



Illinois Chess Association

Illinois Chess Association Board of Directors Meeting
Agenda: Telephonic "Regular Meeting" October 5th, 2019 1:30 PM

Meeting Facilitator: Rachel, Metro Vice-President

Invitees: Stephen Plotnick, Eric Ortega, Rachel Schechter, Patrice Connelly, Eva Harrison, Mike Lenox, Megan Chen, Patrick Cohen, Garrett Scott

- I. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 1:40 PM
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Stephen Plotnick, Eric Ortega, Rachel Schechter, Patrice Connelly, Patrick Cohen, Mike Lenox, Megan Chen, Harold Winston (guest)
- III. **Approval of Agenda:** Agenda unanimously approved
- IV. **Discussion of minutes from prior meeting, potential approval:** Minutes unanimously approved
- V. **Discussion Items:**
 - A. **Upcoming Election/ICA Recruiting:** The upcoming election has been posted on the ICA website. Patrick Cohen, Mike Lenox, Garrett Scott, will not be running for re-election, resulting in two open downstate seats and one open metro seats. The board discussed potential recommendations and will put out feelers for new members. Eva Harrison will run for her current position and has confirmed her nominations to be placed on the ICA ballot.
 - B. **Mission Statement:** The ICA does not have an official statement, which would help clarify its purpose. The mission state of US Chess is: "We seek to empower people, enrich lives and enhance communities through chess."
 - **MOTION:** Create an ICA mission statement that reads as follows: "As the state affiliate, we support the US Chess Federation's mission, "We seek to empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess."
MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY. Patrice will reach out to Maret or Eva to update the mission statement on the ICA website in the "About" section.

C. Organizational Goals:

- Steve has been talking to other presidents of US Chess state affiliate organizations about their programs and ideas to promote chess. He will compile ideas to review with the board to discuss potential ways to encourage chess promotion and potentially generate revenue for ICA.
- *Chess in Education*: Rachel began a discussion about whether the ICA could emulate Chess in Education's programs to benefit scholastic chess in Illinois (she has experience with and has been in communication with Chess in Education). The board discussed how there are particularly downstate school districts that would benefit from chess set donations and curriculums (many schools in the Chicagoland metro regions partner with various local teaching organizations and programs). Patrick had previously compiled lists of downstate schools and contacts who might benefit from such programs.
- Special guest Harold Winston, former USCF President, former ICA president and current head of USCF Trust, who sat in on part of the meeting, provided more information about Chess in Education's current initiative with TITLE I schools. The board discussed the potential viability of providing a similar program for Illinois schools, and decided to have the youth committee prepare a potential proposal for board review and voting.

D. Tour Commissioner and ICA Tour: The position of Tour Commissioner has been open for a long time, and as result no single person has been promoting the tour and/or tracking points. Patrick has overseen tour scheduling and budgeting. The Illinois Tour is intended to promote chess playing throughout the state of Illinois (e.g. encouraging upstate players to participate in downstate events and vice versa). It is unclear if it still serves this purpose. The board discussed the current tour logistics, value, and the issue of no Tour Commissioner.

- **MOTION:** To eliminate the 2020 ICA Tour due to lack of oversight and logistical challenges. **2 Ayes, 4 Nays, and 1 Abstain. MOTION FAILS.**
- **MOTION:** To appoint a tour commissioner soon enough to create commissioned report reviewing Tour analytics and logistics to be reviewed by board in December ICA meeting to resolve ICA Tour issues or abolish Tour for 2020 year. **MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

E. New Affiliate Program:

- There are between 37-50 active IL affiliates listed on US Chess site. Could the ICA offer additional promotions to encourage more affiliate memberships? For a membership fee of \$25 a year, affiliates receive free listings on the ICA event calendar, and Michael Lenox has been updating affiliate event information on the ICA Facebook page as well.

