

BRIDGE COMMITTEE

Carman (C), Sealy (VC)

Aquino, Belford, Kovacich, Moss, Steinberg

Staff: Weinstein

Date: 2/3/22

Submitted by: Aquino / Moss / Carman

Input from Committee:

Purpose: Review opportunities for expanding hybrid online and face-to-face bridge.

Item Type:

	Action Item
x	Discussion Item
	Motion

Item DI221-BR01: Hybridization

Moved that:

Effective date: N/A

Estimated cost/savings: TBD

Discussion:

Much has been said about the potential for integrating the features and benefits of online and face-to-face bridge, and there have been examples of how this has been done in improving bridge marketing, teaching and club games. At the level of Regionals, online and face-to-face qualifications for GNT and NAP District Finals have been incorporated. Even in NABCs, the addition of the Robot Individual has shown how online and face-to-face have been successfully combined. There may be other cases where peak times for working players, such as evenings, and weekends, may be expanded if a comprehensive plan can be initiated for expanding hybridization.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Hennings (C), Kovacich (VC)

Belford, Goodgold, Overby, Shoemaker, Steinberg

Staff: Dunn

Date: February 5, 2022

Submitted by: Jeff Overby on behalf of Governance Committee

Input from Committee: None

Purpose: To resolve outstanding concerns regarding tabled motion Item 213-GV04-from Fall 2021 Board meetings

Item Type:

	Action Item
x	Discussion Item
	Motion

Item DI221-GV01: Unit Formation et al

As part of our agenda in during the Fall 2021 Board meetings, ACBL management proposed a rewrite of the Codification Part 2 – Bridge Operations, Chapter III – Administration of Operations, A. Units, Section 3 – Unit Formation, Boundary Change and Dissolution. The purpose of that motion—213-GV04—was:

In responding to two Units' desire to "consolidate" in 2021, interpreting the Codification as written to effectuate the Units' intent proved impossible. The Codification as currently drafted in this regard is confusing and contradictory. The attached motion clarifies the actions that may be taken by Units related to forming a new Unit, transferring members from one Unit to another, combining Units, as well as dissolving and describes the procedures to accomplish those actions in a clearer manner.

During the Governance Committee meetings held in advance of our on-site meetings, and again during the full Board meeting, there were extensive discussions about several of the proposed revisions included in that motion. The motion was tabled for consideration at a future meeting as there did not seem to be a clear path forward to quick resolution of the wording.

In lieu of presenting a revised motion for Board consideration at our spring 2022 meeting in Reno, the Governance Committee has developed a Discussion Item that includes the major (and some minor) issues for us to resolve so that a well-thought-out motion can be submitted at our summer 2022 meeting in Providence.

To make it easy for you to reference the items discussed below, the original motion is included as part of this Discussion Item and posted in Column D of the MIM. The key issues we need to discuss are as follows:

- There was widespread Board disagreement from ACBL management’s position that would suggest involuntary dissolution of a Unit if it dropped below a certain number of members – 50 was the number suggested, but the specific number is not the issue here. For these reasons, the committee suggests we do not adopt and hereby strike, 3.6.2 as proposed (involuntary dissolution of a Unit) and renumber 3.6.3 (division of assets of a dissolved Unit) to 3.6.2.
- 3.3.1- Do we wish to require that: “the proposed geographical area [*of any new Unit*] must contain satisfactory facilities for the hosting of at least one Sectional tournament annually.” *Note that there is a motion on the Reno agenda that proposes changes to Sections 1, 2, and 4 of this same section of the Codification on Units. This motion removes the requirement for a Unit (presumably existing) to host a sectional every two years—this requirement is in the current Codification, Part 2—Bridge Operations, Chapter III—Administration of Operations, A. Units, Section 2.1.3, and we need to be consistent.*

A companion question is: Do we want to include additional language that suggests “hosting” and/or participating in STACs should be something that Units actively pursue?

- 3.3.4.2 – The word “reason” be listed in the plural (reasons) as in the rest of the document.
- 3.3.4.3 – b., 3.3.4.1-b., 3.4.4-, 3.5.4, and 3.6.1.2- change “District’s member(s) to the Board of Directors” to “member to the Board of Directors.”
- Discuss who pays for the mandatory arbitration as provided in 3.3.5- Currently it is stated that it would be paid from “Unit funds”. Which means the parent Unit would pay the entire amount of the arbitration, no matter what. Seems like it should be split or losing party pays.
- 3.5.1 – Committee discussion during its pre-Fall 2021 meeting was to remove the words: “comprising 100 or more members in the aggregate.” Does the Board concur?
- 3.5.3 (Unit consolidation) – Requires a special election and does not permit a petition method. Is this what the Board wants?
- 3.6.1.1- Need to decide if all special elections be conducted only by email. This decision should be made in conjunction with procedures (proposed to be revised in the coming months) as to how Board of Directors members (Regional Directors) are elected.

