Minutes of the Pioneer District Board of Directors of SPEBSQSA, Inc.
held on January 18, 2015, in the Bezhik Room of the Soaring Eagle Waterpark & Hotel

Attendees:

-----Members of the District Board of Directors present:

    Dan Bezaire (President)
    Jim McMahan (Secretary)
    Larry Parker (Treasurer)
    Chris Berry (Director of CDD)
    Roger Lewis (Director of Events)
    Dave Montera (Director of Music & Performance)
    James O'Dell (Director of Mktg. & PR)
    Mike Ridenour (Director of CSLT)

-----Members of the District Board of Directors absent:

    Mike Hanson (Executive vice-president)
    Doug Weaver (Immediate past president, and also Director of Financial Development)
    Ed Bax (Member-at-large)
    Evan Boegehold (Director of YIH)
    Brian Dunckel (Director of C&J)
    Paul Ellinger (Director of Membership)

-----Guests:

    Bob Price (member of tentative Marquette chapter)
    Peter Stephens-Brown (member of tentative Marquette chapter)

I.   Call To Order:

    President Dan Bezaire began the meeting at 9:30 a.m. by asking James O'Dell to direct the singing of "The Old Songs".

II.   Approval of the Agenda:

    Dan acknowledged the presence of two guests who were representing the chapter being developed in Marquette. He also asked that an item be added to the New Business portion of the agenda as a result of questions that arose the day before at Leadership Academy. He chose to call this topic "Sharing Best Practices".

    Dave Montera moved that the agenda be approved, and Mike Ridenour made the second. **Motion approved.**

    As a matter of administrative detail, it was noted that a quorum of board members was present.

III.   Minutes of the BOD meeting on October 19, 2013:

    The minutes had been previously distributed by the District Secretary. Chris Berry moved that the minutes be approved, and James O'Dell made the second. **Motion approved.**

IV.   Business items arising from minutes:

    Dan Bezaire commented on some business items that arose in the minutes just approved. One of those was the issue of Financial Filings. He hoped that the message had been communicated the day before about the importance of chapters getting this task done. Dave Montera wondered if the message was heard, but still wouldn't produce action.

<u>IV.</u>   Business items arising from minutes (cont.):

Dan noted that he is constantly asked by Don Fuson about how we are progressing in Pioneer on the existing delinquencies. Don has said, "Don't be last!"----since we still have the highest percentage of delinquencies.

Dan offered the reminder that chapters could (theoretically) have their charters revoked if they fail to do their filings.

James O'Dell asked for a location where he could learn the status of his chapter on its filings. Dave Montera remarked that the info could be found on the chapter's webpage under **.ebiz**. It was clarified that one cannot look at the content of a document unless he has personally filed it, but it is possible to see if it is listed.

Another item mentioned in the last set of minutes was whether we should continue our sponsorship of the Youth Chorus Festival (YCF). We have provided $10,000 sponsorships for the last 4-5 years.

Larry Parker pointed out that he had not included the item in the proposed 2015 budget. Because that document has not yet been approved, Dave Montera concluded that we could amend the budget to add in the item on both the expense and income (i.e., Parade of Checks) side. Larry emphasized that, if the item is added, we are making a commitment to Harmony Foundation.

The secretary wondered if this topic should be discussed now, or if it is scheduled for later in the agenda. It was concluded that this was the appropriate place to take an action if we chose to do so.

Mike Ridenour wanted to know how close we have come to the $10,000 in the Parade of Checks during the last three years. Larry reported that chapters have given around $4000, and the District has given the balance. James O'Dell admitted that he was not excited about that circumstance in light of the budget expenditures and constraints we have encountered recently. If we were to spend that amount of money, he would prefer to see all of it spent on youth programs within the District, or on direct support of a youth chorus, or in support of individuals going to the YCF.

Although we had not yet gotten to a discussion of the financial report, Larry Parker cited page 4 of his Profit and Loss statement. He mentioned the $10,000 expenditure for the sponsorship, and compared that number to our $10,700 deficit in net income.

Dave Montera concurred with the opinion expressed by James that our money should go to direct support of our youth chorus. At the same time, he felt that the chorus should understand that they must make a financial commitment; it will not be a free ride for them. Dan Bezaire assured everyone that TVBC was most grateful for the support that we gave them.

Mike Ridenour was looking at the budget over-all, and admitted he didn't understand his portion of it. It was noted that a full copy of the budget will be discussed later in the meeting.

Roger Lewis returned to discussion of our history of funding of the youth chorus(es). Previously, choruses going to the YCF had operated independently. They had asked for funds from the District, but refused to give us budgets. We declined to support them financially without fair accounting for their funds. In many years, we had no representative at all. Doug Weaver and his wife and his wife's mother were very enthusiastic abut youth choruses, so they personally supported and encouraged chapters to support the YCF. The good new is that we have been among a group of 4-5 districts that have routinely been YCF sponsors. With the entrance of TVBC, we have been somewhat caught in the middle of an intense push between proponents of Festival sponsorship versus those who want to raise money for our own District chorus. One good outcome was that TVBC raised more funds than they had budgeted. They even have a small reserve available for next year's planning.

<u>IV.</u>   Business items arising from minutes (cont.):

Roger felt strongly that our first responsibility should be to the chorus. He was pleased that the combined efforts of TVBC and the District had resulted overall in the raising of more total money for YIH programs than TVBC needed. He still favored us sending some money in general support of the YCF next year. He suggested that a combination of money from the District and the estate of Doug Weaver's late mother-in-law might generate a $10,000 sponsorship. He anticipated that there will be sponsorships anyway next year from Doug's family. Whether they want to participate in a co-sponsorship is another question.

Roger concluded by saying that he felt our primary responsibility as a District should be for direct support of "choruses". (He emphasized the plural of that word.) He felt that our second responsibility should be to encourage the raising of more money through the chapters. He proposed that money could still be used for support of YCF through Harmony Foundation.

Mike Ridenour asked if we should wait until we get to the discussion of the budget to decide this issue. Dan Bezaire thought we should wait until Doug is present at a meeting to provide his input toward a final decision.

Another issue mentioned in the minutes from the last meeting was an update of the policy manual. Dan commented that, after reading it, he concluded it is not too helpful in its current state. Revising it is going to be a work in progress. He asked board members to review their appropriate areas within the manual.

A copy containing some proposed revisions had been distributed earlier to board members. Some of the revisions were highlighted **in RED**.

Roger Lewis advocated that the content of the manual with regard to conventions be set at a high level. He felt that much of the detail should be covered in the convention manual---where it could be changed more easily there without board approval (i.e., job descriptions, number of nights authorized, etc.) However, he recommended that our reimbursement policy be maintained in the policy manual. Roger noted that he had not yet submitted those changes as draft items. He concluded that he needed to review which items should be policy, and which things should come out as non-policy details.

