

Minutes of the Pioneer District Board of Directors of SPEBSQSA, Inc.
held on October 18, 2019, in the Presidents Suite of the Shoreline Inn, Muskegon, Michigan

Attendees:

-----Elected members of the District Board of Directors present (voice w/vote):

Dave Montera (President)
Mike Hansen (Immediate Past President)
Joe McDonald (Executive Vice-President)
Jim McMahan (Secretary)
Chris Berry (Treasurer)---(late arrival)
Paul Ellinger (Director of Chorus Director Development)
Roger Boyer (Director of Community Outreach)
Zach Schroeder (Director of Contests & Judging)
Roger Lewis (Director of Events)
Dan Bezaire (Director of Marketing)
Aaron Pollard (Director of Youth In Harmony)---(late arrival)

-----Elected members of the District Board of Directors absent (voice w/vote):

(none)

----Ex-officio members of the District Board of Directors present (voice w/o vote):

Doug Weaver
Brandon Smith---(late arrival)

----Ex-officio members of the District Board of Directors absent (voice w/o vote):

Craig Roney

---Guests:

Erik Dove (CFO and COO of the Barbershop Harmony Society)
Sean Devine (Harmony Foundation representative)
Lynn Weaver (Immediate past president of the Harmony Foundation)
Joelle Laginess (Incoming Director of Education for the 2020 BOD)

1. Call to order:

President Dave Montera called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked Dan Bezaire to lead the singing of "The Old Songs".

Dave then asked Dan to read the Pioneer District Mission Statement. That was followed by a reading by Roger Lewis of the Pioneer District Vision Statement. Finally, Dave concluded this activity with a reading of the Pioneer District Business Theme.

2. Adoption of the agenda:

Dave Montera referred to the agenda that had been submitted. Joe McDonald moved that the agenda be adopted, and Dan Bezaire made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.**

3. Minutes of the BOD meeting on April 26, 2019:

The minutes were previously prepared and distributed by the secretary several months earlier. Joe McDonald moved that the minutes be approved. Zach Schroeder made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.**

4. Treasurer's report:

Chris Berry was not yet present, so this topic was deferred until later.

5. Harmony Foundation report:

Dave Montera noted that there were two H/F reps present---Lynn Weaver and Sean Devine. Lynn was invited to go first, but she deferred to Sean.

Sean began by thanking the District for its generosity, and the hospitality extended to H/F reps whenever they come to District chapters. The reps enjoy the time with members, and the opportunities to hear them sing, to share awareness of the Foundation, and to get feedback. He also commented on how much he enjoyed the social event the night before, and how it adds value to a convention weekend.

Sean alluded to an especially generous John and Sharon Miller match that is currently available during a small window of opportunity, and which can generate a high impact. He noted that Sharon has served as a chair of the H/F board in the past. She was also an interim CEO. John has a significant history of service in barbershop, and is currently the EVP of the H/F board.

The Miller match is one dollar for every three dollars raised. The funds raised will go for H/U scholarships. Sean reflected on the number of H/U attendees who are able to go because of scholarships. He noted that many of them are music educators or non-barbershoppers. He also cited the scholarships that allow one out of every eight chorus directors to attend H/U each year.

[Arrival of Aaron Pollard and Chris Berry noted]

Sean moved on to mention the Healthy Chapter initiative which seeks to identify, and provide help to at-risk chapters.

He diverged briefly to express appreciation for the opportunity to emcee the quartet semi-finals later in the evening. It will give him a chance to promote the Miller match. He also encouraged current donors to H/F to consider doing something beyond their regular gift to H/F. He suggested that people contact either him or Lynn during the weekend to learn more about the Miller match. It is an incredibly powerful match. All of the H/F reps are attending conventions right now to promote it. He noted that the Pioneer convention was his fourth in a row.

Sean stated that he was glad to be back in Pioneer. In the past, he was a regional director for H/F and came here routinely. He now manages the Legacy program for giving through endowments and life estate planning. He is also willing to talk this weekend about that effort.

He concluded with a repeat of his thanks for the opportunity to be present and to raise awareness about H/F programs.

Sean noted that he had Donors Choice checks to give this weekend to the District and to chapters. He will do that at the HOD meeting.

Lynn Weaver indicated that she was the immediate past chairperson of the H/F board. The other fund-raiser that she would cover was the Lidstad Family grant of \$60,000 to match donations of \$60,000 in honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of H/F. The monies from this grant will go to the same programs covered by the Miller match. Lynn mentioned that she went to H/U twice, but only stayed in the dorms once! She declared she was impressed by the results of that program. She observed that the "Frontier" quartet was a prime example. She asserted that there are so many Society programs that benefit from things like the Miller match or the Lidstad match. They all help people to sing. They enhance the community of singers--which brings people together.

The secretary interrupted to confirm the spelling of the name "Lidstad". Lynn then noted that the family offered \$60,000 of their own money for the grant. She urged that everyone think about these two grants that will help people to sing better. She welcomed questions about them.

6. Barbershop Harmony Society report:

Dave Montera started to introduce Erik Dove--the CFO and COO of the Society, but Roger Lewis had to interrupt to determine if anyone was NOT staying for lunch, or if anyone extra was coming. Dave Montera indicated that Brandon Smith would be coming later.

