

Minutes of the Pioneer District Board of Directors of SPEBSQSA, Inc.
held on April 25, 2020, as a virtual meeting using ZOOM technology

Attendees:

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

Joe McDonald (President)
Dave Montera (Immediate Past President)
Paul Ellinger (Executive Vice-President)
Jim McMahan (Secretary)
Chris Berry (Treasurer)
Sherry Knight (Director of Communications)
Zach Schroeder (Director of Contests & Judging)
Joelle Laginess (Director of Education)
Roger Lewis (Director of Events)
Brandon Smith (Director of Outreach)
Aaron Pollard (Director of Youth In Harmony)

-----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):

(none)

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

Craig Roney
Doug Weaver

---Guests:

(none)

A. Call to order:

President Joe McDonald started the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and asked the attendees to tell a little about what was happening in their life. That activity was followed with some info from Joe about how microphones can be turned on or off by Chris, or by individuals. He cited a "chat" function that persons can utilize to mention items that may not be relevant right then, but should be noted before they are forgotten. The default setting is to send the comment to everyone, but a comment can be sent to an individual as well.

Before the meeting was actually started, the secretary noted that he had experimented at our first ZOOM meeting by recording voices to identify who was talking. He discovered that he has problems with determining whether Zach, Brandon, or Paul was speaking. He asked that board members give their name when they begin a conversation string. That effort will be greatly appreciated. Joe McDonald added that the meeting was being recorded. After the meeting, the recording can be processed (with effort) into an .mp4 file. He observed that a recent one-hour Mt. Pleasant board meeting on ZOOM consumed 186 megabytes.

The meeting was officially called to order at 10:17 a.m. Aaron Pollard was asked to sing the lead part for the virtual singing of "The Old Songs".

B. Adoption of the agenda:

An agenda had been submitted. Sherry Knight moved that the agenda be adopted, and Paul Ellinger made the second. Because this is a virtual meeting, Joe McDonald suggested that it will be easier to approve motions via Small Board Rules than by verbal acclamation.

Dave Montera noted that a report from the Nominating Committee was missing from the agenda. He felt it should be in all agendas, since this committee is operating all year long. Dave offered to speak to the topic during Item C.3.

The motion under consideration was approved under Small Board Rules.

C. Operations:1. Minutes of the BOD meeting on October 18, 2019:

The minutes that had been prepared by the secretary had been supplied to the board in conjunction with the First Notice of this meeting. Aaron Pollard moved that the minutes be approved. Brandon Smith made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.**

2. Treasurer's report:

Joe McDonald indicated that he would move to a display of the spreadsheets provided by Chris Berry. Chris planned to focus initially on the Balance Sheet, and then move to the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual sheet, and then to the Profit & Loss by Class sheet. He noted that the general account was setting at about \$38,000, while the savings account was over \$50,000, and the QCA checking account was at about \$4300. He added that the QCA had a surplus in February 2019 of \$2000 that was transferred then. However, as of March 2020, QCA has a deficit related to Top Gun. Meanwhile, the Senior Spirit chorus has a surplus of \$25. The Spirit chorus item will be discussed in more detail later.

Chris pointed out that one prepaid expense for a person who was slated to come to the spring convention will be credited back to us.

There was a \$483.75 credit from the Muskegon chapter that was submitted after the chapter closed its books. Joe McDonald indicated there would be further discussion later about the termination of that chapter's charter.

Chris referred to the Financial Review prepared by Jim Kunz. One of Jim's concerns was a cover sheet form that Chris was using, but which Jim thought was the wrong form.

Chris had also provided a copy of the 990EZ which had been submitted to the IRS.

In reference to the Financial Review, the secretary noted that he needed a copy of the Society form (last revised in 2016) that shows the beginning and ending 2019 balances of all District accounts. That document must then be combined with Jim's Financial Review so that they exist as one document for archiving with the Society. Chris said he would ask Jim to prepare the form.

Paul Ellinger observed that Jim's letter said that his review did not qualify as an audit. He wondered if we should have an audit done perhaps every three years. Chris indicated that the Society only requires a review. Dave Montera clarified that no district and no chapter ever does an audit. The cost of an audit could consume the entire sum of a chapter's or district's account. It would cost \$30,000 to \$40,000. Also, our groups do not qualify under the rules of the A.I.C.A. (an accountant's organization) of needing an audit or a review. The request for a review is based on guidelines established by the Society. The Society merely wants a simple review of the books by an outside person. Dave noted that even a "review" by the criteria of the A.I.C.A. would cost \$20,000 to \$30,000. Dave pointed out that Jim Kunz is a former CPA who knows what to examine.

C. Operations (cont.):2. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Joe McDonald asked Chris to go back to the Leadership Summit which had an expense even though it was cancelled. He noted that a resource person was slated to fly in for the event, and we had to pay a cancellation fee.

Chris expressed his appreciation to Roger Lewis for being able to avoid cancellation fees for the spring convention. Roger mentioned that McCamly Plaza did have a cancellation policy, but they chose not to enforce it.

Chris moved to page 3 of his treasurer's report to refer to the grant application that the Detroit Sound Machine quartet had developed to create a "Barbersoul" event as an E-I-H initiative. The application was for just under \$16,000. It was submitted on time, but the review committee has delayed making a decision until late July. Chris had created a one-page summary of what is planned. Basically, three barbershop quartets will go to three Detroit high schools to demonstrate barbershop. The reason that the District became involved is due to a Society requirement that grant applications be submitted by 501(c)(3) organizations, and DSM does not qualify as such.

Chris mentioned that he had also included a report from Doug Weaver about the Pioneer Spirit chorus. Right now, the chorus has collected monies of about \$1000 in excess of its expenditures. Chris wanted to authorization for him to set up an account for the chorus similar to the one for QCA.

Joelle Laginess asked for an identification of what the Spirit chorus is. Chris noted that it is an all-male group composed of District members who are over age 55. The group competed at the Jacksonville Mid-Winter, and it hopes to qualify for the 2021 Mid-Winter.

Chris requested a motion to list himself, Joe McDonald, Dave Montera, Paul Ellinger, and Jim McMahan as signators on the PNC accounts, and to remove Mike Hansen. Roger Lewis moved this action, and Paul Ellinger made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.**

Chris indicated that he needed a copy of the minutes to supply the bank. The secretary indicated it might be a while before the minutes of this meeting would be available. Dave Montera suggested that the secretary prepare a separate sheet that identified this action as a resolution of the board. The bank should be willing to accept that document.

Chris then requested authorization to set up a separate account for the management of the funds he was holding on behalf of the Spirit chorus. Dave Montera had glanced at the BOD minutes of the October 2019 meeting to try to determine if the Spirit chorus was ever designated as a District organization. He did not see anything to that effect. Without that status, he was reluctant to bring money from the chorus into the District's accounts.

Chris indicated that the chorus had been collecting monies, putting those funds temporarily in a checking account, but then was sending the money to the District because the group understood that we were to keep track of their income and expenses. If that is not the case, then the chorus should be set up as a separate entity.

Dave recalled that, when the chorus was formed, it was stated that it would not be a function of the District. The secretary believed that was captured in some minutes from about a year ago. Dave asserted that, in that case, co-mingling of funds causes a separate problem. Chris stated that co-mingling was the reason that he was trying to avoid with a separate account. However, if the chorus is not part of the District, he realized that it should have its own charter. Chris had thought about moving the Muskegon charter to the group, but sensed that the charter from that group may have already been surrendered.

C. Operations (cont.):2. Treasurer's report (cont.):

As an aside, Joe McDonald reported that, when he was reaching out to chapters, he was surprised that the Muskegon chapter moved so rapidly on the relinquishment of its charter. The first that we learned of it was when we got the check. He felt that the entire process was handled by the Society, and we got no communications about it.

