

**Minutes**  
**AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Sunday, May 9, 2010 – 8:00 PM EDT**

Meeting called to order by: Roy Schmidt at 8:05 PM EDT  
Type of meeting: Regular Monthly Conference Call

**Attendees:**

Jie Li (At Large)  
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)  
Roy Schmidt (Central Region) Chairman  
Laura Kolb (Central Region)  
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)  
Andrew Okun (Western Region)  
Allan Abramson (President)  
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

**Absent:**

Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)

**1. Approval of minutes**

Gordon Castanza made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 28, 2010 Board meeting. Andy Okun seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**2. Call for additional agenda items and new business**

**None.**

**3. President's report**

- a. **Information item: Tournament Coordinator Position**
  - i. Abramson said he will appoint Edward Zhang as the new National Tournament Coordinator. Zhang will have two assistants: Oren Laskin and Eric Davidson-Sawyer.
  - ii. Paul Celmer asked if Edward Zhang would make decisions if there were a dispute. Abramson said Zhang would be responsible and the others would

help. Celmer asked how Abramson knows Zhang. Abramson said he has been on the go scene for a few years in the D.C. area. He is a strong player and has enthusiasm about the game and the organization. There may be a learning curve, but he will have the support of his assistants as well as the president and other experienced volunteers.

- iii. Okun asked why Zhang is the head and the other two are assistants. Abramson said Edward volunteered.

**b. Discussion item: Recognition for long-term members**

- i. Abramson recommends offering lifetime membership for anyone with more than 50 years of membership. He would like to make the number 40 eventually, but start with the 50 years number and see how it goes. Abramson said he is not sure how many members have that many years of membership, but it is far fewer than if we made the number 40 years.
- ii. Kolb asked if the calculation of the 40 years would be for adult full membership only or include youth memberships too. Abramson said he was thinking of just starting from when they first joined regardless of membership type. He isn't sure how long youth membership has been in effect. Abramson said he will check with Sam Zimmerman to find out both how many members have been members for 50 years and when youth membership started and if the number of members affected will be significantly larger if youth membership is included.

**c. Information item: Membership cards status**

- i. Abramson said that membership cards will be printed for current members within the next month or two. The cost of the cards will be less than 50 cents per card. He printed cards for all current members as well as those whose membership lapsed in 2009 (hoping to inspire them to rejoin). He ordered 5000 blank cards that will be stored and printed as needed. This will last for about two years at current rates of membership. The cost is about \$2500 which is over the budget of \$1000, but it

should last for a few years. Jie Li asked what the cards are made of. He said they are like a sky blue plastic credit card.

- ii. Okun said we should come up with a price for a replacement card. Abramson said he thinks \$5 is reasonable.

d. **Reminder: Chapter Calls**

- i. Abramson asked if any Board members had made any calls to chapters in their region. Castanza said he has talked to four chapter presidents in his region. He said chapter members would like to see more frequent ratings updates.

e. **Information item: West Coast go camp status**

- i. Abramson got an update from Fritz Balwit today saying that he and his group of volunteers would like to hold a west coast camp next year, but they are not prepared to run one this year.

f. **Information item: SPOT1 internet tournament**

- i. Abramson said the finals were today. Jie Li said Edward Zhang did a good job running the tournament considering that it was his first time running a tournament this large. Li said the problems mostly involved the use of the web cameras. Li said the web page was strange and the pairings were hard to find, so that should be changed next time.
- ii. Okun said he had the impression that there was some confusion between the tournament organizers and the KGS administrators. Abramson said the tournament could have run more smoothly if there had been better communication with the administrators and that he will speak to Edward about that.
- iii. Li said the players were happy with the tournament with few exceptions. Most problems involved the web cameras with older players or with Korean players where language was a barrier to communication. (Zhang speaks English and Chinese)
- iv. Abramson said he got feedback from people who said the cameras made the games seem more personal.

- v. Li said some players' pictures took up a lot of space so it was distracting. There should be a standard size in the future.
- vi. Abramson said he would like to get a women's online tournament and a pair go online tournament eventually.
- vii. Okun said it seems like there will be a learning curve with the webcam, so maybe the tournaments that use the cameras should start small so the TD can individually help the players with the cameras. 40 may have been too big of a tournament to start with.

**g. Discussion item: TD for U.S. Open at the Congress**

- i. Peter Freedman, who ran the Portland Congress, thinks that the people who work hard on the Congress should get paid for their efforts. He started the precedent of paying travel expenses for the US Open tournament director. Todd continued with the precedent in Washington, D.C., so now after two years, the T.D. expects the Denver Congress to pay again. The Congress director this year said the budget will not support that and it would be hard to draw the line somewhere. The T.D. refused to do it without expenses being paid, so the tournament will be run by Sam Zimmerman and Chris Kirschner. Jon Boley will assist remotely. They are testing software to use and will have a backup plan if there are problems with the new software.
- ii. Celmer said he is sorry it has come to this and asked if there any way to come to an agreement. Abramson said the directors said there was no room for negotiation.
- iii. Castanza asked if Abramson had heard of an offer from a generous benefactor to pay Chris Sira's airfare. Abramson said he had not, but is concerned that a precedent would be set, and that any donation made to the Congress would be used for other expenses.

