

MINUTES
Market Street Singers Board Meeting
January 11, 2010

President Eileen Nicholson called the meeting to order at 7:05pm at the home of Elsie Simon by welcoming new Board Members: Suzy Crawley, Ronna Dansky, Kathryn Minturn, and Deborah Seidel.

PRESENT: Board Members: Suzy Crawley, Ronna Dansky, Kathryn Minturn, Eileen Nicholson, Susanne Redalje, Kate Riordan, Eden Rivers, Deborah Seidel, Elsie Simon, and Jeanne van Aalst.
Director, Chris Vincent

M/S/C to approve the Minutes of the November 9, 2009 Board Meeting.

M/S/C to approve the Minutes of the November 17, 2009 ANNUAL MEETING, held at the Senior Center, with the following change: Under ANNUAL AWARDS, after last sentence, add: "Since recipient Sandy Sundberg was not present, her award was presented at a subsequent rehearsal."

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Kate Riordan reported Balances for December of: Income \$311.83, and Expenses \$1708.12 resulting in a Net Loss of \$1396.29 for the month. Very few member donations came in, and Chris Vincent started buying new music. For the whole year 2009 we ended with a net loss of \$326.31, comparing favorably with the budgeted loss of \$1095.00. For the year, Assets were \$4391.32 (including the piano depreciation and spreading out of internet website expense), and with \$3615.47 cash in the bank.

M/S/C to approve the Treasurer's Report for December 2009.

OLD BUSINESS

Policy regarding solicitation of funds from members at rehearsal by outside groups/individuals. Suzy Crawley circulated her draft of a Policy and a Solicitation Request Form as a way to keep track of possible requests and those granted and refused. After some discussion, there was agreement that we want to strongly discourage solicitation of our members by outside groups at our meetings or rehearsals. However, if a cause is deemed worthy, the Board would consider a written request from groups in the Ballard community, and/or other choral/music groups. The MSS Board would review the request and have final approval/rejection. [23:10:00]

Continued Discussion on Support needs for the Director The Board was made aware of available software (Sibelius 7.0) that would reduce from weeks to hours the time it takes Chris to prepare Part-Predominant practice CD's! This would be of significant benefit to the choir. The Board strongly urged that MSS purchase this critical tool for Chris to use, and he will research and prepare a cost estimate for consideration at our next meeting. [37:24:85]

Policy on Board Spending Limits: As the MSS grows, we need to project costs more precisely, for planning and budgeting purposes, as well as grant substantiation. We do this already for Annual Meeting and Summer Picnic expenses. On the other hand, there are members who have provided, free of charge, supplies and services (i.e. Russ Long's design and production of posters, programs, nametags, and - charging supply cost only - T-shirts). We need to start recognizing the true cost of these items and services, and evaluating and budgeting for them. Our Bylaws deal with this somewhat, but may need revision:

TMSS BYLAWS:

ARTICLE VII, FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION Section 7.02. Checks, Drafts, Etc. (Last 4 sentences) No organization personnel shall at any time incur debts in the name of the organization, except that the President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer may make purchases of \$100 and under for the Association without prior approval by the Board or Executive Action Group. A detailed list and receipt must accompany the check request for reimbursement.

All other expenditures, including reimbursements in Section 3.11, require a completed check request form signed by an officer of the board. Check requests exceeding \$500 require two signatures of officers and/or directors.[44:27:00]

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers: Kathryn Minturn volunteered to fill the Vice President's position, vacated by the retirement of Russ Long.

M/S/C that the MSS Board approve the election of Kathryn Minturn to the office of Vice President.