Chris returned to the question of where the funds go if the Spirit chorus is not a District activity. Should he discontinue processing the group's revenues and liabilities, and send them a check for its balance?

Joe McDonald asked Dave Montera to discuss the funds we get from the Windsor Sendoff and how we handle that event. Dave explained that we don't manage that money or handle that event. The Windsor chapter runs it, and then sends a check to the District. The District merely transfers that money---on behalf of the Windsor chapter---to the chorus going to International. Chris described the process as a gift that Windsor gives to the District to give to the chorus. It is the way that Windsor clears its books.

Roger Lewis was of the opinion that it would be proper for Chris to handle Spirit chorus monies just like he does for the QCA monies. That would give the chorus the comfort of 501(c)(3) status.

Dave Montera emphasized that he was not opposed to the activities of the Spirit chorus. He pointed out that it was declared at the start that the chorus would not be a District function. By putting its finances into the District books, the situation is changed. One option that he suggested would be to approve a motion that the chorus is defined as a sponsored District organization. He was not in favor of that action, but it would alleviate the issue.

Joe McDonald saw the nature of the Spirit chorus in the same context as he sees the Harmony Explosion camp or Bush League. He sees those activities as being chapter-driven, and a source of pride for a chapter. He knew that operating these programs through a district board could become unwieldy. He suggested that, if the chorus did not want to be an independent chapter, it could find a chapter that would be its sponsor. The option of using the Muskegon charter would be akin to this approach. Alternatively, the group could go under the charter of any existing chapter. He noted that chapters can have more than one chorus.

Chris Berry wondered why, if the chorus is identified as a Pioneer District chorus, we wouldn't charter it, support it, and handle its finances? Joe had a concern about what happens to the chorus when its current leaders move on. What happens to it then?

Chris went on to a scenario where a chapter takes on the management of the Spirit chorus, and then the chorus folds. Do the monies in its account go into that chapter's totals funds? The conclusion was "yes". Since Chris saw the chorus with a District name on it, he felt it should be managed ultimately by the District board.

Dave Montera felt that there was a difference between being supported by the District, and being a part of it. He noted that the District supports a lot of programs, but they are not District affiliates in that context, Chris suggested that programs like Top Gun, Bush League, and QCA should maybe have their own status as 501(c)(3) organizations. He thought we might be doing a pick and choose, but the Spirit chorus has our name on it.

Dave pointed out that the Spirit chorus has the District name on it because the early organizers put it there. It was not authorized. Chris countered that the chorus was the District rep to Mid-Winter. However, Dave observed that it was stated then that the chorus would not be a District-managed event either financially or administratively. The organizers that named the group understood the conditions at the time, and moved in that way. Because the chorus was the District senior chorus representative, it was named as the Pioneer District Spirit Chorus,

C. Operations (cont.):2. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Zach Schroeder observed that, if the chorus operated as a second chorus under the charter of an existing chapter, all of the chorus members would probably have to be members of that chapter. That condition would not apply if the chorus operated under District management.

Dave Montera mentioned that the senior chorus program was set up by the Society--which specified that such groups are composed of members of a district. That might suggest that they don't have to be member of a particular chapter.

In hindsight, Joe McDonald noted out that the first senior chorus was created in response to an invitation from the Society. However, as the program goes forward, it will change to a qualifying chorus situation. He expected that the rules for such groups will evolve.

Dave asked Joe to verify through the District Presidents Council if there are any senior choruses (other than the one in Senecaland) that is a chartered chapter. He believed that all of the rest of them are just choruses that meet the age qualification for membership. Joe anticipated that the senior chorus contest will evolve (like others), and we may see several choruses develop in some districts such as MAD.

Paul Ellinger suggested that we might see a senior chorus develop in the Detroit area that could be called the Pioneer District Detroit Senior chorus, and see another in the northwest that could be called the Pioneer District Central North Senior chorus, etc. If that were to happen, he felt the District should not be compelled to manage them.

Dave Montera supported Paul's observation, and felt that there is nothing in the Society's rules that say a district can have only one senior chorus. In geographically large districts, in particular, he envisioned the development of regional senior choruses. He anticipated that only one of those choruses would then qualify as the district representative.

Joe McDonald proposed that this topic be set aside since no motion had been offered. If a motion is offered, he asked that it be a positive motion that the monies be placed in a Pioneer account. Chris Berry moved instead that the \$1000 currently held on behalf of the chorus be returned to its managers. Roger Lewis offered the second.

Aaron Pollard was concerned about giving the monies to the leaders. He felt the money should go to a host chapter such as Grand Rapids. Chris noted that the group currently is not within a chapter. It would have to become part of a chapter, or get chartered as such. If they don't do either thing, they would be meeting without insurance. Up until now, they have been covered under the District's insurance. Chris offered to work with the group to help it find a host chapter, and would not transfer the funds until that has happened. Aaron indicated he was more comfortable with the transfer in that circumstance.

The motion under consideration was approved under Small Board Rules.

Finally, Chris mentioned that the Spirit chorus had asked for \$1500 of financial support to cover the travel costs of its directors to Mid-Winter. That is assuming that the chorus qualifies for the 2021 Mid-Winter. Joe McDonald suggested that this item be addressed later along with other possible budget changes. That way, only one motion will be needed.

Joe McDonald noted that treasurer's reports are never approved---only received. Sherry Knight offered a motion to take that action, but Dave Montera observed that we really don't need a motion. The meeting minutes indicate that the report was provided for information purposes.

As a newcomer on the board, Sherry Knight was struck by the fact that the District has about \$90,000 in its accounts. She wondered why we carry such a large amount.

C. Operations (cont.):2. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Chris Berry explained that, a few years earlier, the board moved to maintain about \$50,000 in its savings account to cover the loss of a year's quantity of conventions.

Sherry suggested that we might want to consider spending some of those funds (after the COVID-19 crisis is past) on chapter development. Joe McDonald hoped she was going to predict when that will happen. Sherry admitted that we may not like how some of the outcomes of the end of the crisis will affect us.

3. Projects & events reports

Before this area of the agenda was discussed, Joe McDonald explained that he sees most of the reports from board members as being related to projects or events. He wanted the reports to focus on what is being done, or what is planned for the next 30 days, or before the next convention.

a. Vision/Mission Statement:

Joe chose to skip this item for now. He planned to return to it later.

b. Website Project:

(This item was also skipped since it is budget-related.)

c. Riser Acquisition Project:

Joe noted that this project had been discussed in the past, but had been in mothballs for a while. He referred to two legal documents that had been created. One of them describes how the risers would be available to District chapters for rental at no cost except for transportation. The other one is a definition of how they would be managed. A "custodial" chapter would be needed to be the caretakers, and to handle different details. That chapter would store the risers, monitor their condition, etc. Joe was asking the board for authorization to proceed with the project. This would involve solicitation of all District chapters to find one that wished to be the caretaker. That chapter might get paid for the job, or pay for the privilege.

The secretary had a legal question to direct to Dave Montera. He recognized that, as owners of the risers, the District would want to have theft and damage insurance, and also liability insurance. The custodial chapter would already have liability insurance anyway. He noted that one of the documents called for the custodial chapter to also have inland marine insurance. He wondered why the custodial chapter needed to incur this cost.

Dave gave a quick explanation of the different types of coverage that are provided by liability and inland marine insurance. He felt that the custodial chapter could file a loss or damage claim under its policy, and we could request reimbursement under that policy. The secretary had observed that the document appeared to require the District to also have a policy. He felt the stipulation on the custodial chapter was redundant. Dave felt that we needed just one policy, and legally he didn't care if it was held by the chapter or the District. From a comfort perspective, he preferred that the District hold the policy, since we don't have control to ensure that the chapter gets a policy.

Dave agreed that this might be a redundancy. He mentioned that Barry George had drafted the documents. Dave was quite satisfied with them. He indicated that there is nothing wrong with having redundant policies. It is just a redundant cost. He thought the custodial chapter might seek reimbursement for that cost.