Dan Bezaire perceived the policy manual as being a very fluid document. He noted that it was last revised about six years earlier. He observed that we have changed a lot of procedures since then. He perceived the document as merely a description of what we do.

The secretary felt that was not the concept of the document that he heard Roger describing. He observed that Roger had advocated that the administrative details of convention planning be listed in the convention manual, but that the critical points, i.e., the financial details, should be defined as policy.

Roger suggested that the members of the convention team should be appointed by the Director of Events, approved by the District President, and report to the Director of Events. However, there have been instances in the past where a DP made changes in those appointments without consulting with the Director of Events. Roger would like for the policy manual to clarify that relationship. The important detail is that the convention manual defines the list of jobs and individual duties.

The secretary was disturbed to learn that the policy manual specifies that two chapters cannot host a chapter show on the same date if they are less than 100 miles apart! The secretary had always under-stood the mileage criterion to be 50 miles. This is the practice of most of the other districts in the Society. If we enforced a 100 mile rule, we could have more date conflicts. From conversations that the secretary has had with James O'Dell, he knew that James was concerned that even a 50 mile rule might be too restrictive. We are fortunate that we don't have that many chapters that are closer than 50 miles apart. It was noted that some east coast chapters have experienced a lot of problems in this regard.

<u>IV.</u>   Business items arising from minutes (cont.):

Larry Parker was concerned about statements in the policy manual that specify that the District will give $50 for each man in a quartet or chorus that goes to International. This only represents $200 per quartet. He noted that we have routinely given $3000 to choruses that often sent only 30 members. He noted that figure should probably be scaled down to $1500 in those instances to comply with the policy manual, or we should change the policy manual to specify a fixed amount for choruses.

Larry pointed out that Doran McTaggert declared at the last HOD meeting in October that he felt $3000 was not enough.

Roger Lewis recalled that the $50/member criterion was created back when that was the cost of a convention registration! That figure was compared to the current registration fee of $232.

Roger Lewis noted that, in the early history of having Sendoff shows to support groups going to International competitions, the District would budget a certain amount to support those groups. Everything raised at the Sendoff was considered to be over-and-above. He felt that the concept has been lost since then. Larry Parker observed that Sendoff monies are allocated to provide $200 for each quartet and $2000 for the chorus. The District then provides $3000 for the chorus, but nothing for the quartets.

Larry noted that his proposed 2015 budget has the $3000 listed again for support of a chorus. He wondered if that number should be increased to include support for quartets.

Dan Bezaire noted that the revision of the policy manual would be ongoing. He reiterated a need for board members to review the portions of the manual that relate to their functions.

--- [Extra item: Dialogue with guests from the tentative chapter being organized in Marquette] ---

Because he knew they had a long trip ahead to get home, Dan Bezaire invited our special guests to comment on the activities of their group.

Peter Stephens-Brown began by reporting that they had been holding mostly biweekly meetings in preparation for a show on April 11. Most meetings have been held on Thursdays, but a few Mondays have been included. The group has been meeting at a Unitarian-Universalist facility in Harvey (MI)---which is 3 miles southeast of Marquette. The group would prefer to meet in downtown Marquette---if a location could be found.

He noted that the "Remnants" chorus in Escanaba has been serving as a sponsoring chorus, and has provided them with music and learning tracks for two selections----"Hello Mary Lou" and "Under the Boardwalk". In addition, they have received polecat books and learning tracks from Pioneer. Peter has also been trying to teach the group how to keep track of which copies they have.

Peter pointed out that Bob Price had become a Society member, and they have two more persons who looking at becoming members. However, they do have a few persons who don't have the financial means to apply for membership---but who are having a good time.

The group has received some grants from the Marquette Community Foundation (MCF) that will be used for music or scholarship assistance to student musical groups in the local area. This assistance is predicated on those groups collaborating with the barbershop group on fund-raising programs.

Since the Marquette group is not yet established as a 501(c)(3) organization, the secretary asked how the MCF was able to give them grant monies. He wondered if they were going to operate under the umbrella of another local 501(c)(3). Apparently the checks have been made out to the Society, but the Marquette group has not submitted them to be cashed. It was wondered if the checks should be sent to the Society or the District. Dave Montera affirmed that they could not go to the District. He suggested that the Marquette group determine the mechanism that the Society will use to insure that the monies are "put in a locked box" for the Marquette group.

[Extra item (cont.): Dialogue with guests from the tentative chapter being organized in Marquette]

Bob Price wanted to explore further how the Escanaba group could assist the Marquette group on the copyright licensing and third-party liability insurance for their April 11 show. The secretary confirmed that the Escanaba group would have to do the paperwork. Bob could coordinate many of the details, but he could not act as their agent. The BMI/SESAC licensing would be submitted to the District Secretary for the LOL District as if it were for an Escanaba show. In the fine print, the show can be identified as an event being done by the Marquette group.

Dave Montera observed that it might have been easier if the checks from the MCF had been issued to their sponsoring chapter. Expenditures then could be handled by the treasurer of that chapter. Dave was concerned that the "long distance" between Marquette and Nashville might create problems in the handling of any monies. He noted that the difference in the amount of money handled by the Society, versus the amount handled by a local chapter, could lead to errors.

Bob Price wondered if they should ask the MCF to re-issue the checks to their sponsoring chapter. James O'Dell then asked if there would be any problems if that chapter is in LOL, but Marquette is seeking to charter in Pioneer. The secretary reported that there have been numerous communications with members of the LOL District board. LOL knows what the plan is. That district is not upset about the plan. It is hoped that the friendly relationship that has been developed on this issue will continue. It was added by Dave Montera that there would be no legal issues with the procedural items that have been discussed so far relative to a show.

Peter Stephens-Brown mentioned that he hoped to bring a lot of the members of the Marquette group down (by bus) for the convention right after their April 11 show. It was suggested that Sault Ste. Marie chapter members might be encouraged to jump on board the bus.

Dan Bezaire concluded by inviting Peter and Bob to be guests at our next BOD meeting in April.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda):

Larry Parker had previously distributed a copy of the 2014 financial report (Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement). Roger Lewis moved that the report be received. Dave Montera made the second. **Motion approved.**

Some board members had not received Larry's budget proposal by e-mail. Others wondered if it was posted in Basecamp. Chris Berry noted that he could place it in that area. The secretary had gotten his copy as an e-mail attachment. Larry Parker noted that he sent out the document around December 1. Fortunately, Larry had extra copies with him.

Dave Montera clarified that Basecamp had the two documents for the 2014 financial report, but it did not have the budget.

Chris Berry went to the computer at the front of the room and entered the budget proposal as a document within Basecamp so it could be displayed on the screen.

Larry Parker pointed out that the budget proposal had a new look. When he was at the Forum in November, he learned about www.techsoup.com---an organization that sells software to 501(c)(3) groups at very low prices. Through it, he purchased "QuickBooks—Non-Profit" for $99. He has found that the software gives him a much easier accounting of the financial records than Robb Smith's program did. James O'Dell described the system as being "GL accounts".