Erik noted that he had no prepared comments. He agreed with Sean Devine that the event on the preceding night was a lot of fun, and a great way to bring people together. Other districts try, but ours was more successful.

Erik indicated he would have prepared remarks for the HOD meeting, so we would not have to hear them twice. His goals were to answer questions that the board might have about things that are happening, to respond to challenges between the District and the Society, and to discuss all of the organizational changes that are occurring. Finally, he wanted to address concerns about the District's inclusion in the new Standard District Bylaws (SDBs), and how the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will work.

Erik mentioned that he and Joe McDonald had discussed Thursday night about the possibility that the MOU might lead to a Society phase-out of districts. Erik asserted that the Society could not function, or have an impact on chapters and communities without the volunteers and the layer of service that districts provide. He emphatically stated that "you are needed". He expressed thanks for the service of district personnel. He added that he will talk more at the HOD meeting. He knew there were a lot of topics in which people have interest, and so he invited questions.

Roger Lewis knew about a new hire by the name of Katie McDonald. Roger asked about what she will be doing. Erik responded with a comment that eleven projects were begun in 2019 in support of the Everyone in Harmony initiative. Katie will be starting her project in two weeks. Her title is Recruitment and Retention Manager. She will be recruiting new members, and finding new communities where members can be found. Erik emphasized that her position is member-oriented, and not community-oriented. She will also focus on member retention.

Erik observed that someone who has been in the Society for at least five years will usually stay. The biggest loss is of people is in their first five years. There is only 60-70% retention in that period. 30-40% will often leave in their first year. The question is "How can the Society help chapters with this local problem?" The goal is to make the chapter experience as strong as possible.

Katie's position and others are funded by an E-I-H budget that goes to the end of 2020. The goal is for all of the E-I-H programs to become sustainable from membership growth after that date.

Erik reported that Katie will begin working on October 24, but will work remotely from Baltimore. Sean Devine said that she is a member of the Hershey (PA) chapter, and has had other involvements in the Society. She is the bass of the S/A quartet "GQ".

Erik noted that seven staff members have been hired for the E-I-H positions. Hopefully, the results from these positions will justify their continued existence.

Dave Montera asked for the number of Society staff members. Erik stated that there were 37, plus these 7 E-I-H positions.

7. Consent calendar reports:

Dave asked if there were any comments on the reports. He thanked the board members for getting their reports submitted again on a timely basis. We have obtained a full consent calendar for the fourth convention in a row. He asked again if there were any issues about the reports that should be addressed. He noted some reports deal with topics that will come up in Old and New Business.

[NOTE: A formal motion to receive the consent calendar reports was never made.]

4. Treasurer's report (return to):

Chris Berry did not have slides of the pages of his reports, so he indicated that the board members should look at the electronic copies they received in the Second Notices. He began by referring to his two-page summary report. It was shown there that we had a balance, as of 9/30/18, of \$98,546. As of 9/30/19, the balance was \$93,661. Chris noted that QCA has a surplus of \$295.89, while the Spirit chorus has a surplus of \$349. He pointed out that his reports have four columns of data. One is for QCA, one is about the Spirit chorus, one is unclassified, and the last one is the total. The District looks over three different groups, and the fourth group is the sum of the first three.

Chris reported that the general bank account has a deficit of \$1343, and the District overall has a deficit of \$697 (as of 9/30/19).

Chris moved to the Profit & Loss by Class sheet (which ideally should be called the Revenues and Expenditures by Class sheet) which shows four "chunks": the administrative chunk, the contributions chunk, the convention chunk, and the committee chunk. His report explains what is in each chunk.

He noted that we are down by about \$2700 in the administrative chunk, but he doesn't expect to gain any significant income in that area.

Contributions include what we get from donations, H/F, and dues, and reflect what is given to quartets and choruses to go to International and Mid-Winter.

Chris mentioned that the spring convention was more expensive, but reminded everyone that Traverse City is always so. We had a deficit of over \$11,000 at that event. He did note that this convention is already has a surplus of \$800, but we haven't spent anything yet.

He reported that Bush League had a deficit of \$527---which is actually pretty good. Meanwhile, Harmony Marketplace has a current deficit---but only because some new inventory had to be purchased. Right now, it is down by \$1400, but much of that should be counter-balanced by sales.

Chris noted that the Spirit Chorus has a surplus of \$350. The group charges monthly dues, and it also collected money for shirts. Most of the dues income was used to pay for the shirts.

Dave Montera explained that he and Chris had talked about using different terminology when we refer to our financial reports. Since we are a nonprofit, we should speak of revenues and expenditures---not income or losses or profits. Ideally, we should cite revenues that are generated, and expenditures that we have. The bottom line is to refer to the financial picture as revenues over expenditures (preferably), or as expenditures over revenues---which is what is budgeted. He pointed out that we budget that way because we have money in the bank, and we feel it is our responsibility to use that money for appropriate services to our members. Some programs are expected to have expenditures that are greater than their revenue. Conversely, some programs may generate extra revenue. However, it is perfectly fine if the first group eats away a little at our bottom line.