Joe McDonald made a note to review this issue in the contracts with Barry. He agreed with Dave that the District should have this responsibility to ensure that it is properly monitored.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):c. Riser Acquisition Project (cont.):

Joe asked for an opinion from the secretary and Dave Montera on whether a motion is needed at this point. Is a consensus to move forward adequate for now? He noted that no money is being spent yet. The effort for now is to find a chapter that wants to be the custodian. After that is accomplished, the entire package will be returned for approval of the contracts and the purchase.

Dave observed that a motion was made at the last board meeting to pursue the investigation of this project. He felt we are still in that phase. When the results of the investigation are brought back to the board, then there would be an approval of the cost and the language of the contracts. Joe noted that all of the blanks in the contracts would be filled at that time.

d. Bush League:

Joe McDonald had talked with Jamie Carey on April 18 about this event. At that time, Jamie was still planning to hold the event. All of the arrangements are made. Jamie is waiting to see if the restrictions are extended.

Chris Berry asked if this is an event that should also be pushed back to chapter level management--to include the accounting. He compared this situation to how the Harmony Explosion camp is managed, and the fact that we have decided that should be the direction for the Spirit chorus.

Dave Montera recalled that, when the Gaylord chapter indicated it could no longer manage Bush League, the management of it would be assumed by the District with the understanding that another chapter would ultimately take it over. He believed that a motion was made to that effect at a previous BOD meeting. He asked the secretary to review past minutes to confirm this detail.

Roger Lewis felt that we had determined that we wanted to continue Bush League forever, but we wanted to find a chapter to manage it. This approach would allow the event to be held anywhere in the District. It is an event that has a 60-year history. He believed that, if we could not find a chapter to manage it, the District would somehow maintain it. He observed that the District does cover the cost of judges for Bush League.

Dave Montera asked Roger if other events such as Quartet Boot Camp were being held simultaneously with Bush League. Roger indicated that the QCA was providing coaching and other support at B/L, but moved that activity to QBC. QCA is no longer at B/L in a formal capacity.

Joe McDonald asked the secretary to research old minutes to see if Dave Montera's question can be answered. For now, Bush League is in our budget.

The secretary asked for guidance on where to search in the minutes. Dave suggested that it would be about the time that Gaylord relinquished its leadership and Traverse City took over. It was a year after that point in time when Traverse City announced that it could not continue to do it. Dave placed this activity as being about three years ago.

e. Harmony Explosion camp:

Joe McDonald reported that the Mt. Pleasant chapter had cancelled the 2020 event at its board meeting on the previous Wednesday. The primary concern was the safety of the campers. Joe mentioned that most---if not all---youth camps have been cancelled this year.

f. Spirit chorus:

It was noted that this topic had already been discussed.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):g. Barbersoul grant application:

Joe McDonald noted that the deadline for submission of the application has been extended. He identified the document that is the actual application. He added that it is possible to come back to the link to that document at any time.

h. Hall of Fame nominations:

Joe reported that one nomination had been received so far. Eventually the nomination committee will be convened. Sherry Knight asked if nomination for this award is a big deal. Dave Montera declared that he hoped it was. Sherry said she was surprised that we don't get more. She sensed that it wasn't perceived as being special. If we want it to be a big deal, how do we reinforce that idea? Sherry indicated that she had been on a HOF committee at CMU which met early in the planning, and which pushed people to nominate particular individuals. Ultimately, there were 5-10 inductees each year, and there was a big dinner.

Based on his experience as a member of the HOF nomination committee for four years, Dave Montera perceived it as a point of pride that the committee didn't get a lot of nominees. He felt that people thought long and hard about who should be (or should not) be in the HOF. Nomination is based on a body of work by the individual within a chapter, within the District, and within the Society. He noted that involvement in the Society was not as important a criterion as the first two. He felt that someone shouldn't be nominated just because the person has been around for many years. He also noted that our District has a small membership compared to the number of employees at CMU. Sherry clarified that the HOF committee she was referencing was just for the journalism department.

Dave indicated that he was comfortable with the nomination process, but that doesn't mean it can't be changed. One of the things he would like to see is that the source of nominations not be limited to chapters. He felt the BOD should also be able to make nominations.

Brandon Smith said that he liked the idea of making a HOF a bigger deal. If that were to happen, he thought that more people would pay attention to it. He felt that those who have been in the District for a while consider it worthwhile. However, if he were to talk about it within his chapter, he felt that only a small number would know it exists. He liked the idea of having a dinner, and felt that doing more promotion would be helpful in getting more nominations. He felt that having more nominations would be a bad thing. He suggested that most of our membership doesn't know about the nomination process, or think about the HOF. He urged that we put more effort into it so that we reap more nominees.

Roger Lewis wondered if quartets have ever been put into the HOF. He noted that the Society's HOF has a number of quartets in it. He thought of some District quartets that he felt would qualify quickly. He admitted that in 2003, when he proposed that the Society create a HOF, that he should have proposed a separate quartet HOF.

Joe McDonald asked if "Chordiology" was ever given a HOF award. Roger indicated that the group received the Glenn Van Tassel award from the QCA.

Joe wasn't sure, but he believed that the process of nomination by chapter may have only come about in recent years. He knew that the paperwork of a nomination he submitted one time was eight pages long. It is an imposing project, and may be burdensome. Should it be streamlined? He could not find a document creation date on the form, so he did not know how old it was.

Paul Ellinger reported that "Power Play" was listed as a HOF recipient in 2003.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):h. Hall of Fame nominations (cont.):

Joe McDonald proposed that this idea be made into a project that will address its marketing, etc. He needed a volunteer to lead it. Aaron Pollard offered his services. He felt that the award is a big deal, and it should be advertised as such to convince the members of the District of that idea. Sherry Knight offered to assist, and so did Paul Ellinger and Brandon Smith.

Joe asked Aaron to create an objective for the project and to share it with the board. He noted that the current application form is downloadable from the website

Paul Ellinger noted that the last three HOF inductees vote on the nominees. As one of those persons, he would be willing to give up that privilege. He thought the system might appear to be a bit nepotistic if it is a stream of like-minded people. Dave Montera agreed that the selection committee might appear nepotistic, but noted that it consists of the DP, the IPP, and the inductees for the last three years. Because we have not had inductees in the last few years, he had allowed the last three inductees to remain on the committee. He suggested that the project committee also review this issue. Aaron agreed that they should look at everything.

Roger Lewis assumed that a chapter had made a nomination for this year's award. He mentioned that almost all of the nominees for the Society HOF come from the Society committee. Sometimes that committee will get a letter, and will investigate further the person suggested. Brandon Smith asked if our committee should also solicit nominations from chapters. This would result in us getting nominations from three sources (the committee, individuals, and chapters). Joe McDonald urged Brandon to put that idea into the team's proposal.

i. Fall 2019 BOD minutes:

It was noted that this item had been covered earlier.

j. Treasurer's report:

This item had also been covered earlier.

k. Charity outreach:

Dave Montera was asked to report on this topic. Dave noted that he had documented the history of our outreach program in his written report. He observed that we have been doing this program now for three years, and have linked it with our conventions. Each time, it has been run by the host chapter with great success. However, at our winter planning session, there was a thought that we might want it handled by a chapter other than the host chapter. At the spring 2020 convention (now cancelled) it was to have been run by the City Lights chorus (Motor City Metro chapter). The chapter had selected a charity for that event.

Since then, the thought has developed that each chapter should be encouraged to select a charity to support over a long period of time. Dave, Roger Boyer, and Geoff d'Allemand have been developing a proposal intended to encourage each chapter to find a local charity that it can support on a long-term basis. That document will go out to chapters in a few weeks.