Larry structured the accounts into a 40000 group (income) and a 50000 group (expenses).   He had projected that the 40000 item for the 2015 spring convention would be $22,000, and the item for the fall convention would be $25,000.

Chris Berry observed that the last spring convention only showed income of $18,220. **[NOTE: This number could not be located in the documents available.]** Larry observed that the registration fees for 2015 had been increased, however, so that was factored in.

<u>V.</u>   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.):

James O'Dell asked if the attendance numbers from the last two conventions were also used in the calculations. Larry referred to the 2014 convention report (separate document) as the source of those numbers. He also cited the income numbers for those conventions ($17,000 for spring, and $22,000 for the fall).

Larry referred to the $6500 figure that was inserted as income from the 2015 Leadership Academy, but noted that Mike Ridenour had indicated it would be closer to $5000.

Some other projected income figures that were cited were $500 (Top Gun Quartet), $1500 (Top Gun Chorus), $750 (Quartet Boot Camp), $500 (Bush League), $16,000 (membership dues), $0 (YCF), and $0 (other income).

After Chris Berry verified that District dues had gone from $20 to $30, he wondered why the income from dues had not gone up proportionately. It was pointed out that membership decreases will affect the number, and the figure is modified because of reduced rates in some membership categories (especially those involving seniors).

Larry noted that $500 was allocated as expense fro CDWI workshops, but assumed that number will be upgraded. He had entered $1000 for Chapter Development, but was unsure as to how much Paul Ellinger was expecting as income and expenses.

Larry realized that he had jumped down into the expenses section. He summarized that the total income for the year should be $77,750.

Now moving forward into the expenses section, Larry had indicated projected expenses of $18,000 for the spring convention, $18,000 for the fall convention, and $5000 for Leadership Academy. Regarding the latter, he observed that Mike Ridenour had indicated they would closer to $6000. For now, the figure was still showing a total income for the three events as $41,000.

He mentioned that the expenses for CDWI workshops would be adjusted from the $500 shown to $1200.

After a quick reiteration of the $1000 for Chapter Development, Larry pointed out the $3000 that was allocated for Competitor Travel. This is the amount that is given to the chorus that goes to International, and is a figure we might chose to modify.

Larry had not entered any amount for Judging Schools, since he was not aware of anyone that we were sending to Candidate schools.

James O'Dell thought we still had two candidates from the District in the program, and who had to be guest judges in other districts occasionally. It was indicated that only one of them is still a candidate. It was known that he is incurring travel expenses to perform this task. It was concluded we needed input from Brian Dunckel on this detail, but Roger Lewis confirmed that the policy manual specifies that judge candidates going to other districts receive $50/night (or ½ of the cost of a room). He believed that our practice has been to cover travel expense as well.

Roger Lewis returned to the mention of the $3000. He noted this figure has been identified as the amount that a chorus receives from the District. He wondered where the $2000 given at the Sendoff is listed in the budget. If it is being handled through our books (and not the Windsor chapter's books), he thought it should appear twice as both income and expense. Larry concluded that it may have been over-looked since there was nothing there when the new system was created. Roger advocated that the item be included in the budget---even though it will net out as zero. Larry confirmed that the numbers are in the main accounts he had at home. He added that he had given $200 to "Rolls Voyce" in support of their trip to Mid-Winter. He mentioned that there is a balance of ~$2400 in the Sendoff account.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

Larry continued to mention figures for different budget items: $0 (Standing Ovation), $1300 (Top Gun chorus), $1300 (Top Gun Quartet), plus the addition of $1500 (Bush League)---for a total of $8600 in the Schools and Subsidies category. The last number was not on everyone's copy of the document, but appeared on the top of page 2 on some copies.

Support for the Top Gun Quartet activity was questioned as being something that is covered by the QCA. Dave Montera had checked the policy manual and had found that the District does provide some support. Roger Lewis observed that the actual practice has been somewhat loose. The quartets are charged fees that cover most of the event cost except the travel expenses of the coaches. QCA would like to split that one cost---with the District paying ½ of it. Roger admitted that shortfalls have sometimes caused the District's share to be a little more than that. Roger suggested that the policy manual could simply specify that QCA and the District will each pay ½ of the costs not covered by fees paid by the quartets who participate in either the Top Gun Quartet or Quartet Boot camp events. Dan Bezaire noted that he will insert that concept into a proposed revision of the manual.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.):

Chris Berry assumed that the QCA account runs through the District books, so he asked if it was possible to call out that portion from the QuickBooks system. He noted that the QCA items were not shown in the budget under consideration. Larry Parker confirmed that the QCA info could be called out so that Profit & Loss Statements could show both the QCA and District portions of expenses.

Chris mentioned that he was not seeing the Bush League expenses on his copy of the budget. For those who did not have copies with that detail, it was noted that it should be entered as Item 52600 for an amount of $1500. Since Quartet Boot Camp was also not listed, Roger Lewis suggested the expenses for that event should be given as $600.

Larry mentioned that he had designed his QuickBooks program using an outline being followed in Sunshine District. In that district, they use a listing of district officers and the amount of support that each one receives. He indicated that we could leave that feature in the budget, or delete it. There were questions about how each officer might use his money: travel (YES), office supplies (YES), programs (NO).

The secretary recalled there had been previous discussion about categories that covered general District expenses such as travel. He noted that any expenses that he might incur in his job would fall into those categories. He felt he would not need $500 for anything else.

James O'Dell noted that many District officers might have expenses that were clearly program-related. By contrast, James admitted that he might have expenses like advertising for a convention. He wondered if that would be a cost of his function, or of the convention. The secretary advocated that it be the latter---since that is a cost of running a convention that should be identified.

James then mentioned that we may see a need to upgrade our District website so it becomes more of an outward-facing media. Such an upgrade would not be linked to a specific convention or other event. He wondered if that would be a miscellaneous Marketing & PR expense. The secretary suggested that even that kind of activity should be identified as a unique task---Website Development and Update.

The secretary indicated that, as a bottom line response to the question of including 53000 expense items in the budget, he felt he had no personal need of it. He could not say that should be true for all board members.

Dan Bezaire wondered where the expense sheets that he submits are defined within the budget. Larry indicated that we had not yet reached that portion of the document.

Dave Montera observed that his function (Music & Performance) was not included in the 53000 list.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

Dan Bezaire asked if we should delete the 53000 list. Roger Lewis urged that it be retained. He noted that he had to make numerous trips to Muskegon in preparation for that convention. He identified that his Director of Events role requires that he make a lot of visits in connection with site selection and event confirmation.

The secretary was of the opinion that even this role is a program function. Roger agreed that trips to a specific location already designated as a convention site could be charged to that event. However, he perceived that selection of new sites was something different. The secretary returned to his point that even that role should be identified as an important function, and not just as an activity of an individual.