Joe McDonald commended Chris on the second page of his summary report. He felt it was a concise summary of the major projects being pursued by the District. Chris wondered if he should spend as much time as he does on the P&L document. Joe did suggest, however, that Chris try to line up the columns on that report!

Chris asked if he should talk about the 2020 budget. Dave Montera indicated that would be a topic under New Business.

Chris answered an e-mail question that came to him after his reports were sent out with the Second Notices. It looked like the District had a \$300 surplus, but that was actually for the Spirit Chorus.

8. Old Business (back to agenda):

a. Senior chorus festival:

Doug Weaver reported that the Senior Spirit group has been meeting monthly since January, and has demonstrated a lot of enthusiasm. He said that there will be about 50 members on stage at the chorus contest on Saturday. Al Fisk will direct one song, and Jamie Carey will direct the other one. Doug understood that the group must get a score of at least 61 in order to go to Jacksonville. Zach Schroeder confirmed that point. Doug admitted that it will be a big disappointment to the group if it does not qualify. He expected that the group will pick up more members if it does.

Doug was very pleased with the response that has occurred. There have been 30 to 45 regular attendees at rehearsals. Fifteen different chapters are represented. Some are coming from Traverse City. Many are coming from the Detroit area. Battle Creek and Kalamazoo are represented.

Dave Montera asked if there was interest in maintaining the chorus after this year. He knew that 2020 will be the last year of an automatic attendance by a chorus from our District. In the future, districts must qualify to go. Doug envisioned that this chorus might supplant the Harmony Mercenaries. It could add repertoire and sing on chapter shows.

Dave hoped that there will be a communication on Saturday night that the group will continue after going to Jacksonville. Doug indicated that one detail to be mentioned then will be the years of combined barbershop experience represented by the chorus membership.

Zach Schroeder reported that the senior chorus in the Senecaland District that competed in the past has now chartered as a senior chapter. However, one of the chapter's rules is that each member must be a dual member of an existing chapter so they don't undermine those groups. Two days after getting chartered, the chorus competed at their district convention---and qualified as the district's chorus representative for the 2020 International.

Doug Weaver reported there have been discussions about the two chapters within Pioneer that may be disbanding in 2020. Consideration has been given to the idea of picking up one of those charters and utilizing it for the senior chorus.

b. Mixed and women's harmony contests:

Zach Schroeder began by noting that this convention will be the first one to feature mixed and women's contests. It had been expected there would be no women's groups this time, but there are three mixed quartets involved. One quartet is actually competing, while the other two are singing for score and evaluation only. He noted that this means there will be 24 quartets singing---which is the most we have ever had since 17 years ago. Dave Montera observed that is putting us close to having to have an additional judging panel. Zach agreed, and noted that we are just one away.

Dave pointed out that this increase in competing categories was approved at the spring 2019 BOD and HOD meetings. He added that approval was also made then for acquisition of an identical trophy for the mixed quartet contest. A similar trophy will be created when we begin to have women's quartets participating. The quartet members will get District champion pins and individual trophies as well. This practice will match what we do for the men's quartets.

Dave lamented that there was a complication in getting the group trophies made in time for this convention. They will not be available for another two weeks. Doug Weaver reported that he went with a new supplier for the individual trophies. These trophies---for the first time---will include the District logo. The four individual trophies for the men's quartet are of one color, those for the novice quartet are of another color, and those for the mixed quartet are of still another color. All of the trophies are slightly bigger than those given in the past, but comparable in cost. He also liked that the new supplier was closer to his home. He explained that Jack Schneider, for years, used a supplier in Grand Rapids that was some distance away. Finally, Doug decided this year to utilize a closer source.

8. Old Business (back to agenda) (cont.):

b. Mixed and women's harmony contests (cont.):

Joe McDonald mentioned that there will be options for mixed and female choruses to compete at the District's spring 2020 convention. This change was discussed at the spring 2019 meetings, but the chorus competitions were delayed so that they would align with the Society competitions. Dave Montera noted that we traditionally have the International chorus qualifier contest and the District championship quartet contest in the fall, and the District chorus championship and the International quartet qualifier contest in the spring.

Dave confirmed with Erik Dove that the 2022 International convention will be the first one to have open competition categories. Three options are being considered for that event. There is a survey out to the membership to get feedback regarding these options: (1), totally open competitions without any categories; (2), separate competitions; and (3), a mixture of the two previous scenarios with awards being given in each category. Erik said that the timing might allow this change to occur even earlier at the 2021 convention in Cleveland. He said that results of the survey will be accepted until November 1. The Society board may make a decision at its November meeting.

Dave observed that the decisions of that board will give our board the guidance on how to proceed. He emphasized, however, that districts are in control of their district contests, but they do not have control of International qualifier contests. We can accept Society guidance, nevertheless, on how we handle the former.

Mike Hansen observed that 2021 is close, and we need to think soon about the structure of our conventions. He noted that we had already moved the QCA show to Friday night to accommodate the number of quartets and choruses that will be appearing on Saturday. Soon, we might have three categories of quartets competing on Friday. He wondered if a 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. start will work then.

