

Minutes of the Pioneer District Board of Directors of SPEBSQSA, Inc.
held on January 12, 2014, in the Bezshik Room of the Soaring Eagle Waterpark & Hotel

Attendees:

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

Dan Bezaire (President)
Mike Hanson (Executive vice-president)
Jim McMahan (Secretary)
Larry Parker (Treasurer)
Doug Weaver (Immediate past president, and also Director of Financial Development)
Evan Boegehold (Director of YIH)
Brian Dunckel (Director of C&J)
Paul Ellinger (Director of Membership)---(late arrival)
Roger Lewis (Director of Events)
Joe McDonald (Director of CSLT)
James O'Dell (Director of Mktg. & PR)

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

Cliff Dake (Director of Music & Performance)
Rob Pettigrew (Director of CDD)

-----Guests: (none)

I. Call To Order:

President Dan Bezaire began the meeting at 9:00 a.m. by asking Evan Boegehold to direct the singing of "The Old Songs".

II. Quorum:

The secretary confirmed that a quorum was present.

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

The minutes had been previously distributed by the District Secretary. Joe McDonald moved that the minutes be approved, and Doug Weaver made the second. **Motion approved.**

It was asked if there were any items of business in those minutes that should be addressed. Since the document was buried in the secretary's non-functioning computer, a copy was not available to review. No one knew of anything that should be covered.

IV. Directors' Reports:

Dan Bezaire noted that some of the board members had submitted work plans. He indicated that it had been suggested, however, that submittal of those plans be deferred until later.

It was noticed that the topic of "Treasurer's Report" was not included in the agenda. Dan indicated that he wanted to put Larry Parker's report at the end after all of the directors' reports were completed.

Dan explained that a reason for deferring the work plans was that those plans might be changed as a result of the activities of the Leadership Academy held the day before. He asked that the plans (or amended versions of what has been provided to date) be submitted by the end of February.

---C&J:

Brian Dunckel noted that the report he had submitted contained three basic points:

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---C&J (cont.)

His first task was to define his new role as the Director of C&J for the District. He will be doing a lot of learning, but has been assisted by pages of check lists given to him by Ron Eubank. The lists identify differences between the fall and spring conventions. Some of the work for the spring event has already begun. Brian has discovered that it will be a lot more work than he envisioned,

Brian did discover that he had a work trip scheduled for the convention weekend in April. Since Ron is helping to oversee Brian's first event, he will be there to run the actual contest duties. Brian is hopeful that he will be back in time for the Saturday night portion. Brian's wife will fill in on the hospitality aspects of the job. Doug Weaver will also help. Roger Lewis will situate the judges' rooms adjacent to each other. Roger confirmed that Ron will also need to be housed in that area.

His second task will be the general organization of the District's judging activities. He expected that this would be an on-going requirement of the job for as long as he has it.

Finally, his third task will be to support our three current prospects for becoming certified judges---two in the Music category, and one in the Singing category. **[NOTE: Per a recommendation from Gary Plaag at the last BOD meeting, the names of the candidates are not reported in these minutes.]**

Doug Weaver reported that he and his wife were handling judges' services at the spring convention on behalf of his chapter---the host chapter Grand Rapids.

As an aside, Roger Lewis asked that the work plans submitted by the end of February be sent to the entire board, and not just to Dan. He noted that he had not received Brian's report, or any others that may be sent out.

The secretary noted that, had his computer been functioning, he would have acquired them by whatever means necessary, and gotten them sent to everyone.

---YIH:

Shortly after the last BOD meeting, Evan Boegehold began working on development of connections with the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia chapter in Mt. Pleasant. He has been frustrated by a lack of response from that organization. He was curious about what they want, or if that group is the wrong one to contact. He indicated that he was not ready to give up on this project. He was going to talk to college-age BHS members at other Pioneer locations to see if they can develop connections in their areas.

Discussion of the youth chorus ("The Voice") was deferred until it came up later in the agenda.

Evan mentioned that James O'Dell had found a high school in Lake Orion that has a 60-member all-male chorus. Evan was going to check out the group, and see if there might be an opportunity to make a barbershop presentation to the students.

Evan had been advised by Gary Plaag that high school and college students can be the worst members because they have no money, they can't make long-term commitments of time, and they are girl-crazy. Until they get settled in their careers and families, they won't get involved in barbershop. Evan felt that the most important thing for us to do is to let them know what they can do in the future. For now, we may not get them on the risers very often or in quartets. We can give them music, and we can stay connected to them. Evan hopes to develop a plan that chapters can use to reach out to this age group, and to schools.

Since Evan was unfamiliar with the design of work plans, Dan Bezair summarized that they should list 3-4 things. Then at the spring convention BOD meeting, the progress (or lack thereof) on those items should be reported. An additional report would be made at the fall convention meeting. Dan emphasized that plans are not rigorous; they can be changed.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

----YIH (cont.):

Doug Weaver wondered if the District should purchase some copies of music that Evan could take to schools that he visited. Brian Dunckel gave a reminder that educator packets were already available from the Society at no cost. Evan was sure that he wants to go beyond e-mails and phone calls, and be able to go to schools to make presentations and to provide that kind of materials. Joe McDonald noted that music and mini-CDs were taken to the recent ACDA convention.

Roger Lewis mentioned that he was hoping to have Saturday night pre-show performances at the conventions that would involve local a capella groups---preferably male. He has discovered that is difficult to do it in the fall because it's too early in the school year. Roger is working with Bud Kraft to line up a group for the spring 2014 convention. Roger wants to keep Evan in the loop for coordination to other groups that might be considered in the future.

Meanwhile, Roger is looking for local community groups that could be featured at fall conventions. He noted that "The Voice" doesn't have to qualify to go to the Youth Chorus Festival, so he wondered if that group could appear this fall. Evan indicated he would talk to Aaron Pollard about that idea.

Doug Weaver suggested that an appearance by "The Voice" in the fall could be designed as a fund-raiser. Although the District may sponsor the group, there will be a need for supplemental funds.

[Arrival of Paul Ellinger noted.]

---Marketing & PR:

James O'Dell added to Evan's mention of the Lake Orion school chorus by explaining that the son of one of his co-workers goes to that school. The boy will be attending one of the Harmony Explosion camps. James also will seek to get the boy into "The Voice". He anticipated that Evan would have a "warmer contact" with the teacher at the school as a result. He will give the name of the teacher to Evan.

