AGA Board Meeting Minutes 9/17/17

Present:
Gurujeet Khasla
Andrew Jackson
Andy Okun (president)
Martin Lebl (chair)
Lisa Scott
Steve Colburn
Samantha Fede (secretary)
Chris Kirschner
Edward Zhang

Meeting called to order at 9:07 EST

Minutes from US Go Congress: Lisa is sending out now. Lisa moves to approve pending changes over email in the next week.

Chris K agrees, Andrew Jackson seconds-- auto approved on September 24th. Motion carried.

President's report:
Spoke to Roy Schmidt and Danny Ko, and Danny is willing to do the work of treasurer/ accounting. We'll get him started and hope to have him appointable by the board next time. I don't have an accountant to do the 990s

Gurujeet: What would Danny not be able to do?

Andy: He is not confident about tax, but is about financials. He hasn't done tax before, so he's unsure.

Chris: I think that's a good split, because ongoing accounting month-to-month is the biggest part of the job. The tax part can be done by an expert for cost, but we just need to pay for that.

Lisa: That's great news.

Andy: Next thing- update: Chris, paul [?], jeff shavel are working on the 50 states project. They are working on a proposal that should be on the agenda for the next board meeting.

Future Go Congresses:
Regarding US Go Congress for 2017, 2018, 2019: we were good for the budget/bill for this year, everything is settled and it looks good. (Lisa agrees).

We have a lot of the people willing to help in the future. In 2019, we have Madison, WI and if that doesn't work, Dallas is interested. 2020, it sounds like colorado wants to do it. For 2021, Dallas, Vegas, and Chicago are interested. Hopefully we won't have to scramble again. We're in a good place, institutionalized, and have backups. There's also still Bozeman! (But we don't have a director for Bozeman).

Lisa: (Report on the 2019 venue) UW-madison, we have about a month for a deposit on the venue, which seems great. We had a meeting with Dave [Weimer], and there are enough break out rooms, it's freshly renovated, there are good rooms for ejournal etc. The one thing that is different is that there's a per-person room fee, $50/person, which is a great deal. This is partially because Dave is a professor. They also handle registration, credit card fee, etc, for $2/person. Andy and I have talked about it. There's no additional web development fee. But we need to talk about it because we have to decide soon. It's central to drug stores, coffee shops, restaurants. The deposit will be $5000.

Andy: Is the money handling optional?

Lisa: Yes, if we do the per-room fee. But, no if we want the low per-person fee. This may be a problem for paying out prizes, but shouldn't be problematic for paying pros etc. Dave also wants to get sponsors, and that money wouldn't have the same problems.

Chris K: This sends up some red flags for me. We did something similar in 2004, and no congress has been as much trouble.

Lisa: I understand, but since this isn't a hospitality school, it seems to be a professional service and they run a lot of conferences. I was initially concerned, but they passed my test. They're very upfront.

Andy: I imagine there's a way to work around some of our concerns.

Lisa: What's the board's feeling?

Andrew Jackson: I am skeptical about them handling registration, and the website, and reports.

Martin: Okay, we have a few weeks to work on this.

Gurujeet: Having Dave Weimer behind it makes me feel confident, does he have any concerns?

Lisa: His major concerns were just that there isn't a major large go community for volunteers in the area, but he thinks that the university helping out may help with that.

Edward: Are there any minimums? What about the banquet?

Lisa: No, because Dave is a professor. There's a range of options for the banquet, some more money, some less. Prices are comparable to 2018, the only thing would be that lunch would be catered to us (more expensive). Breakfast is free in the morning with dorms.

Edward: I'm worried this is very early. Shouldn't other cities have a chance to make a bid?

Lisa: Dallas is interested, but not specifically for a given year, and we're moving towards doing things more in advance. This was supported by the General Assembly and potential other cities would have learned about this at the future congresses meeting, and had a chance to put in a bid or object.

Martin: I think we've tried to do things in advance before, and I like that general direction.

Chris: I think we can also talk about general plans, with the understanding there may be year switching. One other issue in here is that we must have an independent way to check what the university staff are doing with our registrations/finances. We have to know who's coming and when, for how long. We need an independent source, because otherwise, we just get sent a bill.

Lisa: I talked to her about that generally, and explained it was important to us. You and I are on the same page.

Andy: Lisa, can you send me the contracts?

Lisa: I will send you that information. There's a lot to do in the next three weeks.

Chris: We need to see the contract and related information before we proceed.