“Disenfranchisement” of members is one point to consider. We should spell out how elections are held, i.e., is the burden on the group wishing to split off and/or the group wishing to consolidate? Is a simple majority enough? If so, when it comes to a vote, is the result controlled by a majority of those casting a vote? Or by a majority of those members eligible to vote in a given area? For example: assume 100 members wish to break off from a Unit and form their own Unit, does 51 votes force the other 49 to join the new Unit? Or may they remain with the old Unit?

- 3.6.1.1 – Suggest deletion of the phrase “Unit Board Members” where the choice is ACBL members and/or Unit Board Members.
- 3.6.2 – Should we insert here: “No Unit shall be involuntarily dissolved without the permission of the National Board”?
- Create an action item for ACBL management to offer assistance to those Units where their membership has dropped below a certain number and to co-ordinate with District Presidents how best to serve those small Units or educate those Units as to the options of merger, consolidation, etc.
- Finally, the issue of voting for any of the above should be clarified: Does the separation, consolidation, merger or dissolution of Units require a majority vote, or just a majority of those voting?

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Hennings (C), Kovacich (VC)

Belford, Goodgold, Overby, Shoemaker, Steinberg

Staff: Dunn

Date: 6 February 2022

Submitted by: Margot Hennings on behalf of Governance

Input from Committee: None needed

Purpose: To address election procedures as recorded in the Codification

Item Type:

	Action Item
x	Discussion Item
	Motion

Item DI221-GV02: Address Election Procedures in Codification

Part 1:

During the most recent election to nominate an ACBL Board representative to the WBF through the NABF, yet another of the multiple conflicts that we have been working to correct in our Codification was discovered—a discrepancy in the voting procedures detailed in the Codification, Part 1—Governance and Policy, Chapter IV—Board Procedures, A. Administration, Section 3, Elections and in the Codification, Part 1—Governance and Policy, Chapter VII—International Bridge, B. WBF Representative and NABF Board Members. These are the two chapters where Board election procedures are discussed.

There is a motion on the Agenda for Reno that corrects the immediate need to resolve this discrepancy in the procedures for what method—majority or highest number of votes—will be used to determine the two NABF representatives, since the election for those two positions will take place in Reno. However, there are many other items that need to be addressed to ensure fairness and consistency across all procedures used. These are outlined below and Board agreement on them will form the basis of a motion for our summer meeting in Providence.

1. Should we notify interested parties of upcoming vacant positions, e.g., ACBL website, Bridgefeed, Bridgewinners, ACBL Bulletin? If so, how do we notify them? Should the number of days that notice must be given be a goal and not a firm regulation? The US mail system is unreliable, and so are internet systems and email. In order to encourage “new blood” and greater involvement, promote transparency, etc., posting notice in more than one online an/or hard copy source should be considered.
2. In lieu of, or in addition to, notification of pending elections, should there be an annual calendar (published in January in both the Bridge Bulletin and in a link accessible from

the ACBL website) of when the various positions need to be elected based on the start date and duration of their terms?

3. When should we require that candidates declare their interest in an elected position to the Director of Elections, e.g., how far in advance of the date of the election? A minimum of ten days? Two weeks?
4. What do we do if no one declares by the deadline? How do we handle that situation?

To encourage candidates to submit their names in advance: Electing the best person for the position should always be our first concern, but sometimes people don't choose to run until they know who else is running. If declaration of candidacy is not met by the deadline, there will be no guarantee that the qualifications of a late-declaring candidate will be as widely published as those who submit prior to the deadline.

5. Assuming we should allow nominations from the floor, what are the pros and cons of that process?

Problems: Without prior knowledge of a list of candidates, or at least an expression of interest from a prospective candidate, it will be difficult, administratively, to prepare ballots for Board members to vote privately. Runoff ballots would also present added delay during a meeting, without advance knowledge of knowing who is running.