James announced that one of his goals for the year was to drive convention attendance up. He was excited about Roger's plan to have a pool party with pizza at the terrace above the pool. He wants to expand on the idea by having some activity there that will appeal to children. He was going to ask Paul Ellinger or someone who works well with children to be there to organize some games. He anticipated that this activity will be publicized before the convention.

James mentioned that contact had been made with "Experience Grand Rapids" about developing outside activities like tours. A craft beer tour is one of the options. James liked the availability of self-propelled buses. These units handle up to 20 persons, and have a driver.

Another event that will be happening at the time of the spring convention is the butterfly exhibit at Meijer Gardens. The Ford presidential library is also an outside activity that can be promoted. The goal of all of these options is to attract non-competitors and family members.

James hopes to organize a P.R. event in Grand Rapids before the actual convention. "Experience Grand Rapids" is working with him to develop some ideas of where this could be done.

The "Trivia Night" event the Mt. Pleasant chapter held at a micro-brewery was cited as an example of what could be done. Joe McDonald reported that he had learned that Toby Shaver had worked as an emcee at events of that type, and was interested in helping with the concept.

James wondered if the P.R. event should be done as a Grand Rapids chapter function, and then they would be assisted by others in the District. It could be held a few weeks before the convention, and also serve as a recruiting opportunity for the G.R. chapter. Alternatively, it could be held on the Thursday or Friday immediately beforehand. Free tickets for the Saturday night show could be given out then. It would be important to identify those attendees with special tickets so they can be greeted.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Marketing & PR (cont.):

James acknowledged that some people are not keen about outsiders coming to conventions since "barbershop is a participatory sport". Nevertheless, James would like to fill the auditorium with visitors who will have a good experience if we manage it correctly. Be sure that they feel special. Do things that get them involved, and let them know what is happening. Engage them in activities before, and after the contest. Maybe we will get some new members for the Grand Rapids chapter as a result.

Doug Weaver reported that two of the local TV stations do promos to bring in local groups. Doug specifically suggested that we get "Playlist" to appear. "Majestyx" was also proposed for this option.

Roger Lewis recalled that the high school to be used for the convention has a great arts program. He didn't know anything about their choral program. He advocated that complimentary registrations be offered to students that can present a school ID.

Joe McDonald reported that South Christian High School has sent students to Harmony Explosion camp, and that he had connections with the teacher at that school.

Doug mentioned that the Grand Rapids chapter had planned to send comp tickets to local choral teachers. Roger urged that we instead allow students from those schools to come in by merely showing an ID.

Since there might also be college students in the area, James O'Dell proposed that we offer free admission to anyone with a school photo ID---and who looks young enough to be in school!

Brian Dunckel thought we should do a survey of our membership to see if they actually want us to offer outside activities. He asked Joe if he could create a "survey monkey" to determine if people would attend them. Joe thought that a very simple survey that asks "Do you want a family activity?" would be suitable. While older members aren't likely to go a bicycle tour, they might enjoy Meijer Gardens.

James felt we should not lock in a reservation for the self-propelled bus. Instead, we could urge that members arrange it themselves. Many of the other ideas can be simply announced with times and locations and discounts available. That way, we do the initial planning and communications. Those who are interested will do the final coordination, and perhaps seek out others to join them.

Paul Ellinger was of the opinion that families would prefer to do outside activities on their own---especially if there was a specific time when the adult male family member was not competing. James agreed that most of the outside activities must be offered on Friday when there would be fewer conflicts.

Doug felt that the Convention & Visitors Bureau would be most helpful in the planning of activities. It was suggested that the CVB might even pay for the cost of the bus for the craft beer tour. James then concluded that the beer tour might need more organization on our part, but everything else could be left up to the participants.

James expanded on a discussion of Facebook techniques he heard the day before at L/A where one puts an event on F/B, and asks who else wants to go. This would allow us to track how many are going, and spur others to consider it. Joe suggested that this might also be a way to encourage people to stay over on Sunday. It was pointed that the hotel rate we're getting is good for three days before and after the convention.

Roger noted that most of the board members might want to come on Thursday night anyway, and then we might more prone to bring our spouses.

Paul asked if there were a lot of art museums in the Grand Rapids area. James confirmed that there were. He noted that the CVB was pulling together a list of museums (with maps showing locations), a list of shopping locations (with maps), and a sheet about the microbreweries (with maps). "Experience G.R." can create an event "micro-site" to which we could link through the District's convention page.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Marketing & PR (cont.):

Another event that James proposed was to have a tag contest. He reported that "Instant Classic" did this at a Cardinal convention where 10 tags were published in advance (with learning CDs), and then people were invited to sing two of those tags and get an evaluation from a recognized quartet. Roger suggested that this activity be scheduled for the fall convention in conjunction with support from the QCA. In the spring, quartets are instead focused on the competition for International.

Since Dan Bezaire was going to make visitation assignments later in the meeting, James thought it would be helpful for us to go with a list of activities to promote.

Joe McDonald was delighted that "Experience Grand Rapids" could be so involved in this event. He felt that the organization would be an excellent resource to bring together all of these outside activities without major effort on our part. These projects will give us an opportunity to measure interest. Hopefully we can sustain these things at conventions, determine if they are worthwhile, and determine if members will take advantage of them.

Doug Weaver observed that we have a long history of not having things like this at conventions, so there will be a slow acceptance of them.

James O'Dell also observed that we have Society-wide culture that says "if I'm not competing, I don't go to convention". He reported that Scipio Garling remarked at L/A the day before that his chorus doesn't go to MAD conventions unless it is competing. When his chorus does go, he noted that he really only knows the 200 members of his chorus.

Dan Bezaire pointed out the Pioneer is unique in that we don't have divisional contests. That brings more people to the District convention. Paul Ellinger cited an example from a district MAD contest he attended where there were only 150-170 people present. It was clarified that he was at quartet prelim competition to determine who would go to International, so there would have been no choruses attending. He reported that RMD uses this same format at its district competitions.

Roger Lewis added that about half of the districts have no chorus activities at their prelims. He noted that he had judged many of those events where the quartets and their families were about the only ones in attendance.

Brian Dunckel mentioned that only six choruses competed at a recent JAD convention. Dan thought that the numbers were about the same at ONT district conventions.

Based on the examples cited, James re-iterated that the cultural change we are implementing will be difficult to achieve. Dan was thankful that our small geographic size may make it a bit easier to do.

Paul asked if we have many out-of-district people attend our convention. The answer given was that, except for instances when we have had several o-o-d quartets, we have very few o-o-d visitors. It was mentioned that we once had an o-o-d chorus.

James suggested that we let nearby o-o-d chapters know about our event and its outside activities, and invite them to hang out with us. We must be careful, however, that we don't present this as an invite to come to compete.

----CSLT:

Before Joe McDonald began his remarks, Dan complimented him on the organization of the L/A held the day before.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

----CSLT (cont.):

Joe had not submitted a work plan because he knew that four of the five results of the recent mini-Forum would have a big effect on chapter support activities. Leadership Academy, in particular, will be especially affected by the priorities established by that event, so it becomes difficult for him to create his plan right now.

Joe knew that Dan Bezaire would be participating in a District President's conference call on an upcoming Sunday night. He was hoping that some details will be revealed then. Dan indicated that he was going to bring up the subject if it didn't surface otherwise. The only thing Dan has gotten is copies of the worksheets that were generated on the weekend of the mini-Forum. Joe asserted that if we don't see anything in the next 30 days, we will have to go forward with our own plans.

The evaluation sheets from this year's L/A are being reviewed by Joe. A number of comments were made, so he will need time to digest that feedback.

Planning for the 2015 L/A will be complicated by unusual circumstances. Mid-Winter convention is scheduled for the second weekend in January. It has been realized, however, that the first weekend in January is not a good time to hold L/A because of potential conflicts with family activities. However, pushing the event to a later date in January puts new chapter officers at a disadvantage for planning their year.

The secretary reported that some of the students in his Secretary Track class had never been to a L/A before because of family get-togethers on the first weekend in January!

Joe mentioned that he has asked some of the Pioneer leadership if there would be any downside to having the event on the same weekend as Mid-Winter. He noted that the majority of the L/A attendees do not go to Mid-Winter. It would primarily affect our installation of District officers. There was a suggestion that we could do that activity by Skype!

Joe indicated that he wants to begin the scheduling of a venue for the 2015 L/A soon. He knows that we could not consider a return to the CMU venue on the first weekend in January because the school would still be closed. The second weekend would be good at CMU because school would be opening on the following Monday. Trying to get a later weekend in January is risky because of school usages of the facility that might develop.

Dan Bezaire observed that the second weekend might be the least deleterious weekend. Four of the officers would not be present for sure. We could not hold a district board meeting in conjunction with the weekend. It would not be feasible to hold a board meeting by Skype---nor would it be legal as per our Standard District Bylaws.

Another option that Joe cited was to move the event back into late November or early December. Again, family activities would make this option a tough sell. For many years, we did hold it on the first weekend in December. Proposals to move into November were always met with opposition from hunters. A return to early December would still be an option, but it was noted that many chapters hold their show on that weekend.

Paul Ellinger advanced the opinion that early January is still the option that fits best with family and chapter activities.

Joe asked if everyone was comfortable with him booking the CMU venue again for the second weekend in January. Dan Bezaire observed that we could always schedule the board meeting before or after that weekend. There was a consensus to go with the weekend that Joe was proposing.

Paul was complimentary of the venue that was used for this year's L/A. It was observed that some of the attendees brought their families because of the opportunity to go the Waterpark. Doug Weaver was anxious to see what happens to attendance next year after word gets out about this location.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---CSLT (cont.):

Brian Dunckel felt that the summarization of this event to the District should point out how we are adding outside activities to L/A just like we are doing with conventions.

James O'Dell wanted to add a comment on the L/A of the previous day. He found the content to be good, but he really liked the general session at the start that was a demonstration of how the life of a chapter's barbershop experience should appear if it is to be successful. He appreciated the approach of showing how it is to be done---rather than talking about how it should be done. Paul Ellinger concurred with James' thoughts by noting that it was participatory learning. Joe mentioned that it has been three years in the planning to do that session.

---Events:

Roger Lewis reminded the board of his intention to bring a Harmony Brigade chorus to the next convention. The plan is to have the chorus sing immediately after the chorus competition. He knows that the group will not do it unless they can do a really good job.

Another activity that he hopes to do in April is to have a live evaluation of a competing quartet. He must check first with the judging panel for the spring to see if they are willing. It would have to be done on Saturday morning. The quartet to receive the evaluation would have to be one that didn't make the cut on Friday, or would not be singing on Saturday night. Quartets that entered only in the senior quartet competition could be considered, for example.

It would be necessary to get the judges to agree to do it. It would take 45-60 minutes. The most important thing would be to let the public watch so they could understand the depth of what happens. Roger knew that most board members already understood the process. He envisioned attendance by wives---among others. He perceives that the judging process is focusing more and more on live singing during the evaluations. He emphasized that the whole concept hinges on the willingness of three judges to do it.

Although the number of Frank Thorne members in the District could not be immediately quoted, Roger thought it would be interesting to organize a Frank Thorne activity. Perhaps a mini chorus could be assembled. Along with the group of members who are in the 50+ years of membership, Roger thought that there might be a large degree of camaraderie within that group. One simple thing we could do is to provide them a room in which to meet.

Roger was supportive of having a survey in advance of the convention to assess interest in outside activities. However, he also wants to do a survey afterwards to learn what we should do to get more people to attend.

Joe McDonald cited the on-line registration process used for the fall convention. Since it went so smoothly, he felt that we could get members to respond to a pre-convention survey. In response to a question from Brian Dunckel, Joe confirmed that the survey format could have open-ended questions; it just requires a bigger cell construction.

Roger referred to a letter received from Nels Carlson at a previous board meeting with a request to have a ticketed show at the fall 2014 convention. An assumption made about that letter was that the Muskegon chapter was expecting to receive the ticket sales income. However, the main purpose of the show would be to showcase a capella music in the Muskegon area. Roger learned from the Muskegon chapter president that there is an outstanding group (a female quartet-?) that the chapter would like to feature on that show. The chapter believes that the group's reputation would attract an audience.

A dilemma that exists is how to sell tickets for a show that would be a part of a convention (a non-ticketed event). If the show was made into a separate entity, it still wouldn't start until around 9:00 p.m. Roger wondered if local people would come out that late.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Events (cont.):

Another approach would be to expand the pre-show on Saturday night. The ticket charge would include a single-event registration fee, and the ticket income would go to the District.

Roger is mulling all of these ideas. He will meet with the Muskegon chapter in March to work out the final plan.

A convention calendar showing locations for the next few years had been handed out. Roger pointed out the four-year bid from Battle Creek and the three-year bid from Kalamazoo. He was leaning toward going with Battle Creek for the first year, with Kalamazoo for the second year, then back to Battle Creek for the third year---but not doing a fourth year with either. He emphasized that the incentives are good. He noted that this was the first time that convention bureaus have committed to dollar figures. There are hotel rebates (\$5/room in Battle Creek, \$2/room in Kalamazoo) built into the offers. The comp rooms are pretty much standard because those are our requirements. Some contracts only allow two suites with a connecting bedroom. Those are allocated to the judges and the District president. If a third suite is available, that is assigned to the host chapter.

Doug Weaver asked if it was feasible to return to Mt. Pleasant for a future convention. The tobacco smoke at the casino was an issue at the last one held there. Doug wondered if the existence now of the Waterpark would be attractive to families. Attendees could stay at the Waterpark, but the casino would be used as the competition venue. Shuttle service between the two locations would be necessary.

Joe McDonald saw this plan as being workable if a larger shuttle service could be arranged. There are not enough rooms at the Waterpark (only 240), but more (550) at the casino. Roger noted that we might have to sign a contract for both locations, and most contracts require a minimum of 160-200 rooms per weekend. He anticipated that a contract for the Waterpark would be for no more than 125. Fewer rooms at the casino would limit our negotiating power for free space, meeting rooms, etc.

Joe observed that the key would be to work with the right person in the joint ownership structure. Brian Dunckel felt that our repeat customer status, and local connections might help in the negotiations. Roger was hopeful that a blanket combination contract for the two facilities could be created.

Doug pointed out that usage of the Waterpark was consistent with our goal of bringing families to conventions. Joe noted that the facility also has extended venues that include a RV park and two golf courses. There are rooms that are designed for weeklong usage with kitchens and large group sleeping areas.

Roger asked Joe if the Mt. Pleasant chapter might be interested in serving as the location and host again for a fall convention. It was noted that there were no spring locations that were open for scheduling until 2020. Joe didn't see any immediate concerns that might prevent this as a plan. Joe recalled that the 2011 event held in Mt. Pleasant was the last convention that had a significant positive financial return (around \$6000-?). He encouraged approaches to convention planning that will do this again, since the District doesn't have many other sources of income.

Brian Dunckel wondered if it might be possible to get info from the District Treasurer's records, or from post-convention reports passed on by Jerry Ditto, about the attendance and financial outcome of past events. He knew that post-con reports are often incomplete at the Sunday post convention meeting, but the final reports could be helpful. Tabulating that data against locations for the last 8-10 years might be revealing. Roger indicated that he did have copies of post-con reports, but has not had the time to do an analysis of the data.

---Financial Development:

Doug Weaver indicated that he is learning his new position, and is getting advice from Brian later in the day.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Financial Development (cont.):

He reported that Sean Devine will be at our spring convention, but again---not on Saturday. The good news is that he will be around for several days after he returns on Sunday. Doug has suggested that Sean make a visit to the Hillsdale chapter because of its support of youth activities. Traverse City was proposed as another place to visit because it is believed that a Harmony Foundation rep has never gone there before. Doug hopes to go along with Sean on those visits.

It has been recommended that Sean be asked to be the emcee for the Friday night competition. Doug is frustrated that Sean will again not be present for the Saturday night activities. Complaining about this problem has not been fruitful. In Sean's absence, Doug is planning to man the Harmony Foundation display on Saturday.

Joe McDonald asked if David Calland's new role as a H/F director of development will cause us to lose Sean as our H/F liaison. Doug was sure that Sean was still assigned to us for now. There is a chance that we may eventually lose him and get David. Sean anticipates that will happen since the rest of his territory is out East. Doug likes the support we get from Sean, but we just haven't gotten him for a full convention ever since he came in as Ryan Killeen's replacement!

In response to a question from Roger, it was verified that Sean offered to be the Friday emcee; we didn't ask him.

Roger also asked about who the rep from the Society board will be. Dan didn't know for sure, but thought it might be Dwayne Cooper.

Paul Ellinger asked if we were familiar with the Paul Teska show being developed. Paul Teska, who has been an active member of the Harmony Brigade and the Huron Valley chapter, is organizing this event because he has been diagnosed with esophageal cancer. This show will only benefit the Harmony Foundation. He will be using the show as a vehicle to tell his life story.

Paul Ellinger is a member of a 10-person organizing team. Five members are barbershoppers, and five are non-barbershoppers with marketing skills. Contacts have been made with H/F. The show will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 16, 2014, at the 2/42 Community Church in Brighton. Paul has made contact with media folks. TV channel 4 is planning to do a promo spot about the event.

Local restaurants are being surveyed to find a good location for an afterglow. It is expected that people will want to share their feelings afterwards about why singing is so important in our lives. Doug asked to be added to the list of people that receive communications about the planning.

Paul will be the emcee for the show. It will include 6-8 acts that will be both barbershop and non-barbershop. The group formerly known as "elmoTHUMM" will appear, plus "Meta-4", "Chordiology", and "Majestyx".

Since Doug was going to do the officer installation at the Huron Valley chapter later in the week, he planned to get more info.

Joe McDonald reported that Paul Teska was a bit frustrated because he wants to get a H/F rep to attend. He has been asking K.J. McAleesejergins if he could come to tell his story. The problem is that the event would have to cover K.J.'s expenses unless H/F will cover them. Roger Lewis advanced two scenarios. Assume the event will raise \$2500. If the event pays \$500 for K.J.'s expenses, H/F will net \$2000. If K.J.'s expenses are paid by H/F, the full \$2500 will go to H/F, and H/F still nets \$2000.

Obviously, H/F is concerned about how much the event will actually raise. This lends uncertainty to the entire plan. If a budget for the event was created, it may not have been submitted. Paul Ellinger noted that, in retrospect, the event should have gone through Doug in his role as the District Director for Financial Planning. That might have led to more success up front in the communications.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Membership:

Paul Ellinger had electronically distributed a work plan in advance of the meeting. Because of his late arrival, Dan Bezaire re-iterated that the submittal deadline had been extended to the end of February.

Paul said that he would try to make a composite of the remarks in his report. He asserted that we have the tools to make chapters grow. The problem is to find chapters that want to follow a plan. He pointed to the exercise that was done at the beginning of L/A the day before. This was intended to be a demonstration of how a variety of people and activities should convince guests that participation in the chapter is something they want to continue to do.

Paul described an experience he had in December when he went for three days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) of "Supercharging" coaching with the Fresno (CA) chapter and the Santa Monica chapter. The Fresno chapter called him a few days beforehand to report that they had a sing-out scheduled for Thursday. They challenged him to use it as a demonstration of how sing-outs can be used for recruiting. Paul learned that the group was expected to do a one-hour performance in the downtown area. He asked them to do three things:

---One: Sing songs that the public would know. (It turned out they were doing Christmas songs.)

---Two: Sing one song, and then stop for a while. (The intent was to avoid making it a show.)

---Three: Identify to him the things that the chapter does to support the community. (Children with special needs used to be their focus, but now they support veterans.)

Paul discovered that, out of a normal attendance of 16 members at their rehearsals, 13 were there. Paul told them that he would do everything to interact with the audience. After one hour, 11 potential members were identified. The chapter has followed up with the names, and 4 of them have been coming to meetings.

Paul asserted that it is simply a matter of changing the way we look at things. The process is both easy, and hard to do. The easy part is the physical aspect of getting out before the public, and following a plan while you are there. The hard part is to follow a plan at chapter meetings that is different from what we have always done. Paul felt that our biggest hurdle in getting our chapters, our districts, and the Society to grow is to change the way we look at things.

It had been noted that board members would be assigned later in the meeting to make visits with specific chapters. Paul asked that a communications tree be established among our group so that info can be shared about items that should be passed on during a chapter visit. He particularly wanted us to build on the successes of things like the L/A held the day before, or the outside events held at previous conventions. He proposed that we make a monthly contact to our assigned chapters (by phone or a visit) and share the info we have circulated via the communications tree. His concern that written transfers of these things may not get to the grass roots level of chapters.

One of the goals of developing a tree is for us to learn who the key contact is in each chapter. Sometimes that person has been clearly identified; sometimes we will learn at a visit who we should really contact!

Paul noted that he had five topics in his report, but had chosen to cover just two. He summarized his thoughts on the first one by reiterating that we have ways of growing. We must find the people that actually want to do it, and will stick to a plan. He is hoping that we find that kind of chapter, and then see it grow with "organic growth".

The second topic which he had fully supported was the effort to add outside activities ("fun stuff") to conventions.

Roger Lewis commented on Paul's description of the Fresno experience where he observed the mouths of audience members. He noted that it was so obvious and so simple. It makes so much sense, and is so logical.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Membership (cont.):

Paul admitted that his problem is finding time to follow up on the Fresno chapter to see if they tried the technique again. Therefore, he is building a team consisting of Lud Ouzoonian and Mike Sobol (both in the Kalamazoo chapter) that will check with chapters on whether they are continuing their efforts.

Once again, Paul offered a reminder that we do not have a retention issue---even though numbers may suggest it. Most of our losses are due to factors which we cannot control. Less than 5% are things where we might affect a change. Therefore, retention is an area where our time is not best spent.

Paul did announce that he was not in favor of the current option of giving new youth members (Y1) their first year of membership for \$10. He felt that if they were informed at the start of what their dues were, they would come up with the money. However, if they only pay \$10, they get a false sense of what the true cost will be. They become disillusioned when they get a bill the next year for \$70 (or \$140 if they go over age 25). Paul described the process as being counter-intuitive. He believed that they will be there anyway, so they should immediately make the \$140 decision to join.

When the board members make their chapter contacts, Doug Weaver urged that we determine if the chapter has updated guest books. He felt this was one of the most awkward situations that can be created for a guest. It is a circumstance that can often result in a guest failing to return. He has been amazed by how often he has been to a chapter that did not have valid guest books.

Evan Boegehold added to Doug's remark by emphasizing that guests also should be told what the chapter is doing, or how it is being done. He felt that failure to pay attention to this will make a guest feel very uncomfortable.

Paul described a chapter in North Carolina that is growing, but has discovered it must offer a class for newer members to explain a lot of basic facts about barbershop.

Joe McDonald returned to the recruiting concept of singing, and then interacting with an audience by noting that a recent trivia event held in Mt. Pleasant used this technique. Joe would like to create a template of this technique that can be offered to chapters as a chapter support tool. The template can also state that a person can come, if requested, to demonstrate how to do the interaction. Alternatively, someone in the chapter can be trained in the technique. Paul mentioned that he has already created a template that describes the process he followed. The two templates can be merged if appropriate.

---Music & Performance:

(Cliff Dake had submitted a work plan, but was not present to report for this function.)

---CDD:

(Rob Pettigrew had not submitted a work plan, and was not present to report for this function.)

---Treasurer's Reports:

Larry Parker distributed two documents---a Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2013, and a Profit and Loss Statement for the period of January through December of 2013.

He first referred to the balance sheet and began by noting that the District entered the year 2013 with a balance of \$96,882.04. He cited a figure of \$75,793.96 as the ending balance for the year. However, there is an amount of \$14,889.88 that was on the books last year, and is still there. It is money that was set aside for future conventions, but is not actually there. This converts the true bottom line into the \$74,253.98 shown at the top of the balance sheet.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Treasurer's Reports (cont.):

Larry pointed to the balances of \$6222.38 in the Comerica account, and \$12,102 in the Flagstar account. The District has a total of savings in its Flagstar account of \$26,098.72, and the QCA has a total of savings in its Flagstar account of \$4,406.06. A new savings account established with Security Benefit has a total of \$25,424.43. He noted that the Security Benefit account was just set up in September, and it has already earned \$140 in interest. He anticipates that the District will gain \$5000 in interest in the five years of the lifetime of the account.

Larry directed everyone's attention to the figure of \$14,641.28 at the bottom on the last page of the Profit & Loss Statement. He indicated that this was how much the District lost in 2013. Preceding that number was breakdown of the income and expenses for each event (conventions, et. al.)

Larry indicated that in the month of December he wrote three checks totaling over \$21,000. The cost of fall convention rooms, board member rooms, and convention staff rooms was over \$13,000. An amount of \$7100 was paid to Harmony Foundation to cover the difference on our support of the Youth Chorus Festival. Finally, he paid approximately \$1100 to the Society for our participation in the mini-Forum.

Mike Hanson questioned how the numbers on the fall convention indicated that there was a loss. Larry clarified that the loss occurred with the spring convention. The income at that event was \$24,928, while the expenses were \$26,225. Averaging the two events made them almost a break-even situation.

Larry also cited to a loss incurred with the Top Gun quartet event where rebates were given to the quartets involved.

Paul Ellinger asked why revenues show up as negatives on the financial report. Larry indicated that this may be a feature of the accounting software. Through his first year, he has made entry errors into the software, and then caught them later. The system is one that was set up by Robb Smith. Larry has realized that he was not familiar with QuickBooks® software, so he is going to get some training on how to use it better. Joe McDonald observed that this might be good subject to cover at L/A.

James O'Dell reflected on how much we made overall for conventions (a slight loss). This was a result of the loss of \$1296.99 in the spring and a gain of \$1745.30 in the fall. The net loss was \$448.31.

Joe McDonald observed that negative numbers in the software output make the data appear as counter-intuitive. With that perspective, James realized that we made \$164.33 on CSLT activities. Joe suggested there may be ways that the QuickBooks® software can be adjusted to make it more user-friendly. He proposed that we look at making those adjustments when we begin our 2015 accounting. He felt that we should categorize the data into a format that would make it easier to use for planning. He urged that our organization be perceived as a small business rather than as an educational institution.

Roger Lewis asked about an expenditure of \$2403 for lodging---staff. This sounded like just two rooms. It was concluded that this was the rooms for Don Kill and Dawn Spear---plus one night related to Greg Humbel's work with the big screen. (Greg's other night is covered under Troubadour expenses.)

Paul Ellinger made a quick summarization of expenses for different activities---without making any judgments as to their value. He noted that we are in a break-even mode with conventions. We had a small loss on L/A. Bush League, quartet Boot Camp, and Top Gun training all have losses. It was noted that some districts make a profit on everything they do. Dan Bezaire advocated that we merely try to be revenue-neutral. Paul followed Dan's observation with a comment that if were not sitting on \$6000 next year, something wouldn't work. **[The context of this comment was unclear to the secretary.]**

Roger Lewis wanted it noted that QCA pays half of the cost of quartet Boot Camp. Paul indicated he had omitted that program in his summarization for that reason.

IV. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Treasurer's Reports (cont.):

Larry Parker surmised that QAC didn't have any fund-raising projects scheduled. It was noted, however, the QCA will have a raffle in the spring with a potential of generating \$800-1200. QCA takes care of the license for that raffle, while Doug Weaver, as Director of Financial Planning, arranges for the license for the H/F raffle.

James O'Dell had been tabulating the losses shown in the Profit & Loss Statement and got a total of \$11,001---which was different from the \$14,000 previously quoted. Using a 2013 starting balance of \$96,882.04, by subtracting the \$14,000 he got roughly \$82,000. Larry pointed out that we actually had \$74,253.98 at the start of 2014---not the \$75,793.96 shown as total assets. This difference, however, did not resolve the discrepancy that James had identified. Larry was hopeful that a better understanding of QuickBooks® would offer an explanation.

Roger Lewis recalled that there was a problem with a hotel bill for the fall convention of 2012 that was not received for a long time. He wondered if that could be the source of the \$14,889.88 problem mentioned at the beginning of Larry's report. Larry was aware of some fall 2012 expenses that were submitted by Ron Eubank and Greg Humbel and paid in 2013, but he didn't believe they were of that magnitude. Larry had a similar situation with a fall 2013 bill that was just barely received in time to pay it in 2013.

Roger also noticed that we had credit card charges of \$1667. He asked how much money was put through on the card, and what rate we were paying. Larry did not know the answers to his questions, but noted that he wanted to look at that issue and see if those costs can be reduced. Roger surmised that we were running \$20,000-30,000 through the card. He suggested that we might want to get a new supplier for this service that can offer a better rate.

Larry mentioned that the Kalamazoo and DOC chapters use the District credit card to handle their Singing Valentine sales. When he sends bills to those chapters, he includes the service cost of their transactions. In response to a question from Mike Hanson, it was clarified that the credit card costs we pay are for payments that members make to the District, and not for charges that the District makes.

Sensing Larry's frustration with the QuickBooks® software, Joe McDonald asked if it was appropriate for the District to get some professional support to give advice on the product. Larry Parker reported that he had learned the day before that two of his students (Paul Anderson and Paul Schulte) in his Treasurer Track class were well-versed in the software. They have offered to provide support.

A reminder was given that our financial records must receive an annual review. Since that review has been done by the same person for many years, Joe suggested that we might want to move that task around occasionally to get fresh perspectives on the data.

[At approximately 10:50 a.m. Dan Bezaire announced a short recess.]

[During the interim, there was discussion (without everyone being present) of billing problems, and the convention matrix document that was updated in April. The secretary noted that the latter was approved contingent on the addition of few details. Larry Parker indicated that he would send a copy to everybody of the final version. Several persons reported they had difficulties in opening attachments that were sent to the Yahoo groups.]

[The meeting resumed at 11:03 a.m.]

V. Old Business:---Communications---.cpres:

It has been concluded that communication through the .cpres group is basically useless. However, we must establish some mechanism. Hopefully, chapter assignments will help us identify who to contact.

V. Old Business:---Communications---cpres (cont.):

Dan Bezaire confirmed that we won't be able to set up contacts today—because we don't have the right information. For example, he had determined that not all of our chapters are even in the directory. At least six were missing.

The secretary has discovered that a lot of secretaries don't know they have an obligation to report their chapter officers. Dan also mentioned that some chapters had not had their elections yet!

Dan mentioned that we are realizing that the chapter president may not be the person to contact. That person may be listed by default, or does not check his e-mails regularly.

Dan is planning to come up with a spread sheet that lists all of the chapters and the name of one (or two) reliable contacts. Doug Weaver suggested that we then establish a chapter contact Yahooogroup. Dan was agreeable to that concept if the list had two names per chapter.

Joe did not know the history of the creation of Yahooogroups. He was aware of a lot of frustration people have experienced when they tried to sign up for access. He thought that some individuals have never signed up because they found the process too complicated.

Dan noted that the easiest way for each board member to make contacts is via standard e-mails to just the two persons that are the contacts for each of their assigned chapters.

Joe mentioned that he had set up a **gmail** account for sending out CS/LT info within the District. He suggested that we give the District board members access to that account, and use it in lieu of the Yahooogroups.

There was uncertainty as to who originally set up the Yahooogroups. Rob Pettigrew and one other person were mentioned. Doug Weaver only knew that he received the responsibility to be the moderator for the groups from Joe Serwach. It was felt the PioneerBoard group was working OK.