Dave Montera concluded that Roger was seeing two different convention-related functions. For an event that is already arranged, the costs of travel, etc. beforehand are included in the budget for that event. Dave perceived that trips to examine possible future sites were an expense that is not covered elsewhere for now. Roger observed that he has a convention that is still lacking a defined location. He did not anticipate that he will have to make any visits to future sites this year. He expected that he will have to do so in 2016 for the years 2019 and 2020. He anticipated doing a lot of travel next year.

Mike Ridenour suggested that we leave the 53000 section in place for now. If we end up not using it, we'll know it isn't needed in the 2016 budget.

Roger Lewis wondered if the DP and EVP monies were to be used for the cost of those persons to go to International or Mid-Winter. It was indicated that cost was covered elsewhere.

Larry Parker moved on to the Administrative Operations section of the budget---BOD meetings at Leadership Academy and at the conventions. That category included the expenses for travel.

Dave Montera wondered if we needed to add a section for the cost of board members going to the Forum in November. He also asked if all board members go to that event. Dan Bezaire replied with a "no", and indicated that Forum is changing in its design. A full-Forum event will always be limited to six persons. The 2015 event (like the 2014 event) will be attended by the DP, the EVP, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and two future leaders. In 2016, the event will be held at Belmont University, and will occur on the weekend before Harmony University. The list of attendees may be changed by then in the effort to develop future leaders. The move to Belmont will produce a savings of $70,000.

Larry Parker noted that the costs of some items (like the Forum) were not known to him as of when he created this budget (December 1). Dave Montera suggested that it would be difficult to approve the budget at this point with some items---such as the Forum---not yet included.

In response to a question from Dan Bezaire, Larry determined that the cost of our participation in the 2014 Forum was $3610.20. That figure included airfares. Dan believed that the 2015 Forum may cost less because the housing will be at Belmont.

James O'Dell suggested that we should move to table action on the budget for now, and then do an electronic vote after the final changes have been made.

Larry returned to a review of the items in the budget, and cited the section on Chapter Advocates. He explained that referred to the times when board members do visitations at the chapters to which they are assigned. The money that is budgeted for this area is mostly for mileage. Mike Ridenour thought the amount in this item was a "little light". He felt we should be doing more visits. The mileage to groups like Marquette could also increase the total miles to be submitted.

Dave Montera emphasized that the mileage re-imbursement rate is not the normal IRS rate, but at the non-profit rate (30 cents/mile).

Another item in the budget that Larry identified was $2500 for International Convention Expenses. This is related to the cost of sending the DP and EVP to International or Mid-Winter. It was noted that Brian Dunckel has to go to some of those events. It was confirmed that this item covers his costs as well.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

The next item he mentioned was Bank Charges---all of the costs associated with credit cards. That was followed by the $20 for the annual report to the State of Michigan. A $1000 had been budgeted for office supplies (paper, tape, etc.).

When Larry pointed out the expense of $100 for the raffle licenses for the two conventions, Roger Lewis observed that the money for that comes as a payment from the host chapter. He wondered if that should be shown as income somewhere. Larry noted that he usually deducts that sum from the money the chapter gets as starting cash for the barbershop shop. Roger suggested that it really should be shown separately.

By looking at the 2014 convention report as an accountant would, Dave Montera spotted a "miscellaneous expenses" item that might have included the $50/convention expense. He didn't see any corresponding income item. The secretary suggested that we were doing net-accounting without a record of the income and expense. Dave Montera felt that a better accounting practice would be to put the item in both the convention income and expenses sections.

Larry described the process by which subsequent deductions were made for credit card charges and raffle license fees from monies received from the host chapter as a result of their b/s/s sales. Roger Lewis proposed that some of these numbers should appear as "Other Income" under "Other Revenue"---an item that currently showed a $0 balance. Larry asserted that those items were included in the income items for a specific convention. It was concluded that they were probably included among "Pizza Party and Miscellaneous" revenues---but not as specific items. Chris Berry was concerned that could be interpreted as food-related revenue---and not as generic revenue. He asked if the raffle license income could be listed as specific revenue. He acknowledged that it will still remain as a net sum for the budget.

Dave Montera observed that this process would put items like this in both the income and expense sides of the convention reports, and would net them out so they don't appear as a special District budget item.

Chris Berry asked if there were any raffles that are done outside of the convention venues. It was noted that QCA would sometimes have a raffle. The fee for this is also paid as income to the District, but through the QCA budget---which Larry also handles. Chris observed that the total monies for QCA and the District are being held "in the same pot". He felt that the budget should, therefore, reflect the activities of the District and the QCA. He mentioned he had gone through a similar dilemma a few years earlier with his organization in which there were both general funds and restricted funds (akin to QCA). He found this was necessary to eliminate any mystery about who pays what percentage of an expense.

The last item in the expenses was the Troubadour. There is a $168 fee that must be paid annually to put the publication on-line. It was clarified that the document is not hosted on the District website.

Chris asked if there were any costs associated with the operation of our website. Larry was not aware of any. Dave Montera reported that the website is being hosted on Matt Tipton's server. It was presumed that Matt is providing that service for free. It is known that he is also hosting the websites for several chapters.

James O'Dell proposed that the website eventually be put into the budget as a separate item. He felt that we should begin planning on making the website more effective. He was sure there would be some expenses in doing that.

Dan Bezaire mentioned that a member of the Wayne chapter has offered to take over the website. The individual wants to make it more dynamic. Steve Sutherland has advised that person that he was welcome to take on the role, but has heard nothing further.

Dave Montera agreed with James that we should begin making budget commitments for the website. He expected that a time will come when must do something with it. He suggested that we ask Matt Tipton to submit a bill for the usage of his server, and then let him choose to waive the payment and take it as a donation. In this way, we could recognize the process as an on-going obligation of the District.

<u>V.</u>   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

Chris Berry wondered if James had any plans to do mass mailings on behalf of the District. James mentioned a program that he uses at work for this activity, and it is free---up to a specific number of e-mails per month to a set number of subscribers per list. He noted that lists were typically around 2000 subscribers. His experience had been that he has never come close to the two numbers---and he didn't think we ever do so. It would be a function that was separate from the website.

The most immediate goal that James has is to create outward-facing pages on the website. The first one should be devoted to conventions. He would have it set up so that it can be accessed directly---rather than as a link from the homepage. Because of the way it would be structured, there would be no extra cost to maintain it. James felt there some aspects that he could create, but he hoped there were persons within the District who could do it more efficiently.

He wondered if the basic outline of the Macomb website could serve as the "bones" of creating a "Conventions" page. He recognized that there would be some expense to this project. In addition, he envisioned the possibility that we might choose to make massive changes of the basic website. This could be a totally outward-facing website---with a "Members Only": link on the homepage. Again, since this would be a major undertaking, it would have expense.