Dave Montera suggested that is something we hope we have to manage. He envisioned us having 35-40 quartets. He noted that the 24 quartets we have this time is an anomaly. This is the first time in 17 years when that has happened. We may encounter this situation again in April 2020. Then it would become an issue. We might have to have split sessions---Friday afternoon and Friday evening. Roger Lewis and Zach Schroeder will have to work out the details. Dave observed that Joe McDonald's business plan has anticipated this problem. Dave felt it will be the best of all possible worlds to have to deal with this issue.

Dave reported that the District E-I-H Committee did discuss this issue after the approval was made to have additional quartet categories. The current policy manual says that, in the District championship contest, the top eight quartets will compete on Saturday night. Now that we have a mixed quartet contest and a women's quartet contest, we could have as many as three sets of eight quartets competing on Saturday night! Because of that possibility, the E-I-H Committee talked about having open contests. This would assume that Society contests might go that way in the future. The problem didn't develop this time, but the Committee was thinking about how to handle it---if it becomes necessary.

Mike Hansen went on to note that the Saturday chorus contest could become a problem as well. He asked for clarification on a situation where a chapter's chorus No. 1 might want to compete as an all-male chorus, and then have its chorus No. 2 (with some female members) compete as well. Dave Montera understood that a chapter can only have one chorus compete in an all-male chorus contest. However, that chapter could also have a mixed chorus that competed in a mixed chorus contest, and another chorus that competed in an all-female chorus contest.

Dave alluded to the policy manual that refers to rules for specific contests. Mike Hansen verified that choruses could choose to structure themselves accordingly. Zach Schroeder emphasized they would be competing in different contests. Dave added that this could be a problem time-wise. While we are feeling stressed with 24 quartets right now, we could easily handle a few more choruses on Saturday. We will have 13 choruses this Saturday, and we have done as many as 18 or 20.

8. Old Business (back to agenda) (cont.):b. Mixed and women's harmony contests (cont.):

Paul Ellinger noted that Dave said "if", and there are so many things that can happen between now and "if". If we went to one contest, then all of a chapter's choruses would be competing against one another. Dave Montero observed that would then become an "open" contest at which only one chorus per chapter could compete. Aaron Pollard verified that a chapter would then have to choose which one of its choruses would compete. Otherwise, a new chapter would have to be chartered to serve as the home for the mixed chorus or all-female chorus.

Zach Schroeder reported that the Carolinas District (NSC) will be doing its International 2021 qualifier chorus contest in the spring of 2020. From a timing perspective, and in fairness to Carolinas, he suggested that the Society board might need to make some kind of decision by the end of 2020 relative to the 2021 convention. Otherwise, NSC's plans must move to the next year.

For everyone's benefit, Dave Montero explained that Carolinas District has two conventions each year. At their spring convention, they select both their International qualifier chorus and their International qualifier quartet. Their fall convention is a festival and an educational event, and not a competition. He understood that Rocky Mountain District is going in this direction as well.

Zach understood that Land-O-Lakes District was going to a division structure in which preliminary contests will be held through videos. The Society has no control over how districts manage their contests. Different ways are being tried to handle large numbers of groups. Dave Montero thought that technique had been tried once already. He knew it was discussed at a District Presidents Council meeting, but he never heard all of the feedback. One obvious problem is the lack of peer recognition. This becomes a problem when there is no support for the egos of the performers. Dave knew that the video qualification process is being used with youth choruses.

Zach felt that it was critical to bring communities together. Therefore, he was against seeing video qualification as the norm. He thought it should just be used when needed for accessibility. He wanted to see it considered as an "and" tool rather than as an "or" tool. He wants competitors to be able to see each other when they compete. Fortunately, we are not so wide spread that we have to use this tool.

c. Bush League 2019 feedback (extra item):

Doug Weaver reported that this event was held in August in Cadillac for the first time. He felt it was a huge success. There was a golf outing on Friday. A downtown sing was held on Saturday night---with 50-60 in attendance. A Platoon contest was held on Saturday, plus the Bush League contest. The show held on Saturday night at Cadillac High School was a fundraiser for the school. Chris Berry noted that \$2000 was raised. About 100 people attended the afterglow.

Doug anticipated that we will continue to hold B/L in Cadillac where we have connections. He hoped that the Sault Ste. Marie chapter can be encouraged to be the host chapter. This could bring that chapter back into more contact with the rest of the District.

Doug mentioned that both the Senior chorus and the Grand Rapids chorus sang on Saturday night. The event had a huge turnout.

d. Harmony Foundation raffle goal for this convention (extra item):

Doug moved on to a discussion of this particular raffle. From Sean Devine he had learned that, if we clear \$2500 (ticket sales minus expenses), the money can be directed to the Mid-Winter Youth Quartet contest, and Pioneer will be listed as a sponsor of the competition. In response to a question from Mike Hansen, Doug clarified that \$2500 is the cost of a sponsorship. Doug noted that we've never cleared that amount before. He pointed out that our only real expenses are the \$300 VISA card (one of the prizes), the cost of the license, and the printing of the tickets. Sean will be announcing this opportunity when he emcees on Friday night.

8. Old Business (back to agenda) (cont.):

d. Harmony Foundation raffle goal for this convention (extra item)(cont.):

Mike Hansen asked if there would be a youth quartet from our District. Dave Montera didn't know of any that were competing. Zach Schroeder thought the deadline might have passed by now. Sean Devine noted that a district will often not know about a quartet because a teacher has learned about the contest and submitted a video.