- The ICA website will now include a monthly Affiliate Spotlight Feature article (upcoming first article to feature Evanston Chess).
- As event listing submissions are not automated, in the past the ICA has run into problems posting requested affiliate event submissions in a timely manner due to web masters' schedules. The ICA has run into problems with the limited number of webmasters who can receive and post information such as web listing etc. One potential way to resolve this issue is to create an automated event submission form which would just need to be approved for it to be posted. Steve will speak to the webmasters to discuss further.
- **MOTION:** The ICA re-assures affiliates that submitted events will be posted within 7 days of receipt. **MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**
- Steve proposed the idea of an affiliate tournament system that would reward ICA members points for playing at affiliate-organized tournaments. Steve will create a proposal and potential system for such a tournament to discuss further.
- Steve will also create an affiliate committee whose sole purpose is to increase affiliate memberships (committee members tbd).

F. Fundraising: Fundraising may necessary to offset upcoming costs. Rachel will serve as a fundraising chair and will research potential options. Anyone who has fundraising ideas (e.g. knows potential donors, recommends fundraising professionals, etc.) can contact Rachel.

G. State Tournament Email Lists: Contractually, the ICA should receive attendee emails from tournaments such as the Illinois Open, Illinois Class, All Grade, K-8, & Seniors. However, this has not been happening. Eric will investigate using organizer contact information provided by Patrick.

H. Investment Plan/QuickBooks/Treasurer Report: The position of Treasurer is still open. David Rockwell has been volunteering with book-keeping responsibilities, though he will soon be stopping. Patrick will meet with an accountant in the next few weeks to file the 990 tax statements by the November 14th deadline. Once completed, he will discuss with the accountant about services to hep the ICA balance/begin a new QuickBooks for the new fiscal year. Steve can facilitate debits/credits.

I. Increasing ICA Membership/Membership Report: The ICA has 270 active members, which is an increase of thirty memberships over the last two years.

US Chess records 2700+ active chess related Illinois email addresses. Should the ICA create additional promotional materials, such as email blasts and printing and distributing ICA Introduction Trifolds or other promotional materials?

- Though membership is now required for the Warren Junior/Rising Scholars program, this only increases membership numbers, not revenue, as it results in negative cash flow).
- Mike suggested approaching malls as a causal chess playing venue, as you only require equipment and volunteers, and offering a free raffle deal; e.g. entering people in a raffle if they provide contact information such as an email address. They can then be added to future promotional email lists and may be interested in learning more about membership.

J. Board & Bids: The bid requirements need to be posted in a box notification on the ICA website on the Bid Page. Patrice will find the former bid article(s) and send it to Steve to update and publish with this year's information. Steve is also drafting some new potential bid specs.

K. Facebook Page: The ICA's Facebook page is a great additional tool for exposure. Mike, Eric, and Rachel have primarily been posting about ICA and affiliate events and answering questions from chess players. They do their best to engage Facebook users, but there may be room for improvement. Additional board members have been added as editors and are encouraged to post. There may be better ways to utilize the page as well, and board members can make suggestions/improvements. Patrice suggested creating a type of list of clubs and organizations (including non-affiliates) as a resource for players to create more traffic for the Facebook page. The board may discuss further in the future.

L. ICA Website Analysis: The ICA Website is outdated and will require work/review. However, item could not be discussed further due to time constraints.

M. Illinois Sales Tax Exemption: The question recently arose whether the ICA is tax exempt. Steve has begun researching the ICA's potential eligibility into tax exemption status. The process can be a bit complex.

N. Other Business:

- **2nd ICA Banner:** Steve will email Eric banner specifications and Logo images. The banner should also include the ICA website, but the board did not decide if any additional text should be included.
- **Veterans Committee Report:** Michael also provided a written report for the Veterans Committee. In addition to their ongoing programs, new

initiatives include letters and petitions to US Paralympic Committee to get chess admitted to US Paralympic games. Coordinating with FIDE to do the same internationally. Submitted articles to NPR, CBS Chicago, WBEZ (AM Radio), Fox TV News, WGN Radio, WLS Radio, ABC News, NBC News, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun Times, USA Today Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post on the morning of 10/4/2019. Awaiting response

O. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:43 PM

Next meeting Wednesday, Nov 6th, 2019 7:30 PM