Roger Lewis asked for a decision of what we were going to do regarding the budget. He recognized that it couldn't be approved at this point. Dan Bezaire suggested that we might receive a motion to table the item. Roger returned to the discussion about the "Officers and Directors" expenses. Do we still need it? Dan recalled that we had decided to retain the item for now.

Larry Parker referred to one additional expense he had not reviewed----$1900 for "bank charges". Excluding a few returned check charges, most of that expense is related to credit card charges.

Larry reported that Matt Tipton had written the program for handling convention registrations on-line. Matt has indicated that the program is becoming antiquated. It may need to be scrapped or revised. Larry has learned about other programs that are available, and that are being used in other districts. His goal is to replace our current program by the end of the year.

Chris Berry knew of a program that costs $60/month. It lets you make your own on-line registration program, run the billing through Paypal, and dump the charges into your own checking account. It was verified that the fee from Paypal was 3%. The program is called WUFOO.

Larry pointed out that on-line registration would become available on the District website on the coming Friday. When registration ends on March 27, he wondered how he would get the names, chapter, voice parts, etc. from Paypal. Chris clarified that the data comes from the program, and not from Paypal. It was emphasized that the program is just a credit card clearing house.

James O'Dell suggested that we extend our in-house registration programs to enable non-members to register as well. In addition to making it easy for them to do, it will allow us the means to capture their names, and how they heard of us. James perceived that a lot of data can be amassed that says who is coming, why are they coming, and what chapters are coming or not coming.

Larry wondered if this kind of system could also be used for Leadership Academy registrations.

Chris displayed the form that his organization uses for on-line registrations through WUFOO. He noted that it took him about an hour to set up the form. The cost of the program was $30/month. Usage of Paypal adds another $30/month. He pointed out that the programs can be turned off during months when they are not being used.

Larry asked if the registration program could be installed on our District website. James O'Dell concluded that could be look just like the current system does. Currently, our users are linking to a page within our website. This system would be a link to an external website. It would appear seamless to our users. James believed that there are many other programs like WUFOO that are available.

V.   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

Dave Montera wondered if we could use Paypal for the barbershop shop. Chris Berry observed that we could replace our current Virtual Merchants account with Paypal. Larry Parker proposed that we consider divorcing ourselves completely from Virtual Merchants if we adopted WUFOO for the b/b/s. Larry wondered if our credit card readers would work with Paypal. Chris didn't have an answer for that. He thought we might have to get new readers through Paypal. Dave Montera mentioned that he was sent a reader when he established a Paypal account.

Dave calculated that the cost of the credit card services from Paypal for convention registrations would cost us about $430 if everyone used that system. Even after adding the $30/month charge, he concluded that our total cost would be well below the budgeted $1900. Modifying that concept to cover two conventions, the cost would still be below $1900.

Larry wondered, if he were to call Steve Sutherland and have him suspend the startup of the registration process for a few days, could we get this change in place for the spring convention.

Mike Ridenour proposed that the $1900 be left in place within the budget, but that we implement this change.

Dave Montera moved that we table a decision on approving the budget until Larry can make the revisions that have been discussed. James O'Dell made the second.

Mike Ridenour chose to provide some details to be factored into the final version of the budget. He noted that the budgeted amount for Leadership Academy was $6500, but the actual cost will be around $6867. Revenue, instead of being $5000, will be around $5625. The net cost to the District will be close to $1240. He reported that the cost of the CMU facility went up considerably this year. Payment had to be made for each room that was used. The A/V equipment consisted of projectors that cost $35 each.

Mike was hoping to put the event on a breakeven basis. He noted that attendance was 75 persons last year, and 74 this year. The good detail was that, for $1242, we trained 22 new attendees. He noted that to charge the attendees for the actual cost of the event, we would have to increase the registration fee from $75 to $90.

Mike recognized that he didn't have the opportunity to do some shopping for cheaper venues this year. He hopes to do so for the 2016 event, and perhaps find a venue around Flint. A return to Okemos is another possibility, although he had heard that facility had become most expensive.

If we choose to come back to CMU in 2016, Mike asked that the budget for the event be raised to $6900. He noted that he only had to fly in one instructor this time. He would like to bring in Donny Rose for the event in 2016. He observed that if the event is held on January 16, 2016, he would be able to get Paul Ellinger for large portions of it. He reiterated that he was requesting that the budget expense for the 2016 event be set at $6900.

Mike did not ask for a change of the registration fee. He was seeking input from the board. $75 seems like the right amount to charge, but the cost would suggest that we go to $90. He observed that the policy manual says we are supposed to try to break even. Roger Lewis disagreed with that concept, and felt the manual should be changed. He noted that we just raised the District dues. He asked, "What are we giving them [the members]? He felt that the mission of the District is to provide services to our membership---such as those involving education.

Mike reported that the evaluation sheets from the previous day's event indicated that the attendees wanted more variety, more music programming, and more director input.

Dan Bezaire asked if we could hold L/A a week earlier. The key question was, "When is Mid-Winter in 2016?" It was announced that event will not be held until the end of January 2016. The 2015 event was held earlier than normal because hotel rates would go up as Carnival approached in New Orleans. Mike was pleased to learn this, because he would like to hold L/A one week earlier than it was this year.

<u>V.</u>   Finance & Budget (return to agenda) (cont.)

Chris Berry also had a change that he wanted to insert into the budget. He noted that he had asked for funding for CDWIs in 2015 at the spring 2014 board meeting. That was supposed to happen via an electronic vote, but it didn't. The topic was supposed to be discussed again at the fall 2014 board meeting so he could plan a CDWI for late 2015. When that didn't happen, he understood it would be in the 2015 budget. He would like for this issue to be resolved so he can move forward.

In response to a question from Roger Lewis, Chris indicated he was projecting that the revenue would be around $3400, while the expense for three CDWIs could be as much as $6400. However, he acknowledged that he had estimated low on income, and high on expense. He has since learned that expenses should not be as high as he thought. He is hoping to avoid bringing in coaches from Nashville if he can find local talent. He is planning to run three CDWIs and one Outstanding in Front. Each CDWI should bring back $600 to the District, and the O-I-F should break even.

To clarify what was being requested, it was noted that Chris was projecting $3400 in revenue (line item 41700). Since some were seeing this as item 41400, it was reiterated that two different versions of the document were present. Meanwhile, Chris was projecting $6400 in expenses for three CDWIs.

James O'Dell urged that we establish a timetable for making the final revisions to the budget and getting it distributed and approved so Chris can move forward in his planning.

Dave Montera suggested that we go ahead with the motion to table approval of the budget, but then have second motion to approve the specific expenses that Chris will be incurring for the CDWIs.

Since Larry Parker already had a document with other changes made within it, Dave Montera asked if the final edition could be available by the end of the second week in February. Larry indicated he could do that. Dave noted this would allow the board a two-week period to comment on and to vote on the document. It was proposed that the electronic vote be completed by March 1. The secretary gave a summary of this plan.