Dave had planned to ask the board to allow the City Lights chorus to promote its charity at the next convention, and to earmark \$500 as seed money for that project. Instead, he was going to propose that we offer \$500 in matching funds for either dollar donations or value of goods.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):k. Charity outreach (cont.):

Roger Lewis noted that Motor City Metro was slated to be the host chapter for the spring 2021 convention in Grand Rapids. He suggested that we defer this action to that convention. Dave was amenable to carrying his \$500 matching idea forward to that event. He noted that the chapter is not required to carry its charity plans forward if it does not wish to do so. His idea was merely offered as an incentive.

Brandon Smith reported that, at the last board meeting of the Motor City Metro, the idea of carrying the charity forward to the spring 2021 event. This was without knowledge of the matching funds idea. He indicated he would call Cody Harrell (chapter president) during the lunch break to determine his response.

Paul Ellinger wondered if the \$500 matching funds concept was intended to incentivize chapters to support a charity. He preferred to see chapters giving support to a charity because they feel it is something important to do in their communities.

Dave clarified that he was not proposing a continuing matching funds idea. He merely wanted to focus on this one instance. He wanted to support the City Lights chorus for the effort it had made in preparation for the convention that had to be cancelled. His intent was to give some support to the chapter's charity right now. However, if the chapter wants to wait until spring 2021, he felt that was OK. The seed money may not be needed. He was trying to address an unusual occurrence, and perceived this as an opportunity to offer an extra incentive.

Paul Ellinger verified with Brandon Smith that the City Lights chorus planned to proceed forward anyway with its plans for support of its charity. Brandon reported that they and the Mariners Inn were planning to work together long term. Mariners had been informed that the special activity would be pushed to spring 2021 when the chapter would be hosting that convention. Brandon noted that, after he has talked with Cody and others, they may move some activity into this year to take advantage of the matching grant.

Joe McDonald suggested that this item be tabled for later consideration as another budget item along with the Spirit chorus idea.

Joe understood that Dave Montera was going to take a survey of all chapters to find out if they are making connections with local chapters. He suggested that the matching grant concept might be included in that survey.

Joe mentioned that we have been learning about charitable activities that chapters have been doing, and about which we had not known. He proposed that a District award be developed to recognize chapters that have excelled at it.

L. Smartphone Showcase:

Joe identified that a committee of Paul Ellinger and others had been working on this idea, and it had been communicated to some extent to others when it had a different focus.

Paul indicated that one purpose of the showcase is to let the public see the best version of our hobby. The public could see the friendship, the fun, the singing, the altruistic approach to local communities, etc. The goal would be to show what kind of persons we want to be, and not what kind of singers we want to be.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):I. Smartphone Showcase (cont.):

Another purpose of a showcase is to allow performers to discern what a great performance is. The public knows what a great performance is, and we need to hear what the public thinks. They may question why we move and act the way we do. We may not be connecting to the rest of the world.

A third purpose of a showcase is to let many chapters be who they want to be, and not be a non-competition chorus surrounded by groups that are competitive. It is a place where the non-competitive groups can say who they are. They can connect with the world and be proud of what they do.

Dave Montera contended that, although highly competition choruses and quartets go to conventions, he didn't see that circumstance deterring other groups from going. From experience, he felt that these groups go, not to beat the competitive groups, but to beat themselves. He was convinced that the groups in which he has participated have always used that as a measure of success. He observed that his chorus has even brought previous evaluation sheets to ask judges how it has changed with regard to previous problems. Therefore, he wondered if we needed some new venue in which to allow groups to get feedback on how they are doing.

Paul Ellinger agreed that some groups do exactly what Dave described, and they wouldn't need this program. However, he has talked to others who feel they don't get anything out of a contest. They have had bad experiences. They felt judges were not very friendly. These groups say that they just want to perform to the public and be themselves. Paul emphasized that the program was not intended to take anything away from those who enjoy contests, but to offer a new way to those who might see it as a new way to enjoy our hobby. If the latter group finds they don't like it, nothing changes.

Paul also asserted that he would like for us to look for more ways to connect with our communities in addition to connecting with each other. He is seeking more of a balance in this respect. He felt that a lot of our advertising goes out to barbershoppers and not to the general public. He is hoping that the program will help us to move forward. He wasn't sure that singing at a higher level in contests was going to make that happen, or give us more members or more awareness.

Aaron Pollard asked if the Showcase would be part of a convention weekend. Paul didn't think it would be initially, but might be in the future. He envisioned a situation where a group might choose to enter the contest, or enter the Showcase and do any selections it wished to do. Such groups could win recognition as "audience favorite", "best comedy", etc.

Brandon Smith saw the program as an opportunity for groups that are non-standard. He gave, as an example, a high school chorus. Such groups could perform at a school, but usually can't afford to go to a more expensive venue. This program could give them a good place to perform, and brings them into contact with the District. He noted that his first exposure to barbershop was a convention he attended when he was 17.

Brandon also supported that idea of encouraging choruses that don't like to compete. He cited his experience of being in chapters that went to compete against themselves. However, he knew of groups that just don't like to compete at all. Those chapters still have great shows. He thought that coming to convention to be in the Showcase might be fun for them.

Finally, Brandon saw the Showcase as a place to push the boundaries of barbershop. He saw this as a place to try out new things. The flow of the event might be unaffected, and the judges might still be there to do setup. The judges might then see things that are different and interesting. It would get ideas flowing.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):l. Smartphone Showcase (cont.):

Brandon saw the Showcase as a place where other groups could find performing opportunities. He knew that a growing number of Michigan high schools are offering barbershop. He has seen those schools represented in the youth chorus and at the Harmony Explosion camp. He would like to see those entire schools (like Milford) represented at a Showcase event.

m. Communications tree:

Joe McDonald thought this would be a brief topic. He reported that he and Paul Ellinger had called all of the chapters. An idea was presented then about creating a ZOOM group for this purpose.

Paul noted that he and Roger Lewis have found that the most effective communications with people are those done in person or by voice---as opposed to using emails. He recalled the days when Quartet Boot Camp was started. They called every District quartet, and they got 17 to participate.

He suggested that they might build off of the communication tree they established then by utilizing the recent increase in knowledge about ZOOM technology. A communication agent in each chapter could jump on a ZOOM meeting. The meetings wouldn't be long, but would be fairly regular, and could be a means to share info about coming events. The important thing would be to cover the "big ticket" items, and then let the agent share them with his/her chapter. The communication is more than downloading, but is listening, caring, and sharing.

Paul mentioned that he had just received a request from the Harmony Town chorus for him to have a ZOOM meeting with the entire chorus. He felt that chapters are looking for this kind of communication. He and Joe are identifying those individuals that are interested---and they don't have to be chapter leaders.

Joe McDonald referred to a spreadsheet that listed the contacts they have identified so far. About half of the chapters are represented. He expected to get most of the remaining chapters within a few days.

n. Future board member shadows:

Paul Ellinger mentioned that he and other board members have been looking for individuals who could become shadows of existing board members and then move into those positions in the future. In the past, there have been at-large board members, but now the concept is one of "shadows" who merely attend meetings. There is no financial benefit to shadows like there may have been for at-large members. Two persons were specifically mentioned as individuals who might be invited to become shadows: Allen Holmes from the HarmonyTown Chorus, and Scott Turner from the Livingston County chapter. Another person (unnamed) that Paul had met was the president of the Michiana-Metro chapter.

Paul declared that the goal is to find visionary people who also are workers. Joe McDonald observed that the three persons mentioned so far are from chapters that we don't see at conventions. He noted there is an added benefit from having people like them on the board. Joe referred to the survey that was generated in December, and to which many on the board had responded.

The secretary had previously informed Joe McDonald of his plans, and therefore took the opportunity to announce that he was planning to retire as District Secretary after the fall 2020 convention is over, and the write-up of the minutes of the meetings at that event are completed. The board needs to look for someone to become the next D.S. at the end of 2020.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):o. Nominating committee:

Dave Montera, as a member of this committee, suggested that the committee that is updating the policy manual consider a broadening of the membership of the committee.