Andy: Okay, moving on. I attended a meeting of the Future of Asia, and participated in the meeting-- Terry McCarthy had me talk about Go/AlphaGo/AI/China in 3 minutes. I had a talk with a sponsor of this conference afterwards (AirCanada). In the past, events were often sponsored by airlines, Japanese airlines used to sponsor go things. But, I'd heard that isn't common anymore. But, AirCanada still does. They want to publicize that a great way to get from the US to Asia is through Canada, and it's easy because there are US customs services there. This conference had some discounts on tickets (~15% off), and tickets for free. So, my plan is to try to get free tickets and discounts from AirCanada for go related things, unless the board objects. I aim to get this benefit for two types of people: 1) people going to Asia from here for go events, and 2) people coming to US Go Congress from Asia. So, I'd like AirCanada to be our official airline.

Chris: 15% is really good. It seems to be like there'd be a lot of transfers for people coming from Asia, but maybe that's true for American airline companies too. Sounds worth pursuing to me.

Andy: Other things- Andrew Jackson has contacted the EGF about having a joint EGF/AGA tournament, Andy Okun followed up, haven't heard back yet. Jeff Chavel is doing work as tournament coordinator for a variety of tournaments internationally. Thomas has worked it out so that the players get a lot of games. [the name of this tournament?]

Chris: What's the funding on that? Are pros permitted?

Andy: Airfare included. Yes, last year it was Ryan, Mingju, Eric, and Sarah Yu.

I went to an event in Mongolia that was part of Chinese Go Congress, which had 5,000 attendees. About half of them travelled from other parts of China, half were locals. This is obviously a lot of go enthusiasts!

-End of President's Report-

Martin: Let's go on to Chris's agenda items-

Review of AGA bylaws
Chris: Regarding bylaws, numerous sources say organizations should review bylaws every 10 years, and I think that's a good idea. I think 1 or 2 people from the board, plus 2 or 3 outside people, should review them and identify confusing things, and then suggest revisions. Just minor things, not a revolution. Do we want to motion to do this?

Lisa: I think that's a good idea, and I've seen some things I'd like to change.

Andrew: Do you have any ideas for personnel [to be part of the review]?

Chris: I would like to lead it. I would like to solicit Keith Arnold, and approach Dave Weimer. I'm happy to consider other people as well, I don't have a specific list.

Lisa: I'd like to be involved, since I have some ideas.

Chris: Okay, we can get together and approach some others. A group of 5 is a good sized work group.

Edward: What about Thomas Hsiang? [no response]

Andrew: The review of bylaws is a good idea, but I'd like it done in a timely manner.

Chris: I would like this on the agenda for a progress report at the December meeting.

I move to open a committee with me and Lisa to select outside members and advise changes in bylaws to the board, who could then make recommendations to the assembly, and then it would move on to the AGA membership for a vote.

Lisa seconds.

Unanimously approved. Committee moves ahead.

Data Security
Martin: I want to talk about data security.

Chris: This occurred to me because anyone with access to the system can send emails out to everyone, and so we're trusting that people who have this access won't embarrass the AGA intentionally or accidentally. I think we should have an understanding that this email list is only to be used with approval from the board.

Gurujeet: I think there's also a security issue.

Andrew: There are two issues- one is people who have access to the membership manager can email other people who play go, but I think that's the point of this service. The other is security.

Steve: You can't actually send emails through the manager, the manager just provides a list of contacts.

[Can this be used to spam members?]

Andrew: Spam would probably be caught. But another issue is PII [personal identifying information]. We store personal information (like names, addresses, emails etc), and we don't necessarily think about this or monitor this. We don't know if someone's poking around there. The information there is pretty basic, but I wouldn't recommend people keep important private information in their AGA profile.

Gurujeet: Do we store credit card info?

Andrew: Absolutely not. The payment gateways make sure that's not true, we used authorize.net and next year we're moving to stripe for Go Congress. We store no information-- and in fact the credit card portals require us not to store anything.

Andy: The membership manager doesn't let you send out emails, but we do use mailchimp to send out EJ. The only times anything gets sent out, it's fundraising, event announcements.

Andrew: The key is, if I sent out an email through that, it would come from my personal account, and people would know that. People know they can be contacted through our email. There

aren't any additional risks for the membership manager compared to having a paper list. Is this settled/ is this clear?

Chris: I think that we need to make it clear that the policy is that if people use the manager to send out emails, they need to CC (copy) the board/president and know that they will get reprimanded if they use it inappropriately.

Andrew: I can add some language.

Chris: Okay great.

Rating System
Martin: Chris, any updates on the ratings?

Chris: I want Andrew and Jon to be in contact about this. I think they're in contact. Andrew?

Andrew: If everyone's happy with deploying the solution, we can. We don't want to have Java on our server, so Jon will run it independently and that will communicate with the existing server. I've asked him to pull something together formally, so we know what has to be going on at our database. Jon will continue to update compatibility, licences, and keeping our github up to date. Then we can go ahead with deployment.