A vote was taken on the motion pending. **Motion approved.**

Upon confirmation from Chris that he wanted to move forward ASAP on the planning of the first CDWI, Roger Lewis moved that we authorize the planning of this event. There was a concern that the motion did not state a dollar amount. Dave Montera made the second.

James O'Dell suggested that we insert the $3400 figure that Chris had quoted. It was noted, how-ever, that figure was the cost of three events. Since the full amount isn't needed now, Roger modified his motion to specify that we are authorizing up to $1000. Dave Montera agreed to the modification.

A vote was taken on the motion pending. **Motion approved.**

As a final detail for inclusion in the revised budget, Roger Lewis pointed out the report for the fall convention showed an expense of $0 for the big screen. However, he noted that the billing from the Frauenthal Center included an expense of $900 for rental of the screen. Roger urged that this expense be pulled out as a budget item. It was a huge expense that came as a complete surprise. He felt it should be pulled out of the cost of the venue.

Dan Bezaire called for a suspension in the meeting to allow for everyone to go the restroom. He invited our guests from the tentative Marquette chapter to stay for the second part of the meeting.

Larry Parker asked Chris Berry for clarification of the numbers that should be quoted for the CDWIs. He understood that expenses would be around $6400. Chris reiterated that the income should be around $3400.

[Meeting suspended temporarily at 11:20 a.m.]

[Departure of Peter Stephens-Brown and Bob Price noted.]

[Meeting resumed at 11:30 a.m.]

VI.   Basecamp:

Dan Bezaire reported that Marty Monson stated at the Forum that the Society had the license for a project management tool that could be made available to the districts. That has happened, and we now have the Basecamp program. Dan noted that he, Mike Hanson, Mike Ridenour, Larry Parker, and the secretary received some preliminary training on it at the Forum. A website (www.basecamp.com) exists where one can go through a tutorial.

Dan mentioned that Chris Berry has agreed to be the administrator for our Basecamp accounts. He asked Chris to begin walking the board through the system.

VI.   Basecamp (cont.):

Chris displayed the initial screen that one sees upon login. It begins with items such as Projects, Calendar, and "in-progress". Everyone that is in the group is listed. If you look at "me", you see your background info, perhaps a photo (if supplied), and listing of files you have shared.

When a person accepts an invite to join Basecamp, he supplies his name (or a photo, if desired). There was a listing of all board members who have accepted the invitation, plus all of the directors of District chapters who accepted (except one who declined the invitation).

Chris had set up a list of projects that have been defined. The first one was "District board". That project showed the discussions, the number of files shared, any e-mails that were sent, and "to-do" lists.

Among recent items that were added to this project were three files, and the four financial requests for the CDWI and O-I-F events. Chris noted that Paul Ellinger had added a lot of membership-related items. Chris moved down and pointed out the listing of the financial requests previously noted, plus the proposed budget that Larry had developed. This was where the Wavebox items from Paul were shown. There was also a copy of the policy manual reviews made to date, and copies of other documents sent out for this meeting.

The advantage to the Basecamp camp program is that all relevant files are in one place; you don't have to search through e-mails to find them. The files can be presented in **.pdf**, Excel, or Word formats. Anyone can read **.pdf** files. One must have Word or Excel software in order to read those formats. It was confirmed that files can also be removed if necessary. Anyone with "rights" can add or delete a file. It was clarified that the board has "rights" for this particular project. "Rights" are assigned by the program administrator.

Chris pointed out that some of the files were for fall and spring conventions, and then there were those---like the CDWI ones---that were also sent to chorus directors. He also noted Chip Gallant (our Society contact for Basecamp usage) is also included in the team for all projects.

Roger Lewis asked if he could invite more people (like Don Kill) to part of the team for conventions. An invitation to connect will be sent to them. This invitation gives them "rights" as part of the group. Chris pointed out that it is possible to create subgroups known as "clients" who can see files, but not have "rights". Roger asked for example of how this might be used. Chris suggested that Don Kill could be set up with access to administrative files for a convention, but not to financial files.

Dave Montera confirmed that the only things that will show up on his Basecamp account are the projects to which he has been invited. Right now, he has not been invited to any convention project, so he can't see them. He could be added, however. Dave suggested it would be helpful if all board members are included to be listed on the teams for all convention projects so that they are knowledgeable.

Roger Lewis wondered if board members should instead be added as "clients" for convention projects. Chris was not sure of all of the implications of "team" versus "client" status.

VI. Basecamp (cont.):

Dan Bezaire mentioned that he had sent a list to Chris of possible projects with suggestions of who should be on the teams for each. He recognized that conventions are our biggest projects. His goal with adoption of Basecamp is to get away from tedious and unproductive reporting systems. One of the areas of reporting that concerns him is getting info to delegates for the HOD meeting. Chris mentioned that he had discovered a page of "add-ons" that may help with that project. Dan reluctantly admitted that we might have to stick there with old systems for a while.

One nice feature of Basecamp is the ability to create "to-do" lists. Chris had developed the beginning of a list for the spring convention---with mentions of marketing and PR actions. He envisioned one could go farther by creating stage set-up or big screen lists. Each task would have a person assigned to it, and a due date. Roger proposed that the list be called "auditorium". One item on that list would be acquisition of the third-party liability insurance certificate. Roger proposed that the task be assigned to Larry Parker, and that the due date be set for 30 days beforehand (March 25). Because Chris had done the addition right then, Dan Bezaire mentioned that it had already popped up on his I-Pad.

Once it was confirmed that Larry had accepted an invitation to Basecamp, it was shown that the task was on Larry's "to-do" list. James O'Dell observed that clicking on the item allows team members (like Larry) to comment on the task.

Larry mentioned that he had been receiving e-mails so far from Basecamp. He wondered if there was a favored address that should be used instead. Chris affirmed that using the www.basecamp.com website will eliminate the receipt of e-mails. One merely enters his e-mail address and password.

If anyone, like Chris, comments on a project, his remark will be flagged as coming from him. Dan Bezaire pointed out that one can get a daily update of changes that have been made on each project. James O'Dell had discovered that one can request daily updates on all projects, or just on selected ones. A team member can also get a notification when a "to-do" task that he defined has been completed.

Chris asked for confirmation from Larry that the request had already been made for an insurance certificate. He entered a comment to that effect, but it was noted as being from him.

There had been some discussion the night before about the cost of Basecamp. It is known that corporate users must pay, while educators can use it for free. The cost to non-profits is not well-defined. Dan Bezaire knew that the Society is not paying anything for the program right now. Three years from now, that may change.

Larry Parker asked if the revised budget that he will be generating can be put on Basecamp. Chris indicated that can simply be posted on the project "Pioneer District board meetings". It was suggested this would be more reliable than going through Yahoogroups.

Chris asked Dan what his preference was on the naming of the "board meeting" project. If he can rename it, he was suggesting that it be called the "January board meeting"---to distinguish it from the April meeting. Dan favored having each board meeting separate.