Dave was aware of the secretary's plan to step down at the end of the year. He also knew that Jim Kunz was seeking to give up the role of doing the annual financial review, so Dave knew of another position that should be filled before next year.

[NOTE: At 11:55 a.m. the meeting was suspended for a lunch break.]

[NOTE: At 12:30 p.m. the meeting was resumed.]

p. Convention(s) report:

Joe McDonald began by expressing his appreciation for the work that Roger Lewis and others did in arranging for alternate facilities for the Battle Creek convention---even though they were not needed ultimately.

Roger indicated that the District is slated to return to Battle Creek in the fall of 2021. He has secured the same hotels as he had arranged for the one just cancelled. He anticipates that the McCamly Hotel will still not be re-opened.

He reported that he had sent out inquiries to some communities that have been used previously to see if they were interested in hosting future conventions. He got no responses. He also contacted some cities that have never been used as host cites to determine if they were interested in the 2023, 2024, and 2025 conventions.

Roger also noted that there has been a lot of turnover in hotel staffs. This may be related to the current health crisis. He is also seeing that phenomenon occurring in convention bureau staffing.

He reported that we will not have an official photographer at the next convention. We must find a place where quartets and choruses can arrange to take their own photographs. Because groups will take their own photos anyway, professional photographers are unable to earn anything from sales.

Zach Schroeder was concerned about having a source of photos to submit to the Harmonizer and place in the District archives. Roger acknowledged that was a detail that needed to be resolved. Brandon Smith suggested that individuals like Cody Harrell could be enlisted to handle this task. Roger pointed out that the senior champions must also be photographed.

Dave Montera mentioned that he solicited photos from several quartets at the last convention for submission to the Harmonizer.

q. Education events:

Before he deferred to Joelle Laginess, Joe McDonald asked for a display of the summary of February 29, 2020, Leadership Summit. The slide showed who attended, and which chapters were represented.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):g. Education events (cont.):

Joelle spoke to the Music Summit that is scheduled for September 4. She noted that there is another event also planned for that date. She indicated that the Summit date may be changed, but a decision has been made to do it as a virtual event. This might lead to a plan to always do it in this manner. That would make it easier for members who live far away (like in the U.P.) to attend. No board action is needed for the Summit since it has already been approved.

r. Website update:

Joelle indicated that the first goal is to create a website that will serve both existing members and potential members. It will connect to social media for the latter. The second goal is to make it modern and navigationally-friendly on such devices as cell phones.

The committee that is working on the project includes Joelle, Joe McDonald, Chris Bateson, Chris Berry, Steve Sutherland (current webmaster), and Brandon Smith.

Joelle was requesting board approval to go forward with the project. The recommendation is for selection of a custom-made platform rather than a generic system. Chris Bateson is a web designer and is willing to take on the project. Joelle and Brandon would be the website team and handle content. After the website is designed, it would be submitted to the board for review and questions.

Joe McDonald asked Chris Berry if it was correct that \$1300 was in the budget to explore the creation of a new website. While Chris was checking, Joe suggested that a consensus be established to go forward with the project, since it appears to be in the budget.

Dave Montera had a problem with paying for the services of a webmaster. He noted that no other services within the District are done with a payment. He observed that many provide professional services within the District as volunteers. The only things those persons have received have been hotel rooms and registrations. He felt it was inappropriate to pay a District member to be providing services.

Joelle did not know how other districts handle this cost, but she felt this was a legitimate cost in today's world. She acknowledged that Steve Sutherland has been serving as the webmaster as a volunteer. As a member of the website committee, Steve knows that he could not do what this new website would demand to make it cellphone accessible.

Joelle was surprised that a lot of services within the District are done on a volunteer basis. She felt that we did have the budget for this cost, however. From her experience with other website creations, she knew that the task was intense, but thought that the proposed cost was reasonable. The task requires a special expertise. She knew that the rate that Chris Bateson was offering was reduced because he's a member of the District. She felt that to do it for free would be taking advantage of him.

Joe McDonald was comfortable for paying for this kind of service since it gives us leverage for control. He reflected on other instances where volunteers have been excited about a project, but failed. This was why he held this opinion. Paul Ellinger noted that, if Chris didn't do the project, we would have to go to an outside person, and perhaps pay more. Paul liked the fact that Chris understands barbershop. Finally, Paul declared that we have never realized the amount of work that Steve Sutherland has done on the current website. Steve is even in the Hall of Fame for his efforts. It is a huge task. Paul was nervous that we might have to pay someone in the future to do financial reviews if we don't find a new volunteer for that task.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):r. Website update (cont.):

Zach Schroeder asked if we have anyone in the District who could do the job and might volunteer the time---in return for hotel rooms and registrations. Joelle did not know of anyone. Chris Berry observed that the normal cost for building a website of this size would be around \$3000. He knew that a job done for one of his former employers was \$8000.

Brandon Smith asked Dave Montera for clarification of his concern. He thought that Dave was not objecting to paying Chris to build the website, but paying for its maintenance. Dave noted, however that most District volunteers do not get paid for any services. Everything is done as a volunteer. He mentioned that all of the work that Jim Roy does on sound and lighting is as a volunteer. Dave was concerned about talking about payment when we haven't explored all of the options. He knew that there is a lot of time involved in this task, since he has weekly contact with Steve. Dave reiterated that almost everything that is done for the District is done by volunteers with special expertise. He referenced the huge amount of work that Roger Lewis does in organizing conventions. He felt the dollar value of that work might be between \$5000 and \$10,000. He still has a conceptual problem with paying for the cost of the website---even though it is a specialty type of task.

Dave also had a question about who we are trying to reach with the website. He understood that younger people do not use websites, but use social media instead. He wasn't sure if older people use websites either. Who is our target audience?

Joelle Laginess disagreed with the idea that younger people don't use websites. She felt that outreach may start with social media, but she knew that she became more familiar with barbershop through websites. She felt that others have done so as well, since websites have more info, and the info is laid out better.

She also mentioned that some District members have asked her when the new website will be available. This indicates to her that it is wanted.

Brandon Smith perceived the District website as the "virtual" identity of the District. He saw social media as the "arms and legs" that reach out. The website is the body that provides info, however. Brandon had no complaints about the existing website. It is designed to be used, nevertheless, with a desktop computer. He indicated that most of his computing is done, however, on an I-Pad or on a phone. He saw the existing website as a version 1.0 or 2.0, and there is no way it can be updated to accommodate handheld platforms. The new website should be more than a faceless Facebook, and should serve our members in more ways. It would allow people to get info more quickly, since tabs would load easier.

The other aspect of the new website that Brandon wanted to see was a place where one could go easily to get news and info. If it is well-moderated, it becomes another "arm" in and of itself. He suspected we may undervalue the impact of a website.

Brandon appreciated Dave's perspective about how much is done in a volunteer organization. He had never thought about how much is being done. Dave responded by noting that he was not defending Steve Sutherland. He did know, however, that Steve does not have the expertise to go forward with the kind of website that is envisioned. He just wanted to emphasize that Steve and many other volunteers have never been paid.

In reference to using phones with the present website, Dave observed that he once registered three people for a convention using a phone during a rehearsal break. He asserted that the present system does work with I-phones. He has also been successful in using a tablet. He didn't understand how this is an issue with the current system. Even with availability of new technology, he felt the current system is not all that bad.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):f. Website update (cont.):

Joe McDonald suggested that the issue of compensation may be a matter of form. We have been compensating our volunteers with registrations, free hotel rooms, etc. He declared that there is a precedence for doing compensations—but in a different format. Dave Montera agreed that those compensations are an acknowledgement of the work of volunteers. Paying a salary bothered him, however.