Roger Lewis reported that, for the last two conventions, sales of H/F raffle tickets have been over \$2200. Doug Weaver observed that, even with \$300 of expenses, a \$2500 goal is doable.

9. New Business:

a. Modification of new District Bylaws to address any issues remaining:

Dave Montera wondered if there were any other details to resolve. He knew that there shouldn't be---since the modification to authorize the Executive Team was added at the spring convention BOD meeting. That change maintains the BOD as the policy-making body, but allows the Team to handle day-to-day business. Dave observed that practice mirrors how the Society board operates.

The secretary asked if the Society board approved the modification that was made in the spring. Dave Montera believed that neither the board nor the Laws and Governance Committee needed to do so, since the change had already been discussed in a conference call with Marty Monson, Dick Powell, and Steve Denino. They were informed then that the practice had been in the Pioneer SDBs in the past.

Erik Dove was asked for his opinion. He felt it was not a problem because the BOD and HOD---as the governing bodies---have assigned day-to-day responsibilities to the Team. He saw the only time that circumstance would change would be if the Team was assigned governance duties.

Erik added a comment that he felt district bylaws are a messy document, and not as optimally drafted as might be desired. When he worked on standard chapter bylaws, he saw many changes that could also be applied to the district document. Because the district document had to be approved fairly soon by the Society board, there was not enough time to incorporate some changes in it. He noted that a committee is still working on some of those miscellaneous items. He felt that many of the items requested by districts will eventually get approved. However, he did not see that process having any impact on the Pioneer board structure.

b. Approval of the new revised Standard District Bylaws:

[During the preceding topic, it was noted that this action was taken in the spring.]

c. Review of the 2018-2019 Business Plan:

Dave Montera declared that he had developed a nice plan for his term of office, but it went sideways in June 2018 with the implementation of the E-I-H initiative! He did feel that his main focus of "Lasting Friendships, Enduring Music" did carry through during his term. He saw that our members did get the support they needed, and they were kept informed. Positive and constructive comments were used throughout the process. Necessary changes have been made.

Dave was especially proud of the work done through the community service projects, and the efforts made to reach out to the communities where we either had conventions or host chapters. Positive contacts were made with those communities, and the service agency selected in each of them. Dave was glad that the relationships by host chapters to those agencies have continued.

9. New Business (cont.):c. Review of the 2018-2019 Business Plan (cont.):

He suggested this is what makes our organization different from many others that are more inwardly motivated. Our goal has been: "How can we serve you?"; "How can we make an impact on our community?"; "How can we do it in ways other than singing?" While chapters have often defaulted to singing at nursing homes as their community service, Dave suggested there are other ways to do it. He felt that the recent service projects have been amazing. He praised the work that Roger Boyer did, and the work of the District. He declared that the District jumped in with both feet. He saw this activity as a legacy of his tenure as DP, since the District has done more in this area than it has done in 37+ years.

Dave noted that Joe McDonald has a new business plan which will be introduced shortly. It has a different focus. Dave asserted that this is OK, because each of us has a different way of looking at our barbershop experience. Dave saw the 2018-2019 plan as being his vision and focus. He thanked the BOD for making those things a reality.

d. Budget for 2020 (extra item):

Chris Berry said that, when he puts together a budget, he always projects lower revenues and higher expenditures. The end result hurts, and he hopes it may drive people to exceed their revenue expectations, and to spend less.

Chris referenced the budget that he had developed as of October 13. He asked for input on how he should review it. Dave Montera suggested that he hit the high points.

Chris began with the administrative area. He noted that we have a credit card that gives cash back. So far in 2019, it has given back around \$40.

The contributions area includes dues, H/F donors choice income, and raffle ticket sales. The latter group of dollars is intended to be net neutral.

The next area was conventions. There were some numbers for 2018 expenses, but none are expected to be carried over. All of the data from the 2019 conventions was shown, but again, no carryover is expected. Projected numbers for the two conventions in 2020, based on past experience, were then shown. He hoped that Roger Lewis had been able to review them beforehand and felt they were OK.

The next section was Harmony Marketplace, and was based on numbers from John Baker. John wanted to do more marketing of items with the Pioneer logo, or with a Pioneer connection. Extra dollars were allocated for this area.

In the committees area, it was expected there would be another Leadership Academy, so \$1000 was allocated there. Another \$1500 was defined for Bush League. Monies were also allocated for a Music Summit, for Quartet Boot Camp, and for Top Gun.

Chris noted that monies were included for the fall and spring planning meetings of the board.

The contest and judging area included two items. One of them was International convention support which can send Zach Schroeder there for training in the C&J function. The other one was our share (\$1000) of the cost for candidates going to candidate school. Chris explained that he was covering Ron Eubanks, and then estimated some more dollars in case we have other candidates. In response to a question from Dave Montera about whether a new formula was applied, Chris indicated that he used past history for his calculation.

9. New Business (cont.):d. Budget for 2020 (extra item) (cont.):

The convention expenses included a projected cost to send the DP to Presidents Council meetings held during the Mid-Winter and International. A new expense is associated with the addition of a moderator to the Council. Since that person would no longer be a DP, his expenses would need to be shared among the districts. Our share would be about \$350.