VII. Society Vision & Planning Scorecard:

Dan Bezaire had distributed a document that he was responsible for submitting to the Society. He wanted the board to know about it. He was hoping to enter some of the responses very soon. One that he instantly wanted to add was the holding of a L/A, the number of attendees (74), and the percentage that were officers (figure not readily available). The document hadn't been posted on Basecamp, but that will be done soon. The items in the document are supposed to be reported quarterly.

VII.   Society Vision & Planning Scorecard (cont.):

The secretary had noted that tracking of annual renewals of incorporation status is one of the scorecard items. The secretary had been told, but couldn't believe this to be true, that Ontario non-profits do not have to file annual renewals (IOW, once incorporated---always incorporated). Dan did not know if that was correct or not. It has been noted that the Windsor and Sault Ste. Marie chapters have been contributing to our scorecard deficiencies in this category. The secretary reported that the source of this item of info was an e-mail from the D.S. of the Ontario District.

VIII.   Policy Manual Update:

Dan Bezaire noted that this topic was discussed earlier during Item IV.

Larry Parker asked if the District had to submit a BMI/SESAC/show licensing form for a convention. The secretary replied that one is not required since the competitions are not ticketed shows. As an addition to that observation, Larry affirmed that we never use the term "tickets"---just "registrations"

Larry reminded everyone that the convention registration fee had been raised from $35 to $45. The secretary noted that the increase was in the minutes of the last board meeting. He wasn't sure how many members knew about the change. Dave Montera, however, mentioned that the change was announced at the last HOD meeting. The secretary observed that we also announced in increase in District dues at that meeting, but several people have contacted him in surprise when they got their dues notice.

VIII.   Policy Manual Update (cont.):

James O'Dell wondered how many of the HOD attendees comprehend what the board is doing and what we are asking them to do. Or are they just listening? The secretary asserted that the answer to the first question is "no". Dan Bezaire suggested that the answer to the second question is "yes".

IX.   New Business:

A.   75th Anniversary:

Dan noted that 2015 is an important anniversary year for Pioneer. He wondered if we should plan to promote the event at the convention. Roger Lewis agreed that we should, and noted that a meeting was held with the hotel a few days earlier. However, this topic was not on the agenda then. He suggested that chapters might be encouraged to repeat some of the Society's 75th anniversary materials with a new voiceover for the intro song.

The secretary asked if any chapters were doing special anniversary shows. It was noted that the Lansing was doing one in March, and the Detroit-Oakland chapter did one last year. These are/were celebrations of 75th anniversaries of those chapters, and not of the District.

Dave Montera thought we should do some things that could be publicized. He mentioned a post he made on the District Facebook page. The DOC chapter had been contacted by the Oakland County commissioner's office about doing a performance in honor of its 75th anniversary, and receiving a proclamation from them (albeit a year late). He described the performance DOC made for the inauguration of their commissioners. He suggested that we might seek similar proclamations from the Governor's office, or the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives. He noted that proclamations are handed out quite freely, and involve little work by us other than some paperwork.

James O'Dell recalled that Mike Hanson was able to get a proclamation from the Governor's office for the Society's 75th. There were some photo ops that occurred when that was done. He felt that Mike was very familiar with the process for getting that accomplished again. James doubted if local communities would provide proclamations in support of a chapter that belongs to a larger organization with a special anniversary---but it can't hurt to try.

Dave Montera concluded that it would be an overreach for his chapter to pursue that idea with Oakland County, However, he thought it could be pursued with the city of Royal Oak---where DOC rehearses. Similarly, other chapters could go to the communities where they meet.

IX.   New Business (cont.):

A.   75th Anniversary (cont.)

Mike Ridenour envisioned that some special slides with old photographs could be displayed on the big screen at the convention. He knew that his chapter had some old materials from the old Jackson chapter. Dave Montera referred to similar materials that DOC has on its website.

James O'Dell was averse to using too many photos on the big screen. However, he thought a lot of material could be included in the historical display usually present in the barbershop shop. James clarified that he perceived this display as a special exhibit focused on this anniversary. Photos might even be put in albums for browsing. A suggestion was made that they be put in a PowerPoint file that would rotate through them---even on the big screen during intermissions.

B.   Line of Sight:

Dan Bezaire mentioned that this is GoogleDocs system being used by the District President's Council. It contains a series of questions that must be reported periodically. He noted there were a few items that he was not sure of the answers, so he asked for input. Larry Parker gave him one item---the cost of a single admission at a convention ($20 at both spring and fall events). Another item was the amount of money we gave to our youth chorus. It was believed that a figure was in the October 2014 minutes, but couldn't be quickly retrieved.

Another question was the number of CDWIs. The answer was "none---so far". Another item was the anticipated cost of a CDWI per director attending. Chris Berry gave $400 as his estimate.

The form asked for the number of Harmony Explosion camps held in the District. The initial reaction was "one", but the secretary noted that there was also a one-day H-Ex workshop. It was asked if the Muskegon chapter did any "Rockin' Barbershop" events. It was concluded that anything they did was on their own without any District involvement.

In connection with the H-Ex camp, another detail was the cost per student. The secretary shared that the registration fee was $235/student, but that 80% of those fees (on average) were paid by individual donations, schools, and foundations.

Larry Parker could not immediately provide a figure for the amount of subsidized support given to candidate judges. He knew that there was no support for candidate schools..

C.   Vacancy in Director of YIH position:

Dan Bezaire announced that Evan Boegehold had resigned his position of Director of YIH. At this point, Dan had no candidate to propose as a replacement. He was entertaining suggestions. We only have one member-at-large on the board (Ed Bax), but Dan wanted to keep him focused on charitable stuff. It was noted that Ed was one of several board members who were on the barbershop cruise at the time, and thus could not be present for this meeting.

Because we have consumed many of our previous members-at-large via appointments to other board vacancies, the secretary recalled that we had talked about identifying individuals who might be invited to join the board as MALs. Dan thought there was something included in the minutes from last fall, but secretary could not recall anything. The only name that could be remembered was that of Jason Lynch (Traverse City).

Dan noted that the resignation of Evan produced some vacancies in the assignments of chapter contacts. Dave Montera volunteered to pick up Lansing. Mike Ridenour agreed to add Battle Creek to his list.

Dan reiterated that suggestions of persons to take on the YIH role should be sent to him.

IX.   New Business (cont.):

    D.   Best Practices:

        Larry Parker offered a reminder that this topic had been added to the agenda as a New Business item.

        Dan Bezaire explained that this item was prompted by a conversation the day before with a new officer in the Grand Rapids chapter who was wondering what he should be doing. Dan was aware of a manual that was available for his particular function. Sometimes the info in a manual doesn't apply to a given chapter. There is always the option to checking with one's predecessor in the job.

        Dan was advocating that we find ways to share Best Practices between chapters. Some type of forum might be appropriate. He wondered if the Troubadour would be a way to handle these communications.