Paul Ellinger wanted to go beyond the operational reasons for developing a new website, and address a concern about succession planning for this function. He felt that there is no one at present who could pick up the role that Steve Sutherland plays. Joelle Laginess agreed that this was part of the basis to need to work on this project, and why she didn't want to see it get delayed. She noted that Steve understands the need to do it. She felt that the website designer didn't have to be Chris Bateson, but she knew that he was capable and committed. She observed that Kyle Kitzmiller had been considered as a possible designer, but he is not in Pioneer, and would charge a lot more. She admitted that she did not check out all possible persons in the District, but just those that she knew. She thought that we could approve the project, but continue to check for others who might be qualified to be the designer. However, we must recognize that we cannot plan for Steve to do it.

Zach Schroeder urged that we spend some more time to see if there are any other persons in Pioneer who can do website design as volunteers.

Chris Berry pointed out that John Baker and his wife get about \$900 in registrations and hotel rooms to run the Harmony Marketplace at two conventions each year. He suggested this cost is comparable to the projected website design and maintenance cost. Joelle noted that the \$1200 and \$1000 figures for website design and maintenance are padded numbers that she and Chris Bateson developed. They were hopeful that the actual figures would come in lower.

Brandon Smith concluded that the cost of hotel rooms and registrations was comparable to the projected cost of the project. He asked Joelle if Chris would consider that to be his payment for volunteer services. She confirmed that Chris was open to negotiation.

Chris Berry observed that the budget for complimentary registrations and rooms at conventions is defined as being for "staff", and doesn't list who the volunteers are. Addition of this item would increase Roger Lewis' convention budget slightly. However, he felt that this was a specific activity that should be on its own. He suggested that it could be called either compensation in comps or compensation in cash, but he didn't see a big difference.

Joe McDonald proposed that action be taken on this proposal by considering each component. On the first action, Aaron Pollard moved that the District create a new website. Brandon Smith made the second. **Motion approved under Small Board Rules.**

On the second action, Aaron Pollard moved that Chris Bateson be selected as the website designer. Sherry Knight made the second. Dave Montera asked that this item not be handled via SBR. Therefore, a vote was taken by a show of hands (except for Paul Ellinger who had to vote vocally since he was not appearing on screen). **The motion was approved by a vote of 8 to 2, with Dave Montera and Zach Schroeder voting in opposition.**

The third action was to determine if the website design was to be done with a canned package or with a custom design. Joe acknowledged that we hadn't discussed that detail in this meeting. He noted that the report explained what the differences are. Brandon Smith urged the usage of a high-quality, custom design. He felt that it would demonstrate that the District was doing an update with a solid, visual presence.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):r. Website update (cont.):

Joelle Laginess mentioned that the committee had talked a lot about this issue, and had gotten input from Chris Berry and Steve Sutherland. Steve was adamant that it not be created by Square Space (a canned option). If that source were to go under, he felt we would lose everything. Joelle observed that a custom designer would have all of the details documented so that others could go in and edit the site. She believed the cost would be about the same with either option. Special details could be negotiated with a custom design. She added that Steve felt that Square Space uses a "cookie cutter" plan that can be a limitation.

Sherry Knight expressed a concern that, if one person builds the system, only that person knows how to get into the backend to do updates, or fix it if it breaks. Conversely, a package system has support from the organization. A custom-made system is based totally on what the builder knows.

Joelle acknowledged that this concern had been discussed. However, she felt that Chris could pass that knowledge along to future designers. We would have to find persons who could understand the language. The system would be content managed, but it would be written in code that could be passed on to others. Joelle felt that if a package designer went under, then all of the coding would be lost.

Joe McDonald suggested that web design techniques may change again in five years. Square Space may not have existed five years ago, and we don't know which companies will dominate the market in the future. This is why he is comfortable with avoiding this option right now. Joelle noted that one can't negotiate with companies like Square Space, whereas you can with an in-house designer.

Brandon Smith admitted that he was initially in favor of Square Space. However, when he learned that one can put a content management backend into a custom design system, he liked the availability that option would offer. It means that more than one person could have control of the system, and it is not just one person who is dominating the system.

Brandon also noted that we are really updating the language of the system. It isn't that no one can do what Steve Sutherland does. He has merely learned an old language. There are few designers today who know that language. We will be moving to a new language. There is a possibility that, in 20 years, even that language will be obsolete, and we will be in this situation again. However, he felt that the new language will give us some new mileage. He felt that the new language will be fairly secure for a while. He declared to Sherry that, as someone who was originally in favor of Square Space, he felt that the content management backend makes a big difference.

Aaron Pollard moved that we adopt a custom website design. Brandon Smith made the second. **The motion was approved under Small Board Rules.**

s. Authorization for expenditures for the new website design:

Joe McDonald confirmed with Chris Berry that \$1300 was already budgeted for this action. Therefore, no additional board action is needed. Joe informed Joelle that she should work with Chris to set up the vouchers for any expenses.

Chris noted that there had been discussion about asking Chris Bateson if he would be willing to receive registrations and hotel rooms in lieu of receiving compensation for his services. The secretary observed that the dollar amount would be about the same either way.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):t. Participating in Barbershop (PIB) report:

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Brandon Smith explained that PIB is a standard metric the Society is using to track success. The Society found it necessary to change the way it does this task as it changed its structure. The old model was to invest a lot of resources into a small number of people who are interested in barbershop, and get a high retention number. Now the metric is to measure something that interests people to see if it can extend to getting them interested in barbershop. Our District will use a modified metric that measures IF a person ever participated in barbershop. The goal is to find groups that have had interaction with such persons, and track that engagement.

Brandon has had phone conversations with such groups to find out how they connect with people, and how they track those activities. He referenced a link in his report that describes the info that has been acquired so far. At the bottom on that info is resource forms and links to master spreadsheets. Brandon suggested that, if a person participates a barbershop group for the first time, a sponsor would complete the form that captures a lot of facts. The form would then link to a master spreadsheet that compiles it. He noted that it is yet to be determined what will be done with all of the data, and if all of it will be used.

His goal is to track as many people as possible who are participating in barbershop so we can use that info in our planning. He cited the Harmony Explosion camp as an example of a collection of data on new participants. If we find chapters that get similar amounts of feedback on new participants, we should determine what they are doing that got people involved. It could be a metric for determining techniques of success.

Brandon gave an example of how a PIB report could be used with school groups. If he had a group of students who sang tags at his high school, and then several of them went on to particular college, he could share their names with a barbershop contact in that community.

Brandon noted that no board action was needed on the PIB concept, but he welcomed feedback on the design of the form. Joelle Laginess indicated that she liked the form, and liked the opportunity it gives to share info with different groups within the District, or to provide connections to others when a PIB relocates.

Joe McDonald observed that the 10-year history of the H-Ex camp has already led to a number of early attendees who are now in teaching positions, or singing in quartets, or serving in leadership roles in our District and around the country. They have a network of communication, but we have lost contact with many of them because the info is not in one place.

u. Newsletter report:

Sherry Knight expressed a feeling of luck in getting the first edition published with the aid of a spreadsheet. She noted the next edition has been drafted, and will go to the design phase in the next week. She asked for board members to send her ideas for story lines. She wanted to get the PIB program into an issue soon. Another idea that she wants to promote is charities, and what the different chapters are doing. She is seeking e-mails about info on this subject. The article on this topic could focus on what one chapter is doing, or focus on several chapters. This is a topic that could be repeated several times a year, since it focuses on the part of the mission of the District.

She indicated that the cost of the newsletter will be \$500 for the next few months. She clarified that the cost per issue is about \$45. Joe McDonald noted that the budget approval for this cost will be considered later in the meeting along with other budget items.

