

Rhode Island Bridge Association, Inc.

Minutes

September 11, 2022

In attendance: Joe Brouillard, Charleen Christy, Megan Diorio, Maureen Fahey, Barry Gilbert, Julie Goulet, Meg Gousie, Cindy Mottle, Don Rankin, Stanley Williams, Marshall Williams

Guest Sue Miguel

Absent: Bart Buffington

Call to Order: Call to Order at 10:02

President's Comments: Marshall wanted to make sure that all the board members had read the emails from Sue Miguel prior to Sue joining the meeting at 10:15.

New Business

(1. — Proposal from Sue Miguel

2. — Annual Meeting: Live or on Zoom

3. — Gala

The proposed agenda is above but the discussion at the board meeting did not strictly match the agenda.)

Charleen said that she understands the board is concerned that the unit may dissolve. All the board members are aging and Sue Miguel's proposal would provide a path forward for the unit. Joe, Meg and Cindy all spoke to not dissolving the unit. Meg said that the board is not RIBA and one of our duties as a board is to let the members of the unit know the situation with respect to the unit continuing. Charleen said that others in the unit need to carry on. Meg said it is important that members join the board and Maureen said that members do not volunteer to join the board and need to be asked. Meg asked if other units are having the same issues with respect to volunteers and board members.

Sue Miguel joined the meeting and said that the bridge is coming back but it is not the same as it was prior to the pandemic. She has had over 200 players play at the club in person. On the other hand when players come back they are not playing as often in person. For example a player that previously played four times a week in person may play twice in person and twice on-line.

Marshall stated that only 120 members of RIBA played at the Providence NABC. RIBA's membership is around 400 members.

Sue said that it is hard to get players back to the table but once they come back they remember why they played in person - seeing their friends. District events are becoming more entertainment using

destinations versus just playing bridge as the attraction. Sue said that there is a need to change the focus as some of the older players are not coming back. Her focus is now bringing new players to the table and she has 5 - 7 tables regularly for her beginner bridge sessions.

Marshall asked what Sue's thoughts were about the future of RIBA. She felt that there were individuals she could approach about volunteering, serving on the board and even being officers. The board should lead at getting things done versus doing everything. She felt one of the first steps was to get a group of people together to engage membership. Possibly set up a club committee to address the needs of the remaining physical clubs. Set up a think tank to reimagine the sectional though all agreed our location is excellent. She said she was aware of individuals who would like to be involved but don't know how to get involved.

Specific steps were discussed in getting Sue as a board member and officer. Discussion followed as to how to connect to membership to get more volunteers. There was a general agreement that sectionals should be put on hold until we have a new vision for sectionals. The annual meeting/gala should be held by zoom as no location is booked. Sue said the first event in 2023 should celebrate the new normal and hopefully there will be a reduction in Covid cases that will make more players willing to come out to play.

At this point Sue Miguel left the meeting as Marshall felt the board should discuss Sue's ideas. It was moved and seconded and approved to have Sue join the board.

Charleen felt hopeful listening to Sue. Joe felt that Sue could hit the ground running if she was the president. Several other members spoke to the pros of Sue's ideas. There was some discussion that areas of Rhode Island currently do not have a physical club. Barry offered to look into the Lincoln Senior Center for a north-of-Providence chapter site.

Megan asked about unit expenses and income and then proposed the board move to spend no monies, specifically charitable contributions, until the unit has more income. Maureen mentioned we don't spend money without a motion so we did not need a motion.

It was felt that a letter to the entire membership of RIBA detailing the situation with RIBA should be sent out. Julie said membership needs to know how close RIBA is to dissolving. Marshall will write a letter and send it to the board for approval. Barry offered to look into the Lincoln Senior Center for a north-of-Providence chapter site. There was some discussion of consolidating districts but Joe said that bridge is having the same issues in other locations. Megan DiOrio pointed out that a business model for larger units might work better than small units — there are many small units in New England, compared, for instance, to very large units in California, southern states, and other large states. Marshall said this might be worth exploring to a greater extent, and finding out if other units were feeling this pressure. He said that if Sue is willing to hit the ground running she should have the opportunity.

Don asked about the nominating committee and Meg explained how it worked though there has not been a formal nominating committee meeting this year. Don said he would be interested in being treasurer or secretary and has held office as treasurer on another board.

Marshall discussed if his resignation would expedite a new board but the consensus was that he should draft and send a letter to the membership of RIBA and get any new members on the board.

Megan mentioned an application, "Bridge Whiz", that she thought the board should be aware of.

Schedule of Upcoming Board Meetings:

· Future meetings will be held :
October 1st at 10:00 Zoom Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be discussed and finalized at the next board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:34