        The secretary remarked that he has acquired an updated list of chapter secretaries (those who were in the Secretary Track class, plus some others that were known). A group e-mail is being used to share new info or changes that are relevant to this function.

        The Secretary Track class had asked if the PowerPoint presentation used the day before could be distributed. Unfortunately, it is too big of a document to be sent as an e-mail attachment. The class members suggested that the document be placed on the District website, but only accessible by individuals that are authorized to see it.

        It was suggested that the Basecamp program be used to share this kind of info. Each of the chapter secretaries could be invited to join a Basecamp team for secretaries.

        With regard to the sharing of knowledge about how chapter board roles are to be done, Dave Montera mentioned that, a few years earlier, he had asked all of his board members to write job descriptions of their functions. That way, when a job moves to someone new, he has something for reference. Dave now has a packet of both electronic and hardcopy files describing all his officers' functions. Dave proposed that other chapters create similar packets, and then share them between each other via either GoogleDocs or Basecamp. Because each chapter may have unique ways of doing things, Dave liked the idea of seeing the differences that would appear in those packets.

        Mike Ridenour advocated that the District board members begin now on the development of descriptions of our functions. Dan Bezaire favored more of a between-chapters communication, rather than a communication down from the District. His ultimate goal is more inter-chapter communication.

        The secretary agreed that using the Basecamp approach takes the communication away from being a District hand-me-down to being an opportunity for participation by everyone with a similar function. Each team member can share the "Best Practice" that he has learned.

        Dan wondered if we needed a lot of Basecamp projects, or just one for "Best Practices". Chris Berry wasn't sure if he could set up subcategories within projects. Chris pondered what the best way would be to manage a "Best Practices---Secretaries" project.

        Dan wanted assurance that everyone in a team would receive "best practices" suggestions. Chris noted that an initial idea would be shared with everyone who has been invited into the team. Each person would receive it, and could post replies that everyone else would see. The advantage of this method is that it is not coming down from the District officer. It becomes recognized as a sharing of ideas. It was confirmed that "clients" (if there were any in a team) could also post replies.

        It was noted that the old **.cpres** system required that each recipient accept an invitation to be in the Yahoo system.

X.   Old Business:

Mike Ridenour asked for clarification on the process of doing electronic votes. Do we still need to take a vote to have an electronic vote? Dan Bezaire confirmed that the policy manual currently states that a preliminary vote must be taken, and the vote to take a vote must be unanimous. Mike wondered if we could change this practice without waiting until the manual is updated.

Roger Lewis asked if the State of Michigan requires a preliminary vote to approve a subsequent electronic vote. Both Dave Montera and the secretary confirmed that the State does not require anything of this nature.

Mike Ridenour moved that the requirements for (1), a preliminary vote prior to an electronic vote, and (2), for a unanimous vote be removed. Larry Parker made the second. **Motion approved.**

As another item of business, Roger Lewis asked that agenda for meetings include both the date and the time.

A second concern raised by Roger was the process for selecting chorus directors for scholarships to go to Directors College at Harmony University. He felt that the process is mostly based on applications from those who know about the existence of those scholarships, but not driven by a need to identify those directors who should be encouraged to go. Directors of choruses that score low, or don't even compete, don't get selected. Roger advocated that we aggressively seek applicants. He suggested that we look at contest sheets and start at the bottom with invitations. He recalled that was the process in the early days of the scholarship program.

Roger cited Peter Stephens-Brown as a superb candidate for consideration.   He also suggested that we look at the chapters that aren't even on the contest sheet. He proposed that we contact directors of those chapters, and encourage them to apply.

Roger envisioned that the District fund a Directors College scholarship. He advocated that the first step should be for us to encourage suitable candidates to apply for the H/U scholarships.   If they don't qualify, however, he proposed that a District-funded scholarship be offered. He remarked that we now have an advantage in sending candidates from Pioneer because the new H/U site is within easy driving distance.

Roger felt that we have the means to contact our District chapters and to serve them in this way. We know which chapters need this kind of assistance, and we can let Chris Berry follow up with them.

The secretary asked if there was a deadline soon approaching for early registrations. It was noted that the registration process hadn't even begun yet. It was anticipated that the deadline will occur in May.

Dan Bezaire supported the concept that Roger had proposed, and wondered if we might even offer half-scholarships from the District so we could send even more persons to D.C.

Roger observed that when he served on the Harmony Foundation board, a common problem was not the availability of scholarships, but the cost of travel to H/U. He advocated then that two scholarships be given---one for the event, and one for the travel cost. H/F did not favor that plan because it tends to reduce the total number of attendees, but keeps the costs the same. Roger was glad that travel costs have become less of a limitation for us because of the shorter distance to Belmont University.

Roger finalized his comments by saying we should find out which directors need assistance, how can they benefit, and then solve the problem. He concluded it may be necessary to come back to the board with a motion for specific expenditures.

The secretary suggested that Chris Berry is in the ideal position to identify which directors should be encouraged to go to H/U, since he is getting to know all of them. He will also know how far along they are in their training. It was proposed that we let Chris recommend those to be assisted. Mike Ridenour also observed that we should be looking at chapters that may be losing their directors soon because of retirement.

X.   Old Business (cont.):

In answer to the earlier question about the deadline for early registrations, Chris has discovered that it will occur around May 31. He reported that last year's fee was $650.

The secretary then jumped to another aspect of Harmony University---Music Educators College. He reported that two choral teachers in central Michigan area have sent students to Harmony Explosion Camp. They appear to be strong prospects for attending the M.E.C. He threw out the possibility that we might consider providing some financial assistance to them.

Larry Parker asked for clarification on the possibility of doing on-line registrations through the WUFOO program. He wanted to know if Paypal sends the checks for the monies received directly to the District. Chris Berry indicated that the monies are sent directly to our bank account. Larry will have the option of leaving some of the money in the Paypal account in case someone decides to cancel later on, and wants a refund. Since we have two bank accounts, Larry would prefer to have the registration money go into the Comerica account.

Dan Bezaire commented about the aversion of our other bank (Flagstar) of having him (a Canadian citizen) as a signatory of an account!

Mike Ridenour returned to the secretary's suggestion of giving financial assistance to music educators to attend M.E.C. He confessed that he felt "warm and fuzzy" about support for directors to go to H/U. He didn't feel that way right now about educators, but thought that we might revisit that opportunity after the issues regarding directors are resolved.

The secretary knew that there were scholarships available from H/F for music educators to attend H/U. In addition, some chapters have supported local educators from their areas.

Dan Bezaire noted that a request was made at the last H/U for those who were there on some kind of scholarship to stand, and about a third of the attendees stood.

XI.   Adjournment:

At 12:39 p.m., Larry Parker moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mike Ridenour seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**

Dave Montera was asked to direct the group in the singing of "Keep the Whole World Singing".

Minutes prepared by Jim McMahan, Secretary, Pioneer District of SPEBSQSA, Inc.