

Proceedings of the U.S. Chess Federation Executive Board Meeting

February 18, 2012 Conference Call/Online Meeting

This document is a summary of the proceedings of the meeting. It includes motions made, action items accepted and subjects discussed. Details of discussions may be obtained from the sound files online.

At 11:00am President Ruth Haring declared the meeting in session. Gary Walters, Mike Nietman, Allen Priest, Bill Goichberg, Michael Atkins, Jim Berry and Bill Hall were present on the conference call creating a quorum.

President's Report

Haring started the meeting with her President's Report. She began with the topic of finances, commenting on the USCF's encouraging financial recovery which is being attributed to increased membership, better than expected tournament revenue and continued savings on expenses. All legal fees will be paid off in September; the line of credit will be paid down by the end of 2012; and the LMA loan will take longer to repay. Haring noted the terrible cost to the USCF and the chess community we support with the expenditure of monies for other than the promotion and development of chess.

President Haring remarked on the exciting year of national events scheduled for 2012; our players' excellent results in international competition; promoting women in chess; and the 2012 Olympiad. She thanked Saint Louis Chess & Scholastic Center, Karpov Chess Foundation and Trophies Plus for their continued, outstanding sponsorship of many important events. As USCF President, Haring said her mission is to promote chess. Since the last meeting, she had given a talk at the Fresno Chess Club; participated with other notables at the opening ceremony of the Northern California International in Fremont; and took part in a panel discussion at Hip Hop Chess as part of their 5th anniversary celebration.

Executive Director's Report

Bill Hall began his report by announcing that Pat and Phil Smith had relocated to Crossville. Pat is reorganizing the office and Phil is working on office computer issues and the new tournament registration system which will be used for 2012 U.S. Open entries. Hall noted that the new "cradle to grave" TLA system has also been completed. He discussed the extraordinary membership results for the last week of December; advised that plans are in progress for a multi-media announcement of the Nationwide Insurance affinity agreement in March; and reported that the override for the TD Affiliate Area is now in place.

Chief Financial Officer's Report

Referring to the January financial statements, Joe Nanna reported that USCF finances are heading in the right direction. Results have been positive and cash flow is better than expected which has allowed CFO Nanna to focus on debt. He plans to eliminate the line of credit debt by the end of the fiscal year, and hopes not to borrow next year. With continued positive growth, Nanna intends to build reserves for scholarships and for slow periods.

Bill Hall expanded the report with a discussion of the “comparative profit & loss statement” and membership trends. Allen Priest suggested the creation of a reserve fund for technology. President Haring thanked Joe Nanna for his diligence and a job well done and everyone in the office for their frugality which contributed to the positive financial results.

Committee Liaison Reports

Michael Atkins noted that a new member has been added to the TDCC.

Bill Hall advised that a new Scholastic Council arrangement will be addressed in Closed Session.

Unfinished Business

“Ratings Issues” were then discussed. Bill Hall stated that with Phil Smith back in the office the problem server should be working by the first of the week. Within a month the information needed for the ratings committee will be provided, and a full report will be ready by May containing all of the data. The Board can then decide on the pending ratings issues. In order to release Mike Nolan from the call it was agreed that other agenda items requiring his input would be covered.

A brief discussion of Tournament Membership Options was led by Bill Hall with Mike Nolan and Mike Nietman contributing.

The topic of USCF Processing FIDE rated blitz was then deliberated. Michael Atkins, Allen Priest, Bill Hall, Mike Nolan and Bill Goichberg discussed several related issues including effects of online play; activity level and rating viability; using the Glicko2 system; the Quick Rating system; the online tournament reporting system; and appropriate fees. It was agreed that this should be referred to the Delegates.

Feedback on the new rating reporting system was provided by Bill Goichberg. He was concerned that the system is too much work for organizers. Mike Nolan, Bill Hall and Bill Goichberg will fashion a statement for the TD/Affiliate Area alerting organizers that an update is being developed by WinTD and SwissSys which will automatically complete some information being requested.

The Board then considered a draft called “Updated Rules for USCF Rated Matches” which was prepared and presented by Mike Nolan. The resulting discussion covered defining a match; private events; maintaining the integrity of the rating system; exceptions; how matches are separated out for invitational lists; possibility of creation of an invitational rating; current match guidelines and safeguards. It was agreed the topic will be referred to the office for study and recommendation. Bill Hall accepted an action item to work with Mike Nolan on match/invitation issues and prepare a proposal for the May EB meeting.

EB12-029 (Goichberg) Move to accept the “Updated Rules for USCF Rated Matches”.
Passed 6-0 with Jim Berry not voting.

Another action item resulting from the discussion was to explore cleaning- up EB motions, Delegate motions and Delegate Actions of Continuing Interest and creating a policy manual. Bill Hall accepted this task and will make a recommendation on how to proceed at the next Board meeting.

After Mike Nolan left the meeting, President Haring returned to the agenda and “Unfinished Business”. Review qualification for US Championship(s) and National Team(s) selections was the next item considered. The Board considered a proposed Invitational Requirements document prepared by Tony Rich. Bill Hall, Bill Goichberg, Ruth Haring, Mike Nietman and Gary Walters took part in the deliberations. As an action item, Gary Walters will have specialists in his law firm review the “Live in U.S.” portion of the document and he will bring a proposal to the next Board meeting. Mike Nietman suggested the Scholastic Council also review the document as it applies to youth events.

Discussion then moved to the subject of Wildcard Qualifications which was moved to closed session.

