

Meeting summary for Northwest Chess Board Meeting (1/11/2026)

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This meeting was scheduled as the end-of-quarter meeting for the 3rd and 4th Quarters of 2025.

In attendance: Ralph Dubisch (at large), Wilson Gibbins (OCF), Eric Holcomb (OCF/NWC retired Business Manager), Duane Polich (WCF/NWC Publisher), Jeff Roland (ICA/NWC Editor), Josh Sinanan (WCF/NWC President), Alex Machin (ICA) – joined late. Absent: Ani Barua (WCF).

The meeting was called to order officially at about 7:15 p.m. by Josh. The minutes of the August 2025 meeting were approved [motion Wilson/Jeff – passed].

Quick recap

The board meeting focused on financial updates and operational challenges, particularly regarding membership management and email list maintenance. Duane presented a financial report showing a \$5,000 deficit (decrease in bank balance), though the board noted this was not immediately concerning given current reserves. The group discussed a significant issue with approximately 650 extra email addresses in their Google Groups list, with Ralph and Jeff debating whether to remove these manually or wait for subscribers to resolve the issues themselves. The board also approved a 48-page magazine format for the next issue. Additional discussion centered on potential new revenue streams, including webinars and fundraising tournaments, though no immediate decisions were made on implementing these ideas.

Summary

Article Review and Mailing Plans

Jeff discussed an article with Wilson, confirming it would not need to be cut in half and would include diagrams. They agreed to work from a proof rather than starting from scratch. Ralph mentioned minor edits would be needed for the article. The group confirmed the mailing date for the month as the 26th, with Eric planning to have the mailing list ready a few days before.

Subscriber Numbers and Business Name Updates

There was a discussion of print and online subscriber numbers, with Eric noting they currently have 820 print subscribers and a significant gap between that and the 1,500 online subscribers in the Google Group. Jeff raised concerns about removing subscribers. The group discussed upcoming agenda items, including reviewing previous meeting minutes and addressing the change of business name to Northwest Chess Foundation and obtaining Federal 501c3 status.

Chess Organization Financial and Legal Updates

The meeting covered several ongoing issues, including the financial report, CJA awards, subscriber list updates, and membership share discussions. Duane mentioned he would work on submitting the 501c3 document this month, while Eric noted the need to file the annual report with the IRS in June. The group agreed to wait three months before addressing the ICA online membership rates, as Jeff suggested Adam was currently under stress due to a recent ICA issue.

Financial Reconciliation and Membership Systems

The group discussed financial reconciliation and membership systems. Duane presented a financial report showing a net loss of approximately \$5,000, with advertising income and membership fees being the main sources of revenue. Duane noted the current bank balance of \$6,194.61 and Josh mentioned a \$2,500 advance payment from WCF in January, though Eric clarified that these payments are now considered regular payments (for example, of WCF ad fees and memberships collected) rather than advances. Eric also noted that WCF advances for 2025 totaled at least \$15,000, and Eric suggested the \$5,000 apparent loss might be partly due to higher-than-expected expenses for 48-page issues.

Duane is working on reconciling Northwest Chess deposits and will review PayPal transactions, while Eric needs to obtain membership data exports from multiple sources including Bank of America, PayPal, and the new WCF and OCF systems. Wilson explained that OCF recently implemented a new online membership registration system tied to onlineregistration.cc, which has stabilized after initial struggles. The team agreed to complete the financial reconciliation as soon as possible, rather than waiting until April 15th.

Wilson proposed that Oregon start sending their monthly share to Northwest Chess rather than settling once a year.

Email Management

The group discussed email management systems for OCF and WCF, with Eric explaining how updated email addresses are tracked through monthly exports from the membership systems. Members should now be able to update their emails online.

Recent Articles

The group reviewed recent updates to the Hall of Fame article and website content, with Jeff and Wilson receiving praise for their photography work.

CJA Payment

The board discussed payment of Chess Journalists of America (CJA) award entry fees, with uncertainty about whether the \$168 payment was made. They agreed to check PayPal and bank statements to confirm payment, with Ralph offering to contact Josh Anderson if needed.