Eileen Nicholson reminded us that her own term as President is over. Although she can continue for a few more months, she needs the new President to be in place by the April 12 Board Meeting. She will remain on the Board until the summer, and help with transition. [50:47:79]

Acknowledging member issues, such as serious illness: Currently, Chris is the first to learn about members who may need encouragement and/or support during a difficult time. The Board wishes to establish a "Sunshine" point person who would keep track of these folks. This way, possible needs could also be reported to the point person to evaluate and respond, to keep the Board informed, and to see if there may be other ways to help. This point person would be reimbursed for cards, postage, etc. [59:18:35]

Intruders at Rehearsals: Chris recounted the recent event of a stranger "dropping in" on our rehearsal and being disruptive. We need a Sergeant-at-Arms type approach for such intruders, to explain what we're doing and why they need to leave. Because of our seating arrangement, Chris is the one best positioned to see such activity at the entrance. He will ask at rehearsal for a few volunteers to help Mark Strom (who has been doing this) to agree on a plan and to intercept such folks. Chris will set up a means of communicating to them when help is needed. [1:01:58]

E-mail Marketing: At last year's "Chorus America Conference" Chris learned that to reach the 50-and-under crowd these days, e-mail is the most effective marketing tool. There are two ways to do this: **by ourselves** - which is tricky, time-consuming, constant updating, etc.; **by a professional agency** - which does a beautiful job, but is very expensive, requiring a large audience to make it pay.

For now, Chris would like to continue doing it ourselves, using guidelines and skills he learned. Therefore, he wants to enlarge our e-mail list to make e-mail outreach a major part of our publicity effort. He will request that MSS members e-mail their friends, asking if they would like to be added to our mailing list to receive occasional performance notifications, with the ability to opt out at any time. [1:10:40]

Member Guidelines Review Having formulated Member Guidelines, Chris asked that the Board now move on to form a Membership Committee to process newcomers, namely, watch for, identify, welcome, process and orient them; to arrive at rehearsal early, to be briefed by Chris about expected visitors, then sit down (in appropriate section) and talk with them, answer questions, give them a music folder, Guidelines and application form. Section leaders should be an integral part of this committee.

Formation of a Production Committee: to deal with the details at concerts; it could be Board Members, regular members, and (especially) non-singing members (like our wonderful past stage hands, Irene Long, Ken Molesberry, Kathy Palmer, and Meghan Smithling). Committee members would have clearly defined tasks assigned ahead of time, as well as being available to answer questions, solve problems, deal with difficult people; to try as much as possible to spare Chris from minutiae and free him up to focus on the program. Ronna Dansky offered her production experience to help. [1:28:45]

Performance - Venues: we've outgrown venue choices in Ballard. We can make it work at Trinity Methodist this season, but it has drawbacks; Ronna suggested Hale's Paladium, behind Hales Pub on Leary Way (used for Moisture Festival). Also, Chris will contact First Lutheran in Ballard, newly renovated, with good facilities. Questions that we need to answer regarding any proposed venue: capacity - choir and audience?, cost?, non-profit rate?, piano availability? rest rooms logistics? [1:37:30]

Performance - Risers: Chris feels we can no longer do concerts without risers. We used 7 sets of risers at Benaroya Hall. Renting risers limits us to 4 sets -- because the only rental company in town has just 4, which rent for \$300, meaning \$600 for a 2nd rehearsal night. Chris thinks a back row of benches -- four foot-benches, each 4 feet wide, each accommodating 3 people for 12 total -- would do, and could be built, but where to store them?

ADJOURNMENT: 8:55PM (Suzy Crawley will bring treats for the next meeting.)

Respectfully,

Elsie Simon, Secretary

TO-DO REMINDER LIST:

Due Feb.8, 2010 Board Meeting:

Chris: research and prepare a cost estimate for software needed to produce learning CDs.

Due at next rehearsal (Jan. 12)

Chris:

- announce Kathryn as new Vice President
- ask for volunteer to be the "Sunshine" person
- ask for a few volunteers to help intercept folks who intrude on rehearsals
- introduce section leaders and explain what they do
- ask members to e-mail friends for permission to add to our list, and forward this info to Chris

Due at Subsequent Rehearsal:

Chris: announce help needed to expand Email PR list,

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Katherine announced a Ballard event, "Empty Bowls" Ballard Community Center February 27 sell bowls pottery studio makes, soup donated by Ballard Market, \$10 and you get to keep bowls, last year raised almost \$5,000 for the Ballard Food Bank.