Dave Montera explained why this change had occurred. He cited his experience of serving as the moderator of the Council for the last three years. For the last year, the Council has talked about the amount of work involved, and the burden this puts on a person who is already serving as a DP. Dave observed that he was simultaneously doing his pre-retirement job, functioning as Pioneer DP, and serving on a Society committee.

When the Council began to find a replacement for Dave after the end of his term, it was discovered that the Council's charter allows "any person" to be the moderator. The idea was conceived to take an immediate past DP who knows the moderator role, knows the Council, and knows the process---but doesn't have to run a district or be a point person. In July, it was proposed that the outgoing DP for the Sunshine District---Nick Schwob---be appointed.

As Chris had mentioned, districts set aside monies to cover convention costs for the DP and the Director of C&J. As an immediate past DP, however, Nick doesn't qualify for that reimbursement. It would also be burdensome for a district to cover the costs of its new DP, its new EVP, and another person. Therefore, all 17 districts were asked to share in this expense for his airfare and three nights of housing. This would make it a minimal cost to all. The \$350 was a conservative estimate, and Dave Montera anticipates that it will be closer to \$250.

Mike Hansen suggested the situation could be called "dues for the Presidents Council". He was OK with it. He wondered what would happen if the other districts don't support it. Dave noted that the Senecaland District was having "cold feet" about the concept. He is planning to urge that district as strongly as possible to support it. He knew that district is the only one that was reluctant to go for it.

Chris mentioned an increased expense in the office expenses for conventions. This was the allocation of \$1300 for more website content. Mike Hansen asked how the number was determined. He thought it might be low. Chris pointed out that \$1000 had been requested, and our 2019 expense was only \$50. He had upped the sum of those two numbers.

Mike Hansen asked if we would be hiring someone to perform that service. It was noted that Joe McDonald would address that topic when we review the 2020 business plan. Joe's short answer was that we don't know yet. This is an attempt to look into the future. The amount may be inadequate, but it will allow us to get started.

Chris moved to the topic of chorus and quartet representatives to conventions. He explained that the usually low number of \$300 for quartets resulted from an approval by the board for him to buy 12 tickets in 2019 to go to International. One quartet ultimately could not go, one quartet was comp'd since it was also the youth championship qualifier, and the third quartet had already gotten its tickets. Ultimately, a member of one quartet bought a ticket--so Chris has a coupon credit for 11 tickets for the 2020 International.

Chris observed that the budget suggests that we are getting a very good deal on tickets, but the money has already been spent. The winning quartet(s) next spring will be given a coupon code that will give them free tickets. They should resist the temptation to buy their tickets early (unless they can sell them later). If any tickets do not get used, Chris will sell them. He was happy that the Society allowed us to keep the credit from our original purchase.

[Arrival of Brandon Smith noted]

Chris pointed out a special convention expense---the raffle expense of \$1000.

9. New Business (cont.):d. Budget for 2020 (extra item) (cont.):

The next large area shown was the convention expenses incurred in 2019. That was followed by the expenses projected for 2020.

Chris noted that there should be more income in 2020 from Harmony Marketplace because the inventory was being increased. \$1500 will be spent for that purpose. He emphasized that we will own any inventory that is acquired. Nothing is on consignment anymore.

Because a different type of event is envisioned, a CDWI is not planned for 2020. Money is set aside for Leadership Academy, but that will be net neutral. Expenses for Bush League in 2019 were higher, but that was expected. Top Gun is expected to run at about the same cost as before. Finally, the Mt. Pleasant chapter will again host a Harmony Explosion camp, so \$1000 has been allocated for clinicians and another \$1000 is set aside for teaching quartets.

Chris summarized that the budget was a deficit budget in the amount of \$9650.

Roger Lewis remarked that this detail has no effect on the budget's bottom line, but the spring convention should be listed as being at Battle Creek, and the fall convention will be at Kalamazoo. It will be easier to flip-flop them in the report than physically!

Dave Montera mentioned that there is a District policy to maintain a "rainy day" fund. Chris indicated that we have about \$45,000 in our checking account, and about \$50,000 in our savings. The latter amount is intended to be sufficient to maintain the District for one year. This amount is our safety net. It is a little short right now, since our expenditures for a year are currently about \$78,000. However, the policy calls for \$50,000. Chris noted it is intended to cover the cost of two conventions if no one came.

Dave invited questions or comments, Doug Weaver suggested that, if the Senior chorus continues to represent the District at Mid-Winter, monies might be allocated to pay for the transportation cost of the directors. He noted that they currently serve as directors without pay. Chris Berry admitted that he didn't think about that detail when he prepared the budget. Dave Montera noted that, when the chorus was formed a few years earlier, it was said then that the chorus would not be a District function. Doing what Doug proposed would make it a District program. Dave did not object to Doug's idea. He merely noted that it is different from what we envisioned. He felt we should start the process of making that change. Doug supported going through the change.

Mike Hansen asked if the chorus members are contributing. Doug affirmed that they donate \$5 at each rehearsal. Dale Hanson is collecting the money. Doug did not know how many are actually doing so. He knew that enough money was collected to pay for extra shirts that might be needed, and have some left over.