Magazine Planning and Postage

The group also discussed magazine page counts, with Jeff noting they might need 48 pages for February's issue due to multiple articles including a large Oregon piece. Jeff and Ralph emphasized the importance of maintaining ad revenue to cover printing and mailing costs, with Ralph suggesting that 25% advertising on extra pages could offset additional expenses. The group agreed to proceed with a 48-page issue, supported by 11 full-page ads, which Jeff estimated would generate sufficient revenue to cover the costs.

The team clarified the postage process (identifying the percentage of ads) with the USPS, confirming that only Richie and Karen need to handle the physical copies, though the reason for requiring physical copies remains unclear.

Game File Processing

The team discussed the challenges of processing game files from a recent tournament, noting issues with incomplete and incorrectly labeled games.

Investigating Unidentified Chargeback

The team discussed an unidentified chargeback of \$93.67 from May 20, 2025, which Duane is investigating by tracking financial transactions to identify the source.

Exploring Revenue

The board discussed financial concerns, with Eric noting that while they have \$6,000 in reserves, postage costs have increased significantly to about \$400 per issue. The group explored potential revenue streams beyond WCF ads, including organizing fundraising tournaments, webinars, and chess simulms, with Alex suggesting a webinar format where chess masters analyze subscriber-submitted games.

Email List (Google Group) Management Cleanup

The group discussed issues with email list management for the online edition of *Northwest Chess* magazine. Eric identified approximately 650 outdated or unknown email addresses that need to be cleaned up. Eric suggested sending an email to these subscribers requesting them to update their contact information in their respective membership system, which Eric downloads each month. Josh offered to use his Constant Contact account to send the emails. Ralph explained that manually removing them would be a time-consuming process and suggesting they should instead focus on cleaning up the list over time rather than asking subscribers to fix the problem. The group agreed to wait a few weeks after sending the emails before removing any addresses. They also discussed the possibility of adding a web counter to track how many people access the online version of the magazine.

Oregon-Washington Chess Membership Streamlining

The group discussed changes to membership processing between the Oregon Chess Federation (OCF) and the Washington Chess Federation (WCF), agreeing to streamline the system by having OCF handle most Oregon memberships and removing the requirement for Oregon players to have WCF memberships when registering for tournaments. They decided to stop collecting Oregon memberships through the WCF online system and to update the Northwest Chess website to redirect Oregon residents to the OCF website for membership purchases. The discussion concluded with an agreement to handle 2025 membership reimbursements and to discourage the use of old PayPal systems in favor of new payment systems. (The process of implementing new systems, especially by WCF, is still ongoing.)

Next steps

- Duane: Submit the name change document to the Secretary of State for the 501c3 process.
- Eric: Complete the annual financial review and tax filings for 2025, including calculating the current membership share status with WCF.
- Duane: Reconcile PayPal and Bank of America transactions, especially to determine if the CJA award entry fee of \$168 was paid and follow up with the bank if needed.
- Ralph: Contact Josh Anderson (CJA) to confirm if the CJA award payment was received.
- Duane: Send 2025 financial data required for Form 1099-NEC preparation to Eric.
- Eric: Prepare and send 1099s after receiving the data from Duane.
- Allen (implied): Provide Eric with an export of all online registration transactions for the year involving memberships.
- Wilson: Provide Eric with an export of all OCF system membership data.
- Eric: Assemble all 2025 membership/subscription data from various sources (PayPal, Bank of America, WCF, OCF) to prepare a single list for tax and financial purposes. Also compile a list of the Google Group members who are not known as current magazine subscribers.
- Ralph and/or Josh: Draft and send the email to be sent to the extra Google Group email addresses, requesting they update their email if needed.
- Eric: After two weeks, re-run the match process to identify which extra emails remain unmatched and coordinate their removal from the Google Group. (Unfortunately this has not happened – see additional discussions above.)
- Wilson: Begin sending OCF's monthly share to Northwest Chess, rather than settling once a year. (This is still under discussion, but likely will happen by about mid-year.)
- Eric: Update the Northwest Chess website “Ready to Join” section to direct Oregon residents to the OCF site for membership and remove outdated PayPal instructions.
- Josh: Ask Allen to disable Oregon membership collection via the WCF online registration system and redirect Oregon players to the OCF site.
- Josh/Duane: Call the bank to investigate the \$93.67 chargeback/returned item and report findings to Duane. If the chargeback is identified as a returned check, take appropriate action (e.g., cancel membership, notify member).

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. [motion Wilson/Jeff – passed].