According to Roberts Rules of Order, the following apply to nominations from the floor:

Nominations from the Floor *(Informational only)*

As soon as the president opens nominations from the floor, any member can bring forth a nomination. However, the rules for a member nominating a candidate are the same as for the nominating committee. A member should know beforehand if the person he or she wishes to nominate is both eligible and willing to serve.

When the nomination is from the floor:

- A member does not have to get recognition.
- A person can nominate himself or herself.
- A nomination does not need a second.
- A member can be nominated for more than one office.
- A member can't nominate more than one person for an office until everyone has had the opportunity to make nominations.
- Nominees do not have to leave the room during the nominations, when the vote is taken, or when the vote is counted.
- The presiding officer can continue presiding, even if he or she is one of the nominees for the office.
- A member can rise and decline the nomination during the nominating process.

- After each nomination, the president repeats the name to the assembly, and asks if there are any re nominations.
 - A motion to close nominations is usually not necessary unless it is apparent that members are nominating people just to honor them, and that the nominees have no intention of serving.
 - Usually, the president closes nominations when no further nominations come forward from the assembly.
6. Should the same election procedures govern all positions that the Board elects?
7. If the same procedures should be used, what should those be? If different, what should the procedures be (e.g., majority, plurality, ranked choice) for each “type” of position?

Examples:

- If a **majority** is required, and no candidate receives a majority, the bottom candidate is removed, and a new will be vote taken. If there is a tie for the second spot, a runoff election/second ballot is required, until the tie is broken. Flipping a coin to break a tie should always be the last option. Balloting continues until a majority is received.

This method is currently used for all positions elected by the ACBL Board, with the exception of the WBF and NABF representatives. It is the most commonly used, it but can prove time-consuming and tedious if electronic voting is not used. Even with electronic voting, there can be a delay while a new poll is set up to reflect only those candidates remaining if no one receives a clear majority on the first ballot. If two candidates are required to fill the available positions (e.g., the NABF representatives), separate votes must be taken for each.

- In any elections for two or more people where a **plurality** is required, the candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes is elected.

This is the method currently used to elect the WBF and NABF representatives. It is also used by the Advisory Council. It can be characterized as “tactical” voting, subject to compromise, as voters can come under pressure to vote for one of the two candidates most likely to win even if their preference is neither, because a vote for another candidate will reduce support for one of the top contenders. This method is vulnerable to “the spoiler effect,” whereby two similar choices can be defeated by the dissimilar choice if that latter choice receives the most (but not a majority) of the votes.

- **Ranked ballots**—sometimes called “instant run-off” voting—would have every voter rank the candidates from first to last. If your number one choice does not get a majority on the first ballot, you would continue to automatically vote for him/her. If your candidate was last and thus eliminated your vote would go to your second choice. This continues until there is a majority winner. The obvious

advantage is that it only requires one vote, but do we have the technology to process ranked ballots?

8. Should the vote counts be announced? If so, should they be made public?

Currently, announcing the vote count is stipulated in the general section on elections in Chapter IV, and it is customary to announce votes. We do not otherwise publicize the vote totals when announcing the elected candidate.

This is a separate type of “announcement” of vote totals from those received when Regional Directors are elected by Unit electors. That issue was resolved in Austin for Section 9, Elections of Regional Directors in the Codification Part 1 – Governance and Policy, Chapter III – Administration, D. Elections. Here, the announcement of vote totals would speed the election when multiple candidates are running for a single position and provide transparency for the election results.

9. Based on the above discussion, should we retain a separate section for the election of representatives to the international bridge bodies?

Part 2:

In addition to the questions specifically related to the procedures that govern positions elected by the ACBL Board, the following issues affect other elections that are required of Unit- or District-level electors and are relevant to putting good processes in place for those elections:

1. Should we ***require*** voting by Unit electors in a Regional Director Election? If so, and some do not vote, should the names of those who voted be made public—or conversely, the names of the nonvoting Unit Board members? This is one of the few things that we ask Unit Board members to do and yet quite a few simply don’t bother. The US Chess Federation publishes a list of those who do not vote—we might consider doing the same thing.
2. Should we require Unit and District Board members to have an email address registered with the ACBL as a precondition to serving on a Unit or District Board?
3. Clarify how votes cast out of a total number of votes eligible affect weighted voting in races for Regional Director.
4. Will all future voting be electronic? Or will paper ballots be used in any situation? Most agree that paper ballots are an anachronism, so are we ready to move to solely electronic voting for any election overseen by the ACBL?