C. Operations (cont.):3. Projects & events reports (cont.):u. Newsletter report (cont.):

Joe mentioned that former editors of the newsletter were thrilled with the new newsletter. Those persons were Greg Humbel, John Cowlshaw, and Tom Ennis. They were glad to see it return. Obviously, the format is different, but it is very dynamic and useful. Joe admitted that the format was copied from ones used by some other districts.

Sherry indicated that the analytics of the newsletter are being checked through Mail Chimp. Joe reported that the clip rate on the first edition was around 46%. It was clarified that "clip rate" is the "open rate". About 1000 people receive the document.

v. Update of the policy manual:

Sherry reported that a first review was made of the text to ensure that it did not have any language that did not uphold the E-I-H concept. The second review was focused on tightening the language. She indicated that it had a lot of redundancy in it. This review eliminated a lot of pages, but no concepts. She was hopeful that the revised document can be presented to the HOD in the fall.

Joe McDonald noted that one possible change---per a suggestion from Dave Montera---could be the makeup of the Nominating Committee. Changes will be separated out in the future for specific discussions.

w. Survey for future judge candidates:

Zach Schroeder indicated that his goals were to get more participation in District contests, and to get info to persons who might be interested in applying to be judge candidates. With regard to the former, he noted some success at the last convention---with more contestants than we have had in many years. At that convention we had our first mixed quartet contest, and had our first scheduled women's quartet contest (but no contestants). He was sure that the latter will change.

He reported that all spring district contests have been cancelled, the International convention has been cancelled, and Harmony University has been cancelled. He was glad to report that Paul Ellinger's application to become a candidate judge had been accepted. It has not yet been approved, however.

Zach indicated that he, Joe, Brandon, and Paul would be working during the next 30 days to roll out the Smartphone Showcase. They will be providing info for those who wish to participate. An ultimate goal of the program is to increase the number of participants in contests, and to increase interest in becoming judges.

Joe McDonald added that the contests that would have been held this weekend at the spring convention will be rolled forward to the fall convention.

Joe referred to a slide that listed the names of some persons in the District that have been suggested as judge candidates. He noted that we may need to plan for financial support of such persons in future budgets.

Joe cited the weekly ZOOM rehearsal that Chris Berry runs where people get to evaluate performances. He thought that potential judges might evolve from that process. He found it noteworthy that people often score rather close to the actual score received by the original performance. Reference was made to a 10-year-old participant in the session that Chris runs. Paul Ellinger didn't think there was an age limit on judges. Paul also noted that an actual judge in a session was the farthest off from the historical score.

D. Action Items:1. Vision/Mission Statement:

Aaron Pollard displayed a draft document that existed at the time this board meeting was announced. At the top of the text was the proposed vision and mission statements, and then the current statements, and finally, the Society's statements. The committee chose to make the District's vision statement match the Society's---"Everyone in Harmony".

Aaron noted there was a lot of discussion prior to the definition shown for the mission statement. The choice of the word "entity" was still being debated, but the language emphasized the role of chapters in "enriching lives through singing and serving local communities". While this may not be the final draft, Aaron felt it that it was succinct, and was consistent with the Society's efforts to move forward. He believed that the statements needed to be approved formally.

Joe McDonald explained that the word "entity" was highlighted because of Roger Lewis' concern about the validity of the word. Brandon Smith offered the word "community" as an alternative, because that was the way he saw the District. Aaron Pollard observed that this usage would place that word in the document twice in different contexts. Dave Montera noted that our documents with the State of Michigan list us as an "association" of chapters. Several persons liked that word. Sherry Knight looked up the definition of "association" and found this language---"a group of persons formally joined together for some common interest". She felt this word would work.

Joe McDonald asked Chris Berry if he could get to an edit function for the document and change the word.

Although he was not opposed to it, Paul Ellinger felt the word "association" was somewhat cold when compared to words like "community" or "family". He admitted that "association" was accurate.

Joelle Laginess suggested the word "organization", and Joe McDonald noted that word had been considered.

Joe asked if the vision and mission statements needed to be approved by the HOD. The secretary initially felt that they did, but Dave Montera observed that they are not policies. However, Dave also felt that it would still be a good practice to give the HOD a voice on the matter.

Joe said it would be desirable to use these statements soon, and yet it might be a while before we can hold a HOD meeting. Therefore, if we can use a board approval for now, it would be helpful. Action by the HOD might have to come later. Dave Montera recalled that the last update of the policy manual was first approved by the board, but was then provided to the HOD as a record of that action.

Sherry Knight moved that the vision statement be approved, and Joelle Laginess made the second.

Dave Montera admitted that he would liked to have seen the District have its own vision statement that relates to itself. He felt that this action was merely devolving to the Society. He would have liked to see something that tied the statement to the District. Dave was willing to forego a formal vote on this issue, however. **Motion approved under Small Board Rules.**

Joe McDonald moved on to the approval of the mission statement. He noted that the words "association" and "organization" were being considered as alternatives. Roger Lewis suggested that halves of the sentence be flip-flopped, and that it be phrased this way: "The Pioneer District actively enriches lives through singing and serving local communities through its ever-evolving chapters". Joelle Laginess expressed support for that language because it focuses on what we do, and not what we are as an organization.

D. Action Items (cont.):1. Vision/Mission Statement (cont.):

Paul Ellinger found that he didn't have capability to edit the document. Joe identified that he had created the text, but found that he couldn't do an edit because it was coming through Chris Berry. Roger proposed that the statement go back to the committee so it can be reworked and made easier to read as new text. Aaron Pollard was agreeable to reconvening the committee to do that task.

2. Memorandum of Cooperation:

Joe noted that this item had gotten missed at the start of the meeting. He reported that there had been no change in the status of the document. This may be related to its submission in March. He knew that several staff people must respond to Dustin Guyton with comments on our requests. Dustin had been invited to participate in this meeting. If he had, we might have learned more details. Joe indicated that he will arrange for a special board meeting when he gets a response.

3. Spring House of Delegates meeting:

Joe commented that some action items had been covered during the reports given during Section C (Operations). Specifically, the vision/mission statement, the website, the riser acquisition, and a lot of coming events were addressed. Therefore, he moved up the original Item D.5. to this point in the agenda.

[NOTE: Other items were also added afterwards with new numbers that do not follow a known agenda.]

It was noted that a number of districts are hosting their HOD meetings as virtual meetings. ZOOM technology works better for some of the larger districts anyway. Joe proposed that the next Pioneer meeting be done this way. He and Paul Ellinger will work on getting all of the chapters into the system. He expected that we may get a better representation of chapters in a virtual meeting than we normally get with physical meetings. He was optimistic that we still be able to have a traditional meeting at our fall convention.

4. New singing groups:

This topic was identified as an extension of the work that Brandon Smith is doing with the PIBs program. The intent is to add some of these groups to our programs. Joe cited a teacher in Okemos who used some music from the Harmony Explosion library to create a group that meets on an extracurricular basis. He suggested that the District might develop a library that can be used by such groups.

5. Barbersoul grant:

Since this application is still pending, Joe McDonald suggested that we might want to plan to support this initiative—no matter the outcome of the application process. We could plan to do something in addition to the grant, or in support of it even in the absence of any grant monies.

6. Standard District Bylaws:

Updates of Standard Chapter Bylaws were completed by most chapters in January. Since then, Joe has received proposed SDBs from the Society. Since he had received the document so recently, he did not attempt to distribute it to the board in preparation for this meeting. This will be a topic at a future board meeting. He indicated that the District Presidents Council had already discussed several issues and had gotten them addressed before the proposed SDBs were distributed.

D. Action Items (cont.):7. Convention raffle:

Joe reported that Alan Zaeske had proposed that the proceeds of the raffle go to the benefit of some activities or programs within the District---rather than to Harmony Foundation. Alan specifically mentioned camp scholarships.

Joe did not know if the raffle proceeds were committed to H/F by a past board action. Roger Lewis believed that there was a board action in past minutes that the proceeds were designated to go to H/F. In that case, the current board would be required to change that decision if it chooses to do so.