Mike agreed that the chorus was never envisioned to become a District function---but it has. He favored putting it into the budget so that, at least, the travel costs of the directors are covered. Dave also supported the change to define the chorus as a District function. Alternately, he saw the possibility of absorbing the charter of one of the District chapters that is folding. That option would not place it under the District umbrella.

Since there were no further questions, Dave indicated that the treasurer's report that Chris gave was received for information only. However, there does need to be a motion to approve the 2020 budget. Mike Hansen moved this action, and Aaron Pollard made the second.

Mike Hansen observed that the timing of his motion was strange, since the outgoing board was approving a budget that would be binding on the incoming board. He did note that a majority of the current board will be on the incoming board. Chris Berry observed that it must also be approved by the HOD today, or it would have to wait until the April meeting. Joe McDonald there is always an option to amend the budget at a later date.

9. New Business (cont.):d. Budget for 2020 (extra item) (cont.):

Dave Montera admitted that a budget approval motion sounds strange, but he noted that both he and Joe McDonald have reached out to those who will be running programs next year to get their input on proposed increases or reductions that they may have planned

The motion pending was approved under Small Board Rules.

In response to a question from Roger Lewis, Dave Montera confirmed that the budget must first be approved by the BOD for submission to the HOD, and then it must be approved there.

10. Election of Officers:a. Review of slate for the 2020 calendar year:

Mike Hansen noted that one of the jobs of the Immediate Past President is to chair the Nominating Committee. The other member of that committee is the Executive Vice President. The outgoing District President is allowed to recommend other persons to serve on the board.

Mike indicated that the BOD must approve all of the 2020 slate, but there is an Executive Team that is included as part of the slate.

The Executive Team portion of the slate was proposed as follows:

President:	Joe McDonald
Executive Vice President:	Paul Ellinger
Immediate Past President:	Dave Montera
Secretary:	Jim McMahan
Treasurer:	Chris Berry

The rest of the slate was proposed as follows:

Director of Events:	Roger Lewis
Director of Contests & Judging:	Zach Schroeder
Director of Youth in Harmony:	Aaron Pollard
Director of Outreach & Membership:	Brandon Smith
Director of Education:	Joelle Laginess
Director of Communications:	Sherry Knight

Consistent with the movement toward Everyone in Harmony, Mike recognized that Joelle and Sherry would be joining as the first female members of the Pioneer BOD.

Joe McDonald emphasized that having new people on the board was no reflection on the service of those leaving. He mentioned that he had told Roger Boyer that the community outreach program will continue---but in some new ways. He knew that Roger had found someone to coordinate the program, and that there would be a smooth transition. Joe also complimented Dan Bezaire for his many years of service on the board. He asked for applause to recognize them. Joe forewarned them that they might still get phone calls to ask them to handle some project(s).

Joe said that he will be taking a different approach, and will be asking the board to work primarily in two arenas.

Before Joe got into a discussion of the 2020-2021 Business Plan, Dave Montera asked that the current topic be finished. He asked for a motion to approve the slate. Aaron Pollard moved for approval, and Dan Bezaire made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.** Dave indicated the topic would now be passed on to the HOD that afternoon.

10. Election of Officers (cont.):b. Review of the 2020-2021 Business Plan:

Joe McDonald stated that his theme will be "Let's Grow Together". This is in recognition of the fact that barbershoppers continue to grow as performers. He felt it was the responsibility of the District to give chapters and members and quartets the tools to enable that growth.

He also asserted that we needed to grow together. He recognized that there have been some divisions that have developed within the District, so there is healing that needs to occur.

He perceived that an increasing focus will be to find more people with whom we can grow. He saw that happening through the development of new choruses, and maybe new chapters.

Joe suggested that his entire business plan is summarized in the three words "Let's Grow Together".

The phrase "Music and fun that communities can't resist" was identified as the approach that he expected to use. He felt that we will need to create situations that create fun.

Joe noted that the work of the board would be divided mostly into two groups for the sake of efficiency. One group will focus on events, and the other will focus on education. He anticipated a lot of interaction between the two groups, however.

Joe expected that a lot of the work of the board will be fleshed out at the November 23 planning meeting at Paul Ellinger's house. After our priorities are established, they will be drafted into a Memorandum of Understanding that is to be sent to the Society in late November. After that, the MOU will be referenced, rather than using the term "business plan" and creating confusion. Joe mentioned that Erin Harris had recently sent him a template for constructing the MOU. He felt the template was well designed.

Joe then chose to address some budget items. One of them was the District website. Joe praised the work that Steve Sutherland does on it. He will be meeting soon with Steve.

Joe felt that our website was underutilized. He hopes to learn from Steve what the causes of that might be. Joe wanted to see the website become a resource for knowing details about upcoming meetings, for example.

One problem that Joe has noticed is that the website is hard to navigate from a cellphone. This involves some fundamental changes in the setup of the site.

The other thing about the website that Joe wants to change is the creation of an educational program. This is why he had asked Joelle Laginess to join the BOD. He saw an educational program as a clearing house for the existing resources the Society offers. Often, those resources are hard to find on the Society's website. Joe did acknowledge that the Society has just announced it is creating a new website to facilitate info search. That change may make our job easier if we can make links to that site. Joe is planning to decide with Steve if we can integrate our educational efforts into our existing website, or do something different.