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Note: This section is a response to the above discussion by Paul Barchilon, one of the organizers of this year's Go Congress in

Colorado. He was not on the conference call, so he didn't get a chance to address the Board at the meeting, but he wants them to know more about this issue.

To the Board:

I just read the May minutes, and while they may accurately reflect what was said at the meeting, I did want to clarify the Congress position on paying TDs. I am organizing the tournaments for the event, and both myself and Karen Jordan thought it was quite reasonable to pay Chris Sira and Jeff Shaevel for their travel expenses. Allan and Chris Kirschner were dead set against this, and we acceded to their request. To say that there was no room for negotiation is absolutely not accurate. We tried very hard to find a solution, but were told that this was non-negotiable by Allan and Chris. They are in a position to make this decision, which is fine, but I wanted it noted that the local organizers thought paying the TDs was fair, and we were perfectly willing to do it. Chris and Jeff work non-stop at the Congress, with not even a minute to take in a lecture or enjoy themselves. Although I understand that we cannot pay everyone for the work that they do on the Congress, I think that the US Open is the single most important event at the Congress. It has run more smoothly for the past two years than ever before, thanks to the hard work of Chris and Jeff. My personal feeling is that once again the AGA has not done a good job of either thanking or rewarding volunteers who have shown extraordinary devotion.

This issue is closed now, we have already accepted Chris Kirschner and Sam Zimmerman as TDs. I am sure they will do an excellent job, but I still feel badly about what happened with Chris and Jeff. The price of airfare was small, and I think the damage wrought by this decision is quite large. What is done is done, but I don't want Karen or myself being blamed for refusing to negotiate, when that was absolutely not the case. Please amend the minutes to reflect this, and let the board know.

Thanks much,

Paul Barchilon

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**h. Information item: Marketing ads**

- i. Abramson said he tried running and advertisement on Facebook targeting women. He chose the option to pay for how many people clicked on the site rather than on how many saw the ad. There were about 11,000 people exposed to the ad and there were two clicks that cost the AGA less than fifty cents.
- ii. Okun said he has a little experience with Facebook ads and can take a look at it and try something.
- iii. Abramson said he would like to someday pay for a video to be played at airports around the country, but the budget won't allow that now.

**i. Information item: ads on the AGA website**

- i. Abramson said that a company offered to advertise on the AGA website as an experiment. The contract should go into effect within a couple of months. We could end the advertisements at our discretion if they advertise something we do not approve of or in a way that is offensive.
- ii. Li asked if Colburn had suggested switching to Google Apps for our e-mail and if any progress had been made. Abramson said that it was approved and should go into effect in a few months saving some money.

**j. Request/discussion item: Profiles on our site**

- i. Abramson said that most organizations include profiles of their Board members and officers on their websites. He asked the Board for their reaction to the idea. Schmidt, Celmer, and Kolb said it would be fine. Okun said it doesn't seem like a high priority item, but has no problem with it. Abramson said he and Kirschner will put together guidelines for the profiles and send them out soon.

**k. Discussion item: draft budget**

- i. Abramson said he sent a draft budget out for the Board to review. Third quarter income was below expected values, and investment income is below what he had expected. Okun said the returns seem consistent with the current risk-free rate.
- ii. Congress signups are at about 120 attendees so far. This is not too historically low, so it isn't time to panic. The breakeven point is about 360. There will be a Japanese tour group this year and there may even be a Korean tour group.

- iii. The e-journal and yearbook are within budget so far.
- iv. Okun asked what the rationale is for keeping such a large reserve. He said it is roughly three years worth of budget. Abramson said a large part of the reserve is money we are not at liberty to spend, because it is Congress surplus, earmarked for local clubs. He said that using the reserve for programs like experimenting with marketing is a good idea. He doesn't mind spending the money, but doesn't want to spend it in large amounts or on regular operating expenses.
- v. Abramson said the Congress surpluses can be spent for up to ten years by the local organizers on AGA related projects. A common use has been to bring a professional in for a workshop.
- vi. Abramson said he has heard from Paul Barchilon that he may be able to reduce his youth budget.
- vii. Schmidt said there needs to be a line for the youth time membership in the budget and that the money should be amortized properly across the number of years that it covers. Abramson said he will make that change.
- viii. Because of logistics, Chris Garlock will be sending out the annual issue without the CD. The files will be put on the web for download later. This could save the AGA thousands of dollars this year when we need it. Abramson doesn't know whether Garlock will want to continue that method in the future when there isn't a logistical problem preventing the mailing of a CD.
- ix. Mary Laird has been checking the PO Box every other week rather than every week as in the past, saving a few thousand dollars. Okun asked whether it would make sense to change the location of the PO Box to somewhere it doesn't take hours of effort to check. Abramson said the older members like to keep the consistent PO Box out of tradition. Li said there is a premium forwarding service offered by the USPS that costs about \$20 per week to forward mail wherever you want for an extended period of time. Abramson said he will look into it.

#### 4. Old Business

None

**5. New Business**

None

**6. Establish time and date of next meeting**

The next monthly conference call will be July 11, 2010 at 8:00 EDT.

**7. Adjourn**

Okun made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Castanza seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM EDT.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary