

Minutes of the meeting of the House of Delegates of the Pioneer District of SPEBSQSA, Inc.  
held on April 20, 2018, in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, MI

1. Call to Order:

District President Dave Montera called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. He asked Mike Hansen, the District Immediate Past President, to lead everyone in the singing of "The Old Songs".

2. Quorum:

District Secretary Jim McMahan determined that a quorum (30% of authorized delegates) was present.

**[NOTE: The sign-in sheets were attached to the original hard copy of these minutes.]**

3. Agenda:

Dave Montera announced that the agenda had been provided with the Second Notice mailings. The secretary asked that anyone making or seconding a motion to identify himself.

Chris Berry (Monroe North) moved that the agenda be adopted. Jerry Ditto (Kalamazoo) offered the second. **Motion approved.**

4. Minutes of the previous meeting:

Dave Montera noted that the agenda listed the minutes to be approved as being from April 2017, but they were obviously from October 2017.

Dan Bezaire (Windsor) moved for approval, and Mike Sobel (Kalamazoo) made the second. **Motion approved.**

5. Memorial for deceased members:

Dan Bezaire conducted the ceremony. He indicated that the names of members would be announced during the event, and asked that the phrase "Rest in Peace" be sung after each name is given.

The following individuals were honored:

Bob Hood	Traverse City
Dick Ender	Monroe North, Huron Valley
Dan Springer	Detroit-Oakland
Woody Ely	Gratiot County
Donald C. Richmond	Benton Harbor/St. Joseph
John Van Wetrienen	Kalamazoo
Larry Swan	Battle Creek
Jim Styer	Battle Creek
Larry Parker	Lansing

6. Treasurer's Report:

Chris Berry asked the delegates if they preferred lots of numbers, or a text report. The latter was chosen. He began by highlighting the transfer of the old accounts from Citizens Bank and Comerica Bank to PNC. The Security Benefits account was also closed, and \$2700 went in the savings. There was also an old credit card account that has been paid off. Finally, a QCA long-term liability account for approximately \$1700 has been transferred to the QCA savings.

Chris reported that the net profit for the District was just under \$5000. However, cash reserves dropped by about \$6800 in the period from December 2016 to December 2017. That was mostly due to the payoff of the credit card account. He indicated that it appears that the District lost money in that period. He pointed out that payment in 2017 of a current liability held in 2016 makes it look that way. If the \$9000 had been paid in 2016, the figure in his report would have around \$82,000. He emphasized that the District has continued to make money over the last five years.

6. Treasurer's Report (cont.):

Chris indicated that, in 2017, the District supported the Harmony Explosion camp, and sent chorus and quartet representatives to International at a cost of \$6000. He referred to the financial numbers for other events that were supported during the year, and emphasized that a loss is not necessarily a bad thing. It was just something that had to be covered. He did cite the spring 2017 convention in Traverse City that experienced a \$4000 loss, but the fall convention did have a profit of \$7400. Harmony Marketplace has made about \$400.

Chris noted that there was a loss of about \$2600 for Bush League, Top Gun, Quartet Boot Camp, and the Music Summit, but he saw that cost as an indication of an investment that supports the District's membership.

He reported that the QCA had a profit of just over \$2000 because it hosted the fall 2016 convention, but got paid for it in 2017. QCA also had income from a long-term liability, but had expenses from support of Top Gun.

Chris moved to his Profit and Loss by Class report. He noted that both QCA and the general account have columns. Everything is paid out of the general account. At the end of the year, there is a transfer to QCA of either a profit or a loss. For 2017, a transfer was made of \$393.90.

It was reported that a Financial Review was done by Jim Kunz. It includes a list of good things that have been done, and suggestions for things that could be done better. That report is available from Dave Montera for those who are interested. Tax forms have also been filed with the IRS. Chris declared that 2017 was a good year.

In response to a question, Chris confirmed that the Windsor Sendoff liability is in the balance sheet. It is still owed, and is in the amount of \$2427.61.

Chris went back to his text report to show that the District's profit so far for 2018 is \$2970.71. That number was as of March, so this convention will change that number---hopefully higher. A bill for the venue last fall in Battle Creek (\$3800) was finally received so it could be paid. A Leadership Academy in February came out as a mostly breakeven event. Top Gun income minus expense generated a loss of \$2000. This is split between QCA and the District. Chris wished that this income would be zero and the event could be fully funded. However, he recognized that attendees must have some commitment to insure that they come.

Chris delineated that the QCA loss of \$845 was due to the split of Top Gun expenses minus income.

Dave Montera added a comment as a result of a discussion at the BOD meeting earlier in the day. He noted that some numbers are seen in reports as a financial loss. He emphasized that these are just numbers, and do not reflect the return to the District. When we lose money on certain events, it is actually a return on investment. He cited, as an example, the fact that three quartets are going to International this year. Having 50-60 people attend a Leadership Academy, and getting good feedback on leadership abilities and methods of going forward within chapters is another example of a return on investment. Dave asserted that is where the District wants to put its money. The goal is not to make a profit on every activity. If we should make a profit on an event, that is just a bonus.

7. Harmony Foundation International representative report:

Dave noted that, technically, there is no HFI rep at this convention. However, Pioneer is privileged to have the chairperson of HFI living within the District. He introduced Lynn Weaver, who is completing her sixth, and last year on the HFI board. Next year, she will be the immediate past president, but won't have any duties.

Lynn extended thanks to all of the HFI donors in the room, and declared that their charitable giving helps a lot of wonderful programs to exist.

She noted that there are many ways that support can be given, and she would cover them shortly. She then stated the Mission Statement of HFI---which is "To connect people through charitable giving to enrich lives through singing".

7. Harmony Foundation International representative report (cont.):

She moved on to the Vision statement---which is "To be the premier international agent through which individuals and organizations invest in the lifelong benefits of singing".

In reference to the word "lifelong", she asked for a show of hands by those who have been singing for more than 40 years, and then 50. She asserted that those who held up their hands know that singing does wonderful things for a person.

She noted that HFI funds programs and training opportunities for middle school students, and all the way up to college students. It provides singing and training opportunities for singing directors and singing educators. It provides support and resources to communities of singers and their leaders. These are the things that are used to define grants.

Several BHS programs fall within these guidelines---such as the Youth Chorus Festival, the Healthy Chapter Initiative, Harmony University, and various outreach grants. She spotted Marty Monson taking pictures at the moment, and noted that he could tell about all of those programs.

Lynn mentioned that there are several ways to give. The first one is Ambassadors of Song. She acknowledged the A-O-S donors who were present. Their donations help to support on-going expenses such as travel and staff.

She also acknowledged Presidents Council donors who were present, and who are contributing to the annual fund.

Lynn extolled the opportunity to use the Donors Choice program, so that some part of the donation comes back to the donor's home chapter or district. In 2017, over \$400,000 was given back through this program.

Another program she mentioned was Legacy of Harmony through which donations can be made through estate planning with insurance policies or bequests. Any amount given helps a lot.

An additional option is the "Keep the Melody Ringing" program where donations can be made in memory of a deceased barbershopper. If the donations on behalf of a specific individual exceed \$1000, the person's name is put on a plaque at Harmony Hall. Two persons from Pioneer for whom that has happened are Johnny Wearing and Larry Parker.

Lynn wanted to mention a program that is especially important to her---the Youth Chorus Festival at the Mid-Winter convention. She encouraged everyone to attend it. She noted that the first Mid-Winter she attended was very moving for her. That was the year when the Cleveland Heights chorus came with twelve small, scared boys. Last year there 25 boys present, and again, with no director. They have wonderful choreography and great showmanship. Lynn was fascinated by the group's evolution in confidence and stage presence. She was amazed that these young people can get up in front of thousands, after hard work and fund-raising at home, and share their effort to people they don't know. They get standing ovations. They experience emotions. Lynn was glad that many of them will go on into other singing groups in high school, or college, or elsewhere. She saw this as an investment in young people in singing and in life experiences. She saw this as growth in confidence and the ability to be in front of others. She knew she could never have the kind of stage presence exhibited by these 15-year-olds. She saw this as an opportunity for gaining skills for living life by participating in music.

Lynn felt that those of us who sing have the privilege to express ourselves through song, to sing from our hearts, to touch other people's lives through voices, and to give back to ourselves some of what the world takes away. She saw the world as very compressed and compact, and it demands a lot. But with singing, one gives back to one's self. Singing is the giving of a gift that was first given to you, and now you are sharing it.

She knew that the challenge for every chapter is to retain its singers, and also to encourage more young people to attend. The latter is a very different and difficult endeavor. She was confident, nevertheless, that chapters will do it.

7. Harmony Foundation International representative report (cont.):

Lynn declared that HFI was honored to be able to enable some of these programs, and to help the world to be a healthier place through singing. She alluded to a family saying that “If we all do just what we’re able to do, more people will be singing, and the world will be a better place”.

She thanked the delegates for inviting her to speak, and offered a hope for a wonderful convention.

8. Barbershop Harmony Society representative report:

Dave Montera was pleased to introduce Marty Monson, the CEO of the BHS, as the Society’s rep to this convention. He noted that it has been four years since he last came, and then it was also at Grand Rapids. It was noted that Marty was singing in two Harmony Platoon quartets.

Marty had arranged for the showing of the video about the next steps for the strategic plan “Everyone in Harmony”. This video includes the roadmap and milestones as they relate to the big goal. (While Chris Berry was loading the video, Marty led the group in the singing of “Down Our Way”.) Eventually, the January 2018 “Town Hall Board Meeting” video was found on YouTube.

The main areas of focus delineated in this video were: “Participation and Engagement”, “Impact”, “Scale of Assets”, and “Inclusion”. Dates for implementation were noted that go out to 2028.

**[Because this video is publicly available, its full content was not repeated in these minutes.]**

Marty indicated that he would be holding a 90-minute listening session later that afternoon. He encouraged delegates to attend, or to talk to him during the weekend. All possible paths that can be pursued must be heard. Marty knew that a lot of listening has been done already, and a lot of surveys been made. He wanted to have time to talk to as many as possible.

Marty saw this time as an opportunity to build on 80 years of success. Even though BHS has seen a decline in membership, it is still the biggest vocal organization in the world. We have an opportunity to send an olive branch in our communities—where people are born singers. They just have to discover the opportunities to sing. We have to “encourage”---a word found in our legal name (though not in our DBA). He is excited that we have reached the point where we have dates and plans developed.

Marty asserted that the Pioneer BOD is doing good things, and that Pioneer is a healthy district. The District has some money to make investments in program. The District is open to enhancement of 80 years of awesomeness.

Marty said that he was glad to come back to Pioneer where he spent a few years in Kalamazoo, and married into a Michigan family.

Dave Montera presented Marty with a gift package from the Experience Grand Rapids convention group. He expressed his thanks for a worn-out coffee pot that might be coming with the gift, and hoped that an International convention might come to Michigan some day.

Dave mentioned that he gets messages from the Society in preparation for selection of the Society rep that comes to a given convention. He said that he wanted someone to talk about “Everyone in Harmony”, and what it means to an individual member, to a chapter, and to a district. He learned that Marty was tentatively slated to come to this convention, but that remark assured his selection. He indicated that answers to those concerns will be covered in the forthcoming listening session. Dave wasn’t sure who would be listening to whom. He was sure that a lot of good questions should be presented. He knew that, if a question comes up that Marty can’t answer, he knows where to get the answer.

9. Consent Calendar:

Dave thanked all of the members of the BOD for submitting their reports on time. It was believed that this is first time that has happened. He knew that the delegates had received the reports, had read them, and understood them.

9. Consent Calendar (cont.):

Doran McTaggart (Windsor) moved that the Consent Calendar reports be approved. The second was given by Eric Domke (Pontiac-Waterford). **Motion approved.**

10. Old Business:

(There was none.)

11. New Business:

a. Budget Supplements for Music Summit and CDWI:

Dave Montera reported that the BOD, at its meeting that morning, had approved some supplements to the budget so that the Music Summit programs can be expanded, and also to offer a CDWI later in the year.

b. Succession planning:

Another action of the BOD that morning was to add to the list of persons who participate in the board---not as an expansion---but as part of a succession plan. The intent is to have some persons "in the wings" who are involved with board activities, who participate in the discussions, but are not voting members. These persons will move into board positions as they become available, and if there is a proper fit.

Dave noted that one person was already added to this board in this capacity at the fall 2017 BOD meeting. That was Craig Roney, who is shadowing the District Secretary function. The two persons that were added that morning were Zach Schroeder and Brandon Smith.

c. Windsor Sendoff:

Doran McTaggart announced that he had folders with tickets for the Sendoff on Friday, June 8, at the Serbian Club in Windsor. Everyone likes the sauce on the spaghetti, but now it is Serbian flavor. The quartets that will be there will be determined tomorrow. He was hoping that will be three quartets that qualify again. The senior quartet that qualified last fall will be there, as will a youth quartet that has qualified via tapes. Aaron Pollard reported that "Frontier" had qualified. Choruses that have adequate numbers present will also be able to sing as well. The Grand Rapids chorus will perform also.

Doran said that the highlight of the evening will be spaghetti with meat in it this year, and all for the price of \$21. About half of that amount will go to the International chorus rep. The Detroit-Oakland chapter will also present checks to the quartets from the Jug Night fund.

Doran proceeded to distribute tickets to chapter representatives.

a. Budget Supplements for Music Summit and CDWI (return to):

Jamie Carey mentioned that there will be info on the Big Screen about the next Music Summit. This one will be held on May 19 in Canton so that persons on the east side of the state can attend. He noted that 12 chapters were represented at the last one. Because it was requested, the focus of this one will again be a sharing of best practices. Each chapter will be able to talk about things that have worked well for it. There will also be some discussion of the problem of "silos mentality".

He announced that the fall Music Summit will be held on September 29 in Grand Rapids. He is looking to bring in some big name directors from outside the District. Theo Hicks and David Zimmermann were mentioned specifically.

The date of the CDWI will be in November. More details will come out soon. If enough directors register, he may hold the event in Grand Rapids on one day and in the Detroit area on the next day. Jamie asked that anyone who is interested to contact him in person or electronically.

11. New Business (cont.):c. Sponsorship of convention service project (back to agenda):

Roger Boyer mentioned that the service project for this convention was the fourth one so far. However, there will be a change in the planning of the project to be held during the fall convention in Battle Creek. Originally, the sponsor of the project was to be the host chapter. Since Battle Creek has already established a relationship, it has been decided to let chapters that might never host a convention to be the sponsor of the project. Chapters who are hosting for the first time will still be allowed to be the project sponsor. This change becomes effective only when a host chapter has already been a sponsor.

Chapters that would like to be a sponsor should contact Roger to let him know of their interest. There are some criteria for managing a project which he will share with the chapter. Specifically, he is looking for a sponsor for the Battle Creek event this fall.

d. Notifications of deaths of barbershoppers:

Roger reminded the delegates that the Society sends out a condolence letter to the immediate family of any former barbershopper whose death is communicated to the Society. That is dependent upon receipt of information. Chapter secretaries are supposed to report this info, but often fail to do so. Therefore, he proposed that his Outreach function become a focal point for receipt of such info. This should be done even if the individual has not been involved with the Society for many years.

Roger offered to share info that he receives with District chapters so that they can send cards to the family---in addition to the letter the family gets from the Society. Roger will also provide notification of the data to the Society in case a chapter secretary has failed to report it.

Roger has sent a notice of this procedure to chapter presidents and VPs of Membership. He invited the delegates to contact him if they have any questions.

e. Executive Vice-President's survey to chapters:

Joe McDonald indicated that he sent a survey out to all of the chapters in January. That first survey was to clear up lines of communication to the chapters. As a result, each chapter president and/or his designee(s) are on a master list that can be used for consistent communication with chapters. Those contact persons are the ones that should be forwarding info to the members. Chapter members should learn who those persons are. If they can't determine who the contacts are, they should check with Joe.

The next survey will come out in late May or in June to ask what things the District can do that will best suit the chapter's needs. Joe urged that the survey be completed by getting a consensus of inputs from chapter members. He recommended that the survey be discussed within the chapter. Joe is hoping that this project can be completed within the first half of the year.

f. Youth in Harmony impact:

Joe alluded to Lynn Weaver's earlier remarks about the Youth Chorus Festival. He noted that youth can have similar experiences a lot closer to home. He cited the Harmony Explosion camp that the Mt. Pleasant chapter is hosting for the eighth year in a row.

He referred to some young members of the District that are now helping with the leading of the camp. He is beginning to see the development of future leaders of the Society, District, and chapters as youth come out of these camps. Joe sees the camp as a wonderful experience musically, socially, and fraternally, and that it has a leadership perspective.

He indicated that he had 2000 cards with him to promote the camp. He asked the delegates for their help in getting them to potential campers. He implored the delegates to take cards home with them, or contact him to get some. Campers from previous years have been asking for them, and 300 have been shipped out so far.

11. New Business (cont.):f. Youth in Harmony impact (cont.):

Dave Montera asked if Joe would appreciate donations to provide scholarships for camp attendees. Joe mentioned that this has been a great recognition of the value of this program. Each year he has made a request on Pionet for donations in support. Last year the response was so good that he did not have to make a second appeal. He emphasized that no attendee has had to be turned away because of a lack of financial support. He acknowledged that the need grows slightly each year. The checks that are received really help. In 2017, only 6 campers did not need some assistance.

Lynn Weaver asked if the camp's website had a "Donate Now" button. Joe admitted that it did not, but that could be easily arranged.

Joe mentioned that the [www.mountaintownsingers.org](http://www.mountaintownsingers.org) website has a link to the camp website. He declared that he could easily tell ten life-changing stories about previous camp attendees.

Jamie Carey wondered if a link to the camp website could be added to the District's website. Joe indicated that he would arrange that detail with Steve Sutherland.

g. Problem with e-mail blasts through MailChimp:

Dan Bezaire mentioned that some of these e-mails, when sent to holders of g-mail accounts, may go into promotion folders. He suggested that the problem be shared with chapter members.

h. Harmony Mercenaries program:

Chris Berry chose to speak about this program. He identified it as an easy way to get some inter-chapter activities going. Participants learn seven songs, and can then sing with anybody in the program. He compared it to the polecat program.

An extension of the Mercenaries program is the Harmony Platoon event scheduled on Saturday of this convention has 60 men registered. They have formed 17 quartets, and represent 14 chapters.

Chris noted that there are two existing Harmony Platoons with the Mercenaries. The west side group includes Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Holland, Battle Creek, Lansing, and Kalamazoo. An east side group has now been organized, and includes Huron Valley, Monroe North, Windsor, Wayne, and Livingston County. That group will be meeting on May 8 in Wayne.

i. Bush League:

Dick Hartrick identified himself as the chairperson of Bush League---an event now in its 72nd year. He saw many persons in the room whose names are on the B/L trophy. He noted that B/L is changing this year. They are tacking on a Platoon event and a Harmony Mercenaries chorus. It has been arranged that a performance will be held on Friday night in the main street in Bellaire. The traditional Bush League show will be held on Saturday night, but will be open to the community. He reiterated that it is a combined B/L, Platoon, Mercenaries event. There will be a golf outing beforehand on Friday afternoon. Coaching opportunities will be offered. Dick displayed some "It's not your father's Bush League" pins that are available.

Roger Lewis commented that, in the late 50's, four guys from Detroit went to Bush League, and decided to call themselves the "Autotowners". That was where they got their start.

Jamie Carey added that many members of the QCA recalled that there used to be 50-100 guys who attended B/L on Friday night and sang tags. Many of them would form quartets, create names, and compete the next day. He saw it as an intensive social event. That is why they are planning this year's event with a start on Friday of social activities. The goal is to see that everyone who wants to be in quartet can do so. That will be followed by a little Platoon contest on Saturday morning. Some of the groups from that contest will go on to the bigger B/L contest that afternoon. The important thing is that individuals can come and participate. Jamie complimented Dick on his arrangement with Bellaire personnel to sell tickets and do the publicity.

11. New Business (cont.):

i. Bush League (cont.):

Jamie expected that there were be 5000 people in Bellaire that weekend, so he encouraged the delegates to talk to their chapters.

j. Jug Nights:

Dave Montera alluded to previous remarks by Doran McTaggart about the Jug Fund checks that are given to quartets going to International. He corrected that to say that Detroit-Oakland cuts checks from the Jug Nights, but the money comes from the members. DOC is hosting a Jug Night on Monday, May 7, which is DOC's normal rehearsal night. He wants to see as many chapters as possible to come and have their choruses and quartets perform. The chapters can also verbally promote their groups as well, since there may be friends and guests present. He stated the date again, and gave the time and location (7:30 p.m. at the Royal Oak Middle School). There are flyers that call the night "Barbershopalooza".

Roger Lewis reported that the Jug Night at Battle Creek will be on Tuesday, May 22. Dave noted that enough money was raised at last year's Jug Nights to give \$1000 to each of the three quartets going to International, and also to the senior quartet that went to Mid-Winter. It was noted that figure was almost enough to cover their all-events tickets.

Dave is hoping that can be done again to cover those tickets. He observed that it will still cost most quartets about \$6000 for their other expenses. The Jug Fund nights are an important way to support these quartets. He added that DOC will be matching gifts from chapters that are received on Jug Night--up to \$100 per chapter.

Dave urged everyone to support the Jug Nights. There will be 50:50 raffles at each event that will raise some more money. The Jug Nights, along with the direct support from the District, is an important way that quartets are supported.

k. District's theme for 2018-2019:

Dave referred to the "Lasting Friendships, Enduring Music" buttons that many of the delegates were wearing. He indicated that this was the theme that he wanted to use for the two years of his presidency. He noted that the phrase came from the way that he looks at our hobby.

In reference to "Lasting Friendships", Dave cited three friendships that he has had over the years. The first one was the person who was his Man-of-Note. He still sings with that person in his current chapter. They made an acquaintance while he was a police officer patrolling a beach on July 4. This person was walking the beach in barbershop-promotional attire while carrying firecrackers and an open beverage. Dave stopped him and said, "You sing barbershop?" Greatly relieved, the person said "yes", and learned that Dave sang it in high school. The individual connected Dave with a person in his home community who brought him into the old Oakland County chapter. Dave still considers this person as a friend.

The second friend was a mentor. He wasn't assigned to Dave, but Dave recognized this person as someone who could help him. At his first rehearsal, he was seated next to this person. Dave found him to be a very nice person and a friendly lead. For three years, Dave learned everything he needed to know from his mentor. Dave also learned from this person as he began to work in administrative and leadership positions. At age 22, Dave was told to "direct"---and he became an assistant director. His mentor supported him in this role.

Dave recognized that, since he had a mentor, that he should share his knowledge with younger people. Dave identified a specific person in this meeting with whom he has been sharing his experiences. Dave felt it is important for younger people to know that older members were once in the same roles as they are now. Dave summarized that we may now be older, but that is only on the outside. Inside, we are still young. He felt it was important to let younger people know that we are here to share experiences and enjoy with us.

Dave declared that was the "Lasting Friendships" part. "Enduring Music" is easy. He noted that he can remember songs from when he was 3 that we written before he was born, and can remember the words.

11. New Business (cont.):

k. District's theme for 2018-2019 (cont.):

Dave cited instances where he has recalled all of the details of an oldies song, and amazed his wife with his knowledge. Truly, "Music is Enduring!". Every song leaves a spot in our heart, and has a meaning to us. We associate it with something. That is why the music endures within us. Our ability as barbershoppers to share that music is what we should be all about. Because it is enduring to us, let us share with others so that it becomes enduring with them.

Dave announced that was what his aim will be during the next two years.

12. Other Business:

(There was none.)

13. Adjournment:

At 2:58 p.m., the meeting was declared adjourned by Dave Montera. Aaron Pollard was asked to lead the delegates in the singing of "Keep The Whole Singing".