Martin: What's the timeline on the deployment?

Andrew: It depends on Jon, so I can't speak for his timeline.

Chris: He's been very responsive recently, and I think will continue to be.

Steve: Any word on the white papers we promised at the General Assembly meeting?

Andrew: I haven't gotten them.

Edward: Is it a good time for us to discuss them?

Chris: Andrew, we're waiting on your review of them?

Andrew: No, I think we wanted you [Chris] to respond to address why this algorithm is necessary.

Chris: I wasn't saying this was the only possible algorithm.

Andrew: I don't think you've answered the questions raised by the general assembly and membership. I can deploy it from an operational standpoint, but I don't think you've answered the whys/hows. This isn't coming from me. I haven't seen the answers you promised.

Chris: But, no other algorithm option has been presented. We can consider other things, but we're not obligated to find the best option.

Edward: I think the 6 game method is easy to understand, and I support it. The math is sound. It's even better than some of the asian systems. But there are some problems in terms of expectations-- people thinking they've hit a threshold, and asking to play certain people due to wanting to hit a certain rank.

Gurujeet: Regarding Andrew's comments, I remember James Pinkerton to be very outspoken, and I'd like him to be involved with this process.

Chris: I invited him, and he didn't respond. He didn't understand why this is better than just a rating system.

Andy: I've been involved in this conversation since 2006, and I support the idea of a rating system but I've been opposed in the past. We've discussed this and gotten outside mathematical input. We've gotten input from [ ] who worked on the Korean system, but the discussion got lost.

Andrew: When did that happen? 15 years later, maybe the needs of the constituency have changed.

Lisa: I agree, we need to go back to discussing that if it's something people are interested in

Chris: This isn't the only viable system. It doesn't shift other things out. If someone has something better, they can write a proposal and we can test it and see if it meets our standards. I don't think we should answer people who say what about this, what about that, without providing a proposal.

Lisa: I think that's true, but we need to be explaining it clearly to the membership.

Gurujeet: My sense of the assembly meeting was that the members didn't understand the system. For whatever reason.

Steve: The membership doesn't have enough information to evaluate the algorithm, so that's the problem.

Edward: I agree. Maybe you could write up a brief review of what you did and say why it worked. Members may not know the history.

Chris: No. I will not. No one does that. We can't disprove alternative idea that might happen someday. It's hard work to develop these projects.

Edward: But for things we work on and find out don't work, and the data shows it didn't work, it's helpful to the community to show what did or didn't work in a paper.

Martin: I think he means that we should have a QA paper showing how we got to this point.

Chris: I will not do that.

Lisa: I will sit down with you and Jon to write up something we can send to the membership.

Andy: An FAQ that explains it is appropriate, but an explanation testing it against non-existent systems is not.

[Cross-talk]

Andrew: I will deploy whatever the president tells me, but the members were promised documentation and that hasn't been done.

Andy: We promised the white-papers that already existed.

Andrew: It is not sufficient. It is incomplete and refers to non attached documents. The math is explained, but it does not reference the concerns raised.

Chris: I'll have to review that with you later.

Action item: Chris- Work on FAQ to answer membership questions
Board members: Please send Chris questions that should be addressed. Lisa will help with the write-up.

Chris: We are not proposing we stop giving ranks to top tiers at congress, and other ways as deemed appropriate.

Andy: Both of those things were at the request of the Board to give honorific ratings conservatively. If the board objects or needs proof now, it's in the minutes and I can go find it.

Lisa: Also, for people below 18/20k, then we can award ranks based on teacher's opinion, etc, but that's not honorific.

Edward: We've been working on this for many years, and even with questions, we don't have to delay further. Regarding the math, the rank would be stronger than average. It's a relatively

conservative approach and we can be very confident about it. If we delay, it could affect kids who want their ranks, and who are motivated by ranks or who want to use them for college essays. We could plan to announce this at the Cotsen-- there are lots of people there, and there's EJ coverage.

Lisa: Do we want to do that?

Martin: We could give it to the top finishers in each band?

Chris: 5 games is not enough for that.

Lisa: I think the timeline for this is too short.

Chris: We can't promise that.

Lisa: What about 5-0 people at the congress?

Chris: That would probably be okay, and the people would also meet those requirements from the algorithm side.

Edward: It might also encourage attendance at the cotsen.

[cross-talk: there was a general sense that the end of October would not be enough time to finalize and announce this system, although the work group will use it as an optimistic goal]

Future board meeting scheduling:

8pm EST instead of 9pm EST for future meetings.

October 15th is the next meeting. November 12th is the following meeting. December 10th is the final meeting of the calendar year.

Lisa moves to adjourn, Andrew seconds, consensus.

Adjourned at 10:46 EST.

-This is the bottom line-