

Meeting summary for Northwest Chess Board Meeting (11/05/2023)

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This meeting was scheduled as the end-of-quarter meeting for the 3rd Quarter of 2023.

In attendance: Ralph Dubisch (at large), Wilson Gibbons (OCF), Eric Holcomb (OCF/NWC retired Business Manager), Duane Polich (WCF/NWC Publisher), Jeff Roland (ICA/NWC Editor), Josh Sinanan (WCF/NWC President), Ani Barua (WCF), Alex Machin (ICA). The meeting was called to order at 9:08 p.m.

The previous August meeting minutes were read and approved. [Motion: Duane/Jeff]

Quick recap

The team discussed the AI feature of Zoom, approved the minutes of the previous meeting, and discussed Eric's retirement. They also touched on financial reports and explored the challenges of implementing SettleKing for membership and tournament payments. The team agreed that WCF will try using SettleKing for membership and payment processing and considered adding credit card processing (which SettleKing does not currently accept, to reduce fees.) They also discussed automating the membership data entry process and reducing Eric's workload. The team debated the business model of SettleKing.

Summary

Zoom AI, Retirement, and Financial Reports

Josh initiated a discussion about the AI feature of Zoom that takes notes during meetings. The group approved the minutes of the previous meeting, and then discussed Eric's impending retirement from membership management. Eric clarified that he would still provide the monthly add and remove lists for the mailing and email mailing, and Jeffrey confirmed that he still needed this information every month. The group also briefly touched upon the topic of financial reports, but no decision was made.

SettleKing Payment System Challenges

Ralph, Eric, Josh, and Wilson discussed the challenges of implementing SettleKing for payments, particularly for those without debit cards or bank accounts. Josh proposed that SettleKing could house the payment system, allowing people to use whatever payment method they preferred. The group agreed that whoever took the payment (if not automated) would enter the person's information into SettleKing (or the linked database). Eric suggested that a trusted person at the tournaments could handle entries for those using checks or cash. Josh updated the group on his meeting with David and Srikant about integrating SettleKing with David's online registration system to phase out PayPal.

The group also discussed using SettleKing to house WCF memberships. David/Josh gave permission to Srikant and his team to work on his test site for integration. Jeffrey asked

about the cost of the work, to which Josh confirmed it would be done for free. Ralph expressed confusion about the potential cost of the contract with David and asked how the OCF felt about this, to which Wilson responded negatively.

Settle King's Membership System and Billing Confusion

Wilson expressed confusion about SettleKing's progress with a membership system and its billing mechanisms. Ralph, Eric, and Josh discussed potential issues with payment methods and the lack of clarity in SettleKing's billing setup. They also discussed the possibility of continuing to use PayPal or other payment methods, and how these methods would affect fees and payments. Ralph expressed concern about linking bank accounts to PayPal. Josh clarified that SettleKing syncs with Plaid, a third-party service, for bank account details. The group agreed that the benefits of the system could outweigh the potential issues, particularly given that it is free for players, however, WCF will try the system first and OCF will not initially participate.

Chess Community Service Discussion

Wilson, Josh, Eric, Ralph, and Jeffrey discussed the Oregon Chess Federation, the Portland Chess Club, and the Northwest Chess community. They decided to offer the same service to these organizations and considered using the SettleKing wallet for tournament registration and membership fees. However, they ultimately decided to continue using PayPal and Stripe as payment options for now, due in part to the manual entries required for pre-registration with on-site payment.

Online Membership System Discussion

Jeffrey, Wilson, Eric, and Josh discussed the need for an online membership system and considered the challenges and potential impacts on their organization. Wilson suggested developing OCF's own membership system, which could affect their relationship with Northwest Chess. The group expressed optimism about the progress being made on an automated system. They also explored using SettleKing as a membership and payment processing system for the organization, with Josh suggesting that WCF could serve as a guinea pig for this new system. The WCF Board approved the proposal, and the group discussed the possibility of adding credit card processing as an option in SettleKing. The conversation ended with the acknowledgment that the management of the membership system could change and potentially result in a larger share of dues for WCF.

OCF's Financial and Operational Discussion

Ralph, Wilson, Eric, and Jeffrey discussed the financial and operational aspects of the Oregon Chess Federation (OCF). The conversation centered around OCF's share of magazine costs and membership management. Ralph and Wilson expressed concerns about the increasing burden of membership management on Eric. In response, Eric suggested that the OCF could hire someone to help manage the process. The team also discussed the benefits of automating the membership data entry process and reducing Eric's workload. The team agreed to explore these options further.

Discontinuing Player Claims and Debating Business Models

The team discussed the issue of players claiming to have paid elsewhere in WCF events, with Eric estimating that this practice affects about 10% of all players. They agreed that this should be discontinued. The business model of SettleKing, a company entering the membership management business, was also debated, with Ralph expressing difficulty in seeing how it makes money. The team also debated the business model of SettleKing, which provides a digital wallet for chess players, and expressed concerns about data privacy and potential abandonment of the project. They decided to regularly back up their data from the platform. The team also contrasted SettleKing's approach with that of Northwest Chess, noting that Northwest Chess does not use its people's emails to market. They concluded that while SettleKing might (or might not) be designed to make money, it was created by chess enthusiasts to support the chess community.

Settle King Integration and PayPal Discussion

Jeffrey, Ralph, Eric, Duane, Josh, Wilson, and Ani discussed the integration of SettleKing with their systems. They decided not to encourage WCF memberships through PayPal due to manual entry requirements once SettleKing is ready. Ralph confirmed that SettleKing has API integration, which they are interested in. Wilson suggested that a programmer would be needed if they were writing their own registration system. Lastly, Duane mentioned the possibility of David Murray or Marguer Nayangar's dad providing resources for this project.

OCF Site Modification and PayPal Integration Discussion

Wilson outlined his plan to modify the OCF website, intending to use direct links to Duane's (NWC PayPal account) instead of existing ones. He also planned to send an email in the coming weeks to determine the necessary steps. Eric inquired about the possibility of integrating PayPal buttons with the OCF account, to which Wilson responded that PayPal had discontinued easy-to-use buttons. The group discussed the manual processing of PayPal transactions and the possibility of Duane sending a check (for the OCF share) occasionally. Wilson emphasized the necessity of buttons for membership purchases at tournaments. The meeting also touched on the possibility of using other platforms, with Ralph expressing doubts about their longevity. The discussion concluded with a discussion on the need for a vote, but no clear decision was made.

System Implementation and Evaluation

The team discussed the implementation of a new system and its evaluation. Wilson asked Josh about his plans to assess the acceptance of the new system, which might include a survey or town hall meetings. Eric suggested sending an email explaining the new system to all members. Ralph expressed his intention to write about an idea related to a 'subset membership' for tournaments and decided to send an email about it. Ralph's idea was recognized by Eric as a way to register for tournaments. The team also discussed involving professional programmers to improve the system. They set a deadline for material submission for the next magazine issue and decided to adjourn the meeting.

Next steps

Wilson will discuss the possibility of a trial run with SettleKing with the OCF.

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 p.m. [Motion by Ralph/Wilson and approved by all.]