8. International conventions update:

Joe reported that, at the last two meetings of the District Presidents Council, Steve Armstrong (chair of the Contest and Judging group) talked about how the district qualifiers would be handled at Los Angeles. Now the discussion has moved to how it will be done at Cleveland. Joe McDonald expected that a future edition of the Troub will announce that all of the groups who qualified for L/A will go forward to Cleveland. Layered on top of them will be qualifiers from later contests. This means there could be as many as 50 choruses at that event. Basically, this means that two-years-worth of qualifiers will be on stage.

9. Muskegon chapter charter termination:

Joe indicated he was surprised and disappointed to learn that the chapter was well into the process before we heard about it. Dave Montera confirmed that he received no notification about it last fall. He felt that part of this happened because James Pennington (the point person in this process) left his position on the Society staff, and there was a period of several months before his successor was named. Dave contacted the successor in January to finalize the merger of the Detroit Oakland and the Grosse Pointe chapters. Dave got back an e-mail from that person that said there was a process for doing mergers. Dave declared that the process had been done, and many e-mails had been sent to James. The new contact discovered that there was a file of correspondence on that merger. Dave thought the Muskegon termination may have gotten dropped into a similar file.

Dave mentioned that he had heard that the Gratiot County chapter was considering disbanding. Joe knew this was not true, since the Mt. Pleasant and Gratiot County chapters share a director and a lot of contacts. Joe knew that Gratiot County shut down for a few months in the winter, but resumed its activities in March.

10. Lansing chapter Economic Injury Disaster loan application:

Joe reported that he had been in communication with Kevin Lenneman (treasurer of the Lansing chapter) about a chapter show scheduled in March. The show had to be cancelled two days beforehand. The chapter experienced serious financial losses because of programs that had been printed and other commitments. The chapter chose to apply for an EID loan from the Federal Small Business Administration. This is a \$10,000 loan that can be forgiven.

Joe and Chris Berry have been checking to see if any other chapters have experienced similar losses so the losses could be combined to meet a threshold. No chapters have, but it was learned that no threshold exists. Lansing has submitted the loan request, and Kevin and Joe are waiting to see if the request is accepted.

D. Action Items (cont.):11. Periodic meetings of the board via ZOOM:

Joe proposed that the board meet on a recurring basis using this technology. He envisioned that meetings might be scheduled for each month, but may not actually need to be held. The goal is to update the board continuously on projects. There were no objections. Scheduling on Sunday evenings was proposed since most everyone is involved in a chapter on the other nights. Since Joe has a District Presidents Council meeting on every third Sunday night, he suggested that either the first or second Sunday be considered.

12. References:

Joe referred to the documents at the end of the agenda that he “parks” at this location for ready reference.

C. Operations (return to):2. Treasurer’s report (return to):

A return to this area was made in order to address three budget-related items that still needed action. Those items were: \$1500 for director support for the Spirit chorus; \$500 as matching funds for the charity that the Motor City Metro chorus was supporting at the next convention; and \$500 for the District newsletter. Joe noted that action had already been taken on the website development project.

The \$1500 expense was covered first. Joe reminded everyone that the \$2000 expense for the Harmony Explosion camp will not occur in 2020, and that will affect the bottom line of the budget in a big way. Brandon Smith moved for approval of this expense, and Roger Lewis made the second.

Dave Montera asked if any money was provided for the director of the chorus that went to the last International. It was noted that monies were provided from the Windsor Sendoff, and \$3000 was provided by the District. These funds were given to the chapter. Zach Schroeder observed that chapters usually pay for the costs of their directors.

Dave wondered why we would be providing support in this instance since the Spirit chorus is not a District event. Several persons indicated they would be abstaining on this vote since it didn’t appear to make sense. Roger Lewis observed that we normally support all International competitors from the District. Paul Ellinger agreed with that statement, but he had a concern about paying the director.

Dave suggested to Sherry Knight that the policy manual be reviewed with regard to this topic. He thought that the manual covers how much money is provided to chapters and quartets. If this motion is approved, the language of the manual may need modification to include a senior chorus.

Brandon Smith confirmed that the figure of \$1500 was just for the expenses of the director (registration, travel, etc.). He felt that one of the strengths of Pioneer is that we support our members---even when they are not defined on the bank account---but they are still part of the organization. He saw the cost for two directors of the Spirit chorus as being about \$750 each, and felt it was a good way for the District to show that it cared about this group. He also liked the fact that the cost will not impact us this year because of the loss of the H-Ex cost.

Aaron Pollard was comfortable with us supporting choruses and quartets. However, he wasn’t clear about whether the Spirit chorus was or was not a chapter-run or District-run activity. He noted that the youth chorus was supported by the District when it went to the Mid-winter convention, but it didn’t make sense to him to support the director per se.

Roger Lewis suggested that this issue be turned over to the policy manual committee for an examination of how we should support this group and others. Paul Ellinger supported this idea, but urged that the question focus on support of the “District senior representative” since it might be a different group in the future.

C. Operations (return to) (cont.):2. Treasurer's report (return to) (cont.):

Brandon Smith asked if the money was going to be used to assist the chorus to go to the next Mid-Winter, or was it just a payment for past activities. It was clarified that the first scenario was what was intended. Brandon acknowledged that a payment to the chorus would probably then be given to the directors anyway. The mechanics of the process would lead to the same result.

Joe McDonald proposed that this action be tabled, and the decision be referred to the policy committee for further study. Sherry Knight made note of that decision.

The next item was the offer of \$500 in matching funds to the Motor City Metro for its designated charity for the next convention. Brandon Smith reported that he had discussed this issue with Cody Harrell and one other M-C-M member during the break in the meeting. They were comfortable with letting the issue remain unresolved for now. The situation with the pandemic may change the chapter's plans for the next convention. They are definitely interested, but want to talk more with the Mariners group. Joe McDonald proposed that this topic be reviewed again at a future board meeting.

Finally, the topic of the \$500 additional cost of creating the Mail Chimp site that supports the newsletter was considered. Joe McDonald realized that this cost had not been broken out during the discussion of the cost of creating the District website. He observed that a mini-website must be created for each month's edition. Though not as complicated as doing the website, the newsletter site does require some knowledge about placing photos into a template.

Sherry Knight moved this budget change, Joelle Laginess made the second. It was clarified that this is an expense of \$45/month. It was also clarified that this would be an expense in addition to the monies paid to Chris Bateson for the basic website design.

Paul Ellinger noted that this was similar situation to the earlier discussion of the design of the website. He wondered if there was anyone else who could do this job on a volunteer basis. However, he was comfortable with doing this task for \$500 annually if it would normally cost \$1000. He just wanted to see some due diligence done first.

Joe McDonald had a concern about the momentum of getting the newsletter out this year. He was amenable to getting proposals for doing the newsletter next year. Dave Montera noted that the costs for this year's issues should have been approved before they were incurred. Joe agreed with Dave's observation. Brandon Smith suggested that the motion be modified to cover just the issues that will go out this year. Dave Montera then proposed that this topic be considered along with whole question of website design that will be discussed with Chris Bateson.

Joe decided that the motion should be tabled until all discussions with Chris Bateson had been completed. Alternatively, the motion maker and seconder could withdraw the motion, but they did not choose to do so.

Joe verified with Chris Berry that he would be pursuing these topics with Chris Bateson.

E. Adjournment:

Joe McDonald asserted that the ZOOM technology worked well for this meeting. Others agreed with that assessment. Paul Ellinger complimented Chris Berry on getting all of the reports displayed on the screen. Joe thanked the members for contributing their time on this Saturday and on their committee responsibilities, and for continuing to work on things for this year and for next year.

At 2:13 p.m., Joe McDonald declared that the meeting was adjourned.

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