Dan summarized the discussion by noting that getting info to our chapters seems to be the source of many of our problems. After we get the info out, that is about all we can do.

---Communications---Troubadour:

Dan reminded everyone that the deadline for submittals for items was fast approaching. He urged that board members use this on-line publication tool.

---Communications---Chapter contacts & visitations:

Dan began making assignments of the different chapters to board members---giving consideration to requests that some members had made:

Brian Dunckel	Saginaw Bay	Hillsdale	
Paul Ellinger	Wayne	Mt. Pleasant	
Doug Weaver	Sault Ste. Marie	Gaylord	Muskegon
Joe McDonald	Grand Rapids	Holland	
Larry Parker	Gratiot County	Flint	
Roger Lewis	Michiana Metro	Benton Harbor	
Mike Hanson	Alpena	Traverse City	
Dan Bezaire	Detroit-Oakland	Rochester	Huron Valley
Jim McMahan	Grosse Pointe	Pontiac-Waterford	
Evan Boegehold	Battle Creek		
James O'Dell	Livingston County	Windsor	
Cliff Dake	Kalamazoo	Monroe North	

V. Old Business (cont.):

---Communications---Chapter contacts & visitations (cont.):

[NOTE: This list was subsequently modified, and the revised list sent to board members.]

An assignment for Motor City Metro was not made since the chapter is not active. James O'Dell noted that he would be the contact person for the chapter since he is holding the chapter's assets. The chapter has not had elections in the last 2-3 years.

While he felt that we should not approach chapter visitations with a questionnaire like the one used for the 2011 visits, Roger Lewis did advocate that we go with guidelines on things to report or to do while on a visit. He also urged that we establish a system for reporting our observations after a visit is made. One useful item of data would be the number of members present that night vs. the listed membership. Going with a "mini-list" would be a way to approach this task.

Dan offered to send, on some regular basis, a summary of items that could be shared with the chapters during a visit. He drew an example from the New Business portion of the agenda by citing the fact that the youth chorus just wants to have their existence announced.

While the most important thing is to attend the chapter meeting, Roger Lewis recommended that the District officer meet beforehand with the chapter president or board

Brian Dunckel cautioned that the purpose of our visits is not so much to gather information, but to disseminate information---and to let the chapter know we care. It was noted that visibility is the critical factor. Roger stated that "we should not over-tell and under-listen."

Larry Parker asked if the visits should be done before the convention. The process should be started as soon as possible. It might even be feasible to make more than one visit before convention.

Joe McDonald commented that, once the list of facts to be acquired has been defined, it would be easy for him to set up a way the results could be reported on-line.

Doug Weaver emphasized that the first detail is to determine who to contact. He suggested that we start with the director, since he/she will know who is reliable. Alternatively, one can start with a person in the chapter with whom you are well-acquainted. Dan Bezaire said he would leave it up to the board members to find their best contact, and then notify him who that person is.

VI. New Business:

---Mid-Winter presentations:

Dan assumed that the District would again be at the Mid-Winter convention to show our support to H/F of the Youth Chorus Festival. Doug Weaver noted that Dan would be on-stage for that task. Doug also plans to be at the event.

---Forum update:

Dan confirmed that there has been no formal update on the outcome of the event. The only thing available is the summary sheets handed out after the event. He reported that the district presidents would be meeting by teleconference the evening after this meeting. He was confident that they are just as frustrated as we are.

---Youth Chorus ("The Voice"):

Dan indicated that the group would be re-named soon because that name is already copyrighted. The group would be beginning its rehearsals on the following Sunday. The organizers are hoping to get support from the District and from H/F.

VI. New Business (cont.):

---Youth Chorus ("The Voice") (cont.):

Our main concern is that the group must abide by the legalities required of a non-profit corporation. At the moment, the Hillsdale chapter is potentially going to be their sponsor. If Hillsdale does not take on this role, the District may need to do it. Dan is excited that the group has been started.

Doug Weaver raised the question of whether we are going to be a Youth Chorus Festival sponsor separately if we are also sponsoring this chorus. Dan was of the opinion that if we can only sponsor one, it should be our own. However, it is still possible to sponsor more than one.

Doug advocated that if we do sponsor a chorus, that we do it with the "Parade of Checks". He was optimistic that, after three years, we should be getting closer to obtaining the full \$10,000 from chapters rather than drawing part of it from the District's funds. Dan suggested that it might be easier to do in this situation. Chapters may say, "We'll give the money to our own Pioneer youth chorus."

Joe McDonald observed that some chapters are changing their priorities and choosing to spend money to send youth to camps rather than sending it to H/F. Also, some chapters may have a bad year financially.

Brian Dunckel noted that we can educate chapters on the many different ways they can support youth programs.

Doug was glad that Pioneer has been able to support the Youth Chorus Festival two years in a row, and to demonstrate to other districts what can be done. Given our current financial situation, he wasn't sure if we can continue to do so.

Brian Dunckel asserted that we should plan to provide significant District support if we choose to support the YCF again. He didn't think that we could count on major support from the chapters. Doug admitted that our past support from chapters didn't go the way we had hoped. Perhaps our efforts to solve our communication problems will change that.

It was noted that two of our District chapters are committed to supporting Sing Canada, and a few others are almost defunct. That reduces us down to about 20 the number of chapters that can provide support.

Evan Boegehold was concerned about the level of dedication of the youth that are coming into the new group. He would feel more comfortable if they had been meeting for a while prior to signing up for the YCF next January. He wasn't sure that we should commit yet to pay for them to go as a significant group. There was a consensus that we will know by spring convention how they are developing. Since "Wavelength" will be the section leaders for the group, Evan expects to be able to give a progress report.

---Next Convention:

Dan reported that he and Roger had a meeting on the previous Friday with the staff at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Grand Rapids. Dan commented that we will love the performance venue.

Roger reported that the TV station in Grand Rapids ran a story on December 24 about the financial problems of the hotel. The station stated that the employees were not getting paid, and there were a lot of unpaid taxes. This leads to a concern by us about the continued viability of the hotel as a convention site. Discussion of those issues was a major part of the Friday meeting. The employee pay problem was determined to have been caused by usage of a third party to handle the payroll. A cash pre-payment transfer to that firm was \$200 short, and the firm would not issue any of the checks. Because everything occurred just Christmas, the hotel gave cash loans to the employees to alleviate their circumstances.