Mike Hansen saw this change as a good thing. He recognized that our existing site is a platform that uses old technology. He added that he understood that it would cost money to do an upgrade and do the job better.

Dave Montera noted that he has discussed this issue previously with Steve Sutherland, who has approached by others who wanted to take over his role. Steve had told those individuals that he is not "married" to the job. If someone else wants to do it, he would give up the role willingly to a person who thinks he can do it better. His one question to them is, "where will you be three years from now". His concern is that someone sets up new systems, and then walks away. Dave observed that situation happened with the construction of the District's Facebook site. We had a page, and no one could access it.

10. Election of Officers (cont.):b. Review of the 2020-2021 Business Plan (cont.):

Brandon Smith asked if we had ever considered using Square Space---where there is no administrator. Dave Montera knew that this option and others were available. Dave suggested that we may need to consider the hiring of a webmaster that is not associated with the District, but takes feedback from us. This person would be a professional in the field, rather than being a member of the District who might have to relocate.

Joe McDonald emphasized that all of these concerns will be addressed at the November planning meeting. If the cost of meeting our objectives is larger than currently budgeted, we will have to plan accordingly and adjust our budget in April.

Joe asserted that there are some exciting things happening now---not only in the contest arena, but in other ways to experience barbershop. He reported that the Mt. Pleasant chapter is in the midst of its second session of the MountainTown Family Chorus. The first session ended in June, and the second one will be done on November 10. Both sessions have involved about 30 persons, and most of them were new to barbershop. The group has included males and females, and has an age range of 10 to 82. It has developed a sense of community and family. The goal is to create a template for organizing such groups that is repeatable.

Joe has suggested to the Society that other levels of membership be created so that people can experience the barbershop community without a large financial investment.

c. Closing remarks (extra item):

Because this was the last meeting where he will preside as District President, Dave Montera chose to comment about his two years. He quoted a Chinese proverb---“We live in interesting times.” He identified his time as being part of a lifestyle. He recognized that everyone in this meeting wouldn’t be present if barbershop was not part of his/her lifestyle. He cited his recent President’s Messages that have been somewhat nostalgic. He has talked about family. His chapter has been “family”. He attends rehearsals, and endures some challenges therein---but “that’s my family”. He gets to see his family every week. Then he goes to conventions, and sees his extended family twice a year. Also, he goes to other events around the country, and sees other extended family members. However, he cited District family get-togethers as meetings of his “cousins”.

Dave wanted to acknowledge the service of the three persons who were leaving the board. He first mentioned Roger Boyer---who spearheaded the new Community Outreach program which got immediate recognition at the national level.

Dan Bezair was the next to be recognized for his inability to say “no. His return to service on the board after serving as EVP and DP was especially appreciated.

Finally, Mike Hansen was recognized by Dave as being his predecessor in the DP role, and part of the committee that asked him to serve. Dave mentioned that Mike and Doug Weaver had approached him at a District event, and asked him to serve as the EVP. They talked briefly about what the BOD did---because it had been a while since Dave had been on the board. Later that day, Dave decided he wanted to serve and give back to the District. Upon learning of his acceptance, Doug said “Oh thank God! The first 17 said ‘no!’ “

Dave realized that Mike didn’t really know him, so he appreciated the confidence that Mike has shown in him.

10. Election of Officers (cont.):c. Closing remarks (extra item) (cont.):

Dave declared that the DP job is the best thing in the world, because it gives one the opportunity to stand before his friends twice a year and say "Hi! I'm the Pioneer District President. I'm proud as [bleep] to be the president, because you guys make me look good." Dave admitted that he did a lot of administrative stuff, but not a lot of work. However, he gets graded on the administrative aspect. He felt that he was not good on education, or communications, or membership stuff. Fortunately, we have people who do those things well, and that is what makes the District look good. As DP, he realized that he just gets to say "thank you".

Dave summarized his remarks by saying that he appreciated all that the board members have done. He was glad to have lived in these interesting times. We've had to adapt and adjust---without having rancor, or losing members. We've worked through problems in a civil manner. He knew that doesn't happen as often in many other groups. He reiterated his appreciation for the service of the board members. He is looking forward to his next two years as IPP, and he is looking forward to seeing what Joe McDonald is able to do as DP.

d. New provider of camera services at conventions (extra item):

Roger Lewis noted that he had been looking for someone to perform this service at future conventions. He found a person in the Grand Rapids area who has done it in the past for that chapter, and for the Senior Spirit chorus. That person is shadowing the operation at this convention, and will start doing it at the next convention in the spring. Roger observed that we may have to solve problems then about renting or purchasing cameras and computers.

e. Locations for the 2023 and 2024 conventions (extra item):

Roger also noted that we are looking for possible sites. He mentioned, as a reminder, that we don't have to have a chapter at a given location (like Midland). He encouraged suggestions for possible communities. Dave Montera suggested that the expenses for the preceding topic might get covered at the November 23 meeting.

11. Adjournment:

At 11:58 a.m., Dave Montera declared that the meeting was adjourned. Brandon Smith was asked to lead the singing of "Keep the Whole World Singing".

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