The Qualification Committee report on use of ratings was postponed until the K-factor studies are complete.

After a brief lunch break President Haring called the meeting to order. Gary Walters and Jim Berry had not joined the conference call.

A review of the status of the Random House contract for the USCF rule book was next on the agenda. Bill Hall advised that Tim Just is working on some very exciting projects in this area. More information will be given in closed session.

Gary Walters joined the meeting.

The Dues Structure Review Committee organization was discussed. Bill Goichberg asked that the topic be revisited later in the meeting.

Allen Priest reported on progress of the Governance Task Force Committee (GTF). The final list of questions and comments regarding committees and the role of committees are ready and will be emailed to the GTF Committee and given to the Illinois attorney this week.

Bill Hall addressed “Patron Level Memberships” stating that the Life Benefactor Membership promotion should be completed first. He advised that a link from the USCF homepage to information about and a list of Life Benefactor Members is functioning; the art work for the special Life Benefactor membership card has been finalized; components of a packet including a certificate are being selected; and that a list of Benefactor Members is appearing in *Chess Life* magazine. Hall said the Patron Level Memberships will piggy-back off this process and that a promotion and marketing strategy is in place.

At this time Jim Berry joined the group.

Gold Membership was the next agenda item. Bill Hall said that brain-storming meetings including Senior Staff and Publications are planned for March to generate ideas for promoting and implementing the Gold Membership.

The Privacy Policy Review Committee topic was handled by Gary Walters. He advised that a member of his legal firm has volunteered to review the various USCF Privacy Policy documents and make a recommendation. Walters accepted the action item of having a revised Privacy Policy draft ready for the Board meeting in Saint Louis. Haring asked to be added to the sub-committee.

Bill Hall requested the Grand Prix/Victory Points Program discussion be moved to closed session, since he is working on sponsorship and launch dates.

“Budget Goals - Top Players” was then addressed. Bill Hall, Ruth Haring, Jim Berry and Allen Priest took part in the discussion. It was agreed that plans for supporting our Top Players should be included in the budget.

An update on computer infrastructure improvements was presented by Bill Hall. He reported that two new servers were being ordered; a third had been donated by Phil Smith for the phone system; three new computers are in-house and ready for set-up; and USCF is transitioning to a 4-year replacement plan on computers. President Haring recommended a comprehensive, long-term technology plan and computer architecture be formulated so new equipment can be purchased accordingly.

On the Website Update issue, Hall advised that part of the office restructure includes a new procedure for updating information. Judy Misner is the contact person.

New Business

Michael Atkins asked that “FIDE Norm Event Changes” be moved to closed session. He also commented on the next item saying many important decisions impacting chess in the U.S. will be made at the FIDE Congress in Turkey. President Haring said planning will begin in June. Concerns should be sent to her.

Michael Atkins reported that the TD information pages he created are ready to post on the website.

Jim Berry introduced the concept of a Scholastic Life Membership with online Chess Life only. Bill Hall, Jim Berry, Bill Goichberg, Ruth Haring, Mike Nietman and Allen Priest participated in the resulting discussion. Bill Goichberg agreed to present the idea to the Dues Structure Review Committee for further consideration.

President Haring asked for a brief break and to resume the meeting in closed session.

When Open Session began Jim Berry and Gary Walters did not join the call. The following items are products of Closed Session.

Action Item – Bill Hall – to implement the “Most Active” list

Action Item – Gary Walters – to provide guidance to the Board on forum moderation related questions.

Action Item – Gary Walters – to give the Board an email update of current ethics complaints.

EB12-030 (Mike Nietman) Move to accept as presented the “Revision of the Organization of the Scholastic Council. **Passed 5-0 with Jim Berry and Gary Walters not voting.**

EB12-031 (Bill Goichberg) Move to add Bob Holliman (MO) to the Dues Structure Review Committee. **Passed 5-0 with Jim Berry and Gary Walters not voting.**

Bill Goichberg noted that a forum discussion regarding free online TLA and paid TLA locations on the website. As an action item, Bill Hall, will look into the situation.

Allen Priest remarked that the 501(c)3 filing will be submitted in the next week or so.

President Haring announced that the next meeting will be in Saint Louis. The finance workshop will be held May 18, 2012. The Executive Board will meet May 19-20, 2012.

The meeting was adjourned.

Action Items and Motions from the February 18, 2012 Executive Board Meeting

Action Items

Bill Hall – to work with Mike Nolan on the Match/Invitation list issue and prepare a recommendation on how to proceed for the next Board meeting

Bill Hall – to explore a clean-up of EB motions, Delegate motions, and DACI's and the creation of a Policy Manual.

Bill Hall – to implement the “Most Active” list

Gary Walters – will prepare a proposal regarding the Waiting Period portion of the Invitational Rules

Gary Walters - to have a revised Privacy Policy draft ready for the Board meeting in Saint Louis

Gary Walters – to provide guidance to the Board on forum moderation related questions.

Gary Walters – to give the Board an email update of current ethics complaints.

Motions

EB12-029 (Bill Goichberg) Move to accept the Updated Rules for USCF Rated Matches. **Passed 6-0 with Jim Berry not voting**

EB12-030 (Mike Nietman) Move to accept as presented the Revisions to the Organization of the Scholastic Council. **Passed 5-0 with Jim Berry and Gary Walters not voting.**

EB12-031 (Bill Goichberg) Move to add Bob Holliman (MO) to the Dues Structure Review Committee. **Passed 5-0 with Jim Berry and Gary Walters not voting.**