

**ACBL Unit 159
Annual Membership Meeting
November 24, 2024**

Call to Order

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by President, Ashley Erwin.

Board Member Attendees: Ashley Erwin, Lorraine O'Donnell, Gustavo Gonzalez, Kay White, Reggie Feuille, Lorena Moore

Others: Scott Norris, Dan Anthony, Ellen Eastman; New Board Members: Bill Hickman, Cindy Osborn, Christy Horton

President's Comments

Ashley Erwin commented that he and Nancy Stockton had written ACBL several letters/emails, and made numerous phone calls to ACBL trying to get exemptions so that we could use Bob Craig as a director mentor/trainer, and as a director in lieu of canceling games. Little progress has been made. Efforts continue.

Ashley also informed the Board that he had nominated Lorraine O'Donnell for the ACBL Advisory Board. She has been accepted and will be one of the three representatives from District 17.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the September meeting, distributed by President Ashley Erwin, had been submitted/mailed to the Board during the previous week, amended and reviewed. Motion to approve was made by Kay White and seconded by Gustavo Gonzalez. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Kay White presented the treasurer's report to date; motion to approve for audit was made by Lorena Moore and seconded by Reggie Feuille. Motion carried.

Old Business

February Sectional: Sectional dates: February 15-16. Ashley reported that Rob Van Ekeren from Las Cruces has agreed to direct our Sectional. His fee will be \$600, which should still give us a net profit of about \$2000. Gustavo Gonzalez volunteered to be Tournament Chair; Bill Hickman agreed to be Co-chair.

Building Sign: The club manager, Scott Norris, reported that he could get the building sign replaced in Mexico for about \$70. Scott was authorized to replace the sign with a cost limit of \$100.

Best Practice/Policy Document: Ashley said that the policy and best practice documents for directors had been reviewed and edited and were ready to be implemented. Cindy

Osborn indicated that some of her comments had been changed. Ashley said that was why he had redistributed the document after editing.

Dan Anthony and Ellen Eastman, current directors of the club, indicated that that took issue with decisions concerning playing directors. Ellen said that she was planning to retire in January because she did not need a job and would rather play bridge than direct. Ashley noted that the documents parallel ACBL language that playing directors are discouraged but not prohibited, and that, therefore, directors could play. In fact, in cases where a partner fails to show, the director was encouraged to fill in to keep table count up. Ellen then mentioned that she did not wish to pay entry fees when she had a scheduled partner and that she would quit if that was the case. Ashley reminded her that they had spoken previously on this issue and that she said she didn't really have an issue with the fee, she just didn't want to sign a document. She said she didn't remember. Dan said that he supported Ellen and that if she quit, he would quit too over this issue. Lorraine O'Donnell said that blackmailing or coercing the Board in such a manner was unacceptable. She also noted that neither one of them would be playing bridge with anyone when the club shut down due to a lack of directors.

Ashley Erwin re-iterated that directors could play, but felt they should pay. Lorraine suggested that table count was low, and a playing director could help a game make and that with a \$6.00 fee most players have a better experience than a director who pays the same fee but is working during that time. Ellen noted that she does not play as well when she is directing. Lorraine did suggest an incentive payment to non-playing directors. Lorraine also pointed out that often when Bob Craig was playing his directing responsibilities frequently had him viewed many cards in boards he had not played, as well as slowing the game down when he was frequently called away. Lorraine said a playing director had an unfair advantage when they see hands that they would or had played when making a ruling. Dan and Ellen said there were not many director calls and were generally for a bid or lead out of turn, or a Bridge Mate problem.

Bill Hickman asked why we would even be making a change to something that had been working forever. Ashley informed Bill that this had been Bob Craig's policy not the Units. The Unit had had disagreements with Bob earlier about playing directors. The fee is not a financial burden to the Directors when in fact they are paid a higher rate for low table counts by the Unit than they were by the Craigs. The ACBL Directors Manual discourages playing directors, so why would you have them play for free.

After more broad-based discussion it was suggested that the Board not change what has been in practice under the Craigs' ownership of most of the Unit's games. Lorraine suggested that this be re-visited in a year to assess impact on the club and feedback received during the year. Ashley agreed.

Ashley Erwin said he would redraft the Policy document and send it to the Board members and directors for comments. The provision will be added that when directing, the director may play for free.

New Business

2025 Games: The schedule of games and directors for 2025 was discussed as follows:

Tuesday: Open game starting at 12pm, Director: Dan Anthony (will be a standby partner)
Wednesday: Open game starting at 6pm, Director: Dan Anthony (will be a standby partner)
Friday: Open game starting at 12pm, Rotating Directors: Ralph Liguori, Steve Nordberg, Scott Norris (when qualified)
Saturday: 499er game starting at 12pm, Director: Ellen Eastman
Sunday: Open game starting at ?????, Director: Ellen Eastman*

Dan Anthony repeatedly asked and challenged if Ralph Ligouri Steve Nordberg would be ready to take over the Friday game at the first of the year. Ashley informed him several times that Ralph was a responsible person, had said he would be ready, so it shouldn't be a concern. Dan kept interrupting, Ashley Erwin told him that he wasn't a Board member and that was enough. Dan left after that.

*The Sunday game start time to be further reviewed. The Sunday game is the least attended of any of the games and it has been proposed to start the game at 12:30 pm vs the current 1:30pm start time to try and attract more players. A number of members have indicated they don't play Sunday due to the late start time, but the game would lose one pair if started earlier. Ashley will send out a member survey before a final decision is made.

Club Manager's Report

Scott reported that the fire inspector had found the stove in violation of code in that it doesn't have a vent. The report said the stove needed to be "removed." Scott has removed the power cord from the stove and disabled it. His research indicated that it didn't need to be removed once disabled. It is now just a piece of furniture.

Adjournment

Lorraine made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Gustavo. Motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 1:10pm

Next Meeting

Call to Order of New Board

The meeting of the New Board was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by President Ashley Erwin.

Board Member Attendees: Ashley Erwin, Gustavo Gonzalez, Kay White, Bill Hickman, Cindy Osborne, Christy Horton

Others: Scott Norris

Selection of Officers

The following slate of officers was selected:

President: Ashley Erwin

Vice President: Gustavo Gonzalez

Treasurer: Kay White

Secretary: Christy Horton

Other comments:

Bill Hickman indicated that he wished to talk about increasing player attendance at the next meeting. The following items were brought up at the October Membership meeting, which may serve to initiate discussion at a subsequent meeting:

- Carpooling
- Sign-up sheets for partnerships
- High/Low games
- Sunday special events
- Raise the player total limit for Saturday games
- Create non-life master games

Next meeting: January 19th, 12:15pm (start time may change to 11:15 am depending on the final decision on the game start time)

Submitted by Ashley Erwin, president, Unit 159