In regard to the taxes problem, Roger reported that the hotel is owned by a company in California. This hotel is the largest facility owned by that company. The California company is doing a re-financing to take care of back taxes.

VI. New Business (cont.):

---Next Convention (cont.):

Roger mentioned that his contact at the hotel is confident that they will be ready to go. The hotel manager believes that the California company will be successful in their re-financing. It was noted that most of the tax problem was related to penalties.

Doug Weaver indicated that he also talked to his contact at "Experience Grand Rapids". EGR knows that the Crowne Plaza is the second biggest hotel in Grand Rapids. Therefore, it is in the county's best interest to insure that the hotel stays open. Although the situation is uncomfortable, Doug felt that the hotel has it under control.

Roger observed that he has seen a lot of conventions at hotels that were going through bankruptcy. The hotels still operated, even though they had to "cut some corners". He recalled a Mid-Winter held in Tucson hotel that had been in receivership for over a year. Not everything worked as it should have, but it did happen. Roger was of the opinion that the people at the Crowne Plaza are good people who will work hard to make our event a success. He reminded the board that they have three more conventions booked with us for future years.

VII. Miscellany:

---Succession planning (not on agenda):

Roger Lewis expressed a concern that we tend to put people in board positions and lock them into those roles for a long time. Consequently, when we identify people that we want to bring into leadership roles, we don't have ways to do that. He cited Mike Hanson as an example of someone that is coming into his Executive Vice-President role without having prior board experience. Roger has noticed that Mike Ridenour is another person who wants to get involved in District activities. As a way of doing succession planning, Roger proposed that we add some "at-large" positions.

The secretary noted that "at large" members could be added as non-voting "ex-officio" members at any time. Adding them as voting members might require modification of our Standard District Bylaws. It was determined the SDB already allow for the option of adding "at-large" members "as needed". Brian Dunckel pointed out that when this idea was last considered, there was a problem with justifying the extra hotel room expenses, etc. for board members without any function.

Roger urged that we create jobs for these persons. He was aware of topics discussed at these meetings where help is needed.

Dan Bezaire indicated that Rob Pettigrew is finding it difficult to perform his CDD function. As a result, we have a need, right now, for a temporary or permanent replacement. Dan has received some suggestions of persons to contact, but has not done so yet.

Dan concluded that there might be an advantage of having "at-large" members in the board mix who could step in when needed.

Paul Ellinger proposed that we allow people to become involved in the board at any time if they would do it on their own dime. Their participation would demonstrate that they have a commitment, and they want to learn what we are doing. He was personally interested in getting people to be a part of a membership team.

Doug Weaver asked if there was any limitation in the SDB on the number of "at-large" members. Brian indicated that the document identified some officers by title, or as "such number of vice-presidents or other officers as deemed necessary to carry on the business of the District".

Paul asked if persons could come to meeting without the privilege of voting. The secretary noted that if there were designated as "ex-officio" they would have the privilege of "voice without vote". If they were merely guests, they normally would have voice only at the discretion of the presiding officer.

VII. Miscellany (cont.):

---Succession planning (not on agenda) (cont.):

Paul then offered to submit some names as possible “ex-officio” members. It was recommended that the names be give to the Nominating Committee.

Doug suggested that if we had any ex-officio members right now, one of them could step in and fill Rob’s job. That is our immediate need.

Doug would love to get Mike Ridenour involved in the board now for the purpose of succession planning.

In addition to Mike, it was suggested that names be offered to the Nominating Committee at this juncture. Ed Bax and Dave Montera were offered---both of whom are already on the Committee’s list.

Roger Lewis observed that, under standard parliamentary procedure, they could be appointed as “at-large” members by the president, and then approved by the board. Brian Dunckel observed that all other board positions have historically been filled in this manner.

It was noted that Dave Montera had previously been designated for an ex-officio role as the legal counsel for the District. Chris Berry was also presented as a name for consideration by the Nominating Committee---but with the understanding that he may be taking over Rob Pettigrew’s role. Dan reported that Rob had indicated that he would step aside---either temporarily or permanently---as we see fit.

There was discussion about also nominating ex-officio members at this point. However, this aspect was set aside for the moment.

The secretary articulated the ideas that had been discussed for purposes of clarification. Chris Beery would be asked to take over Rob Pettigrew’s role---either temporarily or permanently. The other three persons would be appointed by the president as “at-large” members. It was confirmed that these actions did not need approval at the next HOD meeting. When elections are held next fall, there roles would be affirmed by an approval from the HOD at that time.

Brian Dunckel asked for a definition of the actions that will be taken. Dan Bezaire stated that he would ask Chris Berry about the Director of CDD role. Doug Weaver, as Nominating Committee chair, will contact Ed, Dave, and Mike.

A clarification was sought about the coverage that Ed, Dave, and Mike would receive under the convention matrix. While it was first proposed that they only be covered for one night’s lodging, it was concluded that they were entitled to two.

---Credit card expenses (not on agenda):

Larry Parker alluded to previous discussion of this topic. He has been exploring different ways to manage this process. For the registrations and barbershop shop charges at the last few conventions, we have used the old style imprint device. Later, he must go on-line with Merchant Services and carefully type in all of the numbers. Invariably, a few numbers don’t go through. When he leaves a message with the holder of a card, he usually doesn’t get a reply. Sometimes he can’t tell what dollar amount should be entered, so he quotes what is obviously a wrong amount---and will usually get a reply.

One of the systems he is considering uses cell phones, but then you must buy two phones. Some suppliers (like Verizon) require a long-term monthly contract. With any cell phone system, both phones require a top attachment. The charge is 2.3% for each transaction. The advantage to this system is that the data is always entered correctly, and it saves Larry a lot of time.

In addition to the cost of the phones, the basic options are to buy a system for an entire year, or pay for just the usage period.

VII. Miscellany (cont.):

---Credit card expenses (not on agenda) (cont.):

Doug Weaver raised a concern about using a cell phone system at Kalamazoo conventions where everything is in the basement. Would we get a signal there? Larry reported that he did not have any problems with his own phone at the last Kalamazoo convention. Doug was under the impression that we had problems when we tried a cell phone system at one event. This could not be verified from anyone's recollection. It was believed that a cell phone system was tried at Traverse City.

Larry wants to explore the options, make a recommendation at the spring convention, and get an approval. He noted that Merchant Services is our current service provider for on-line registrations prior to conventions.

Doug Weaver observed that if Larry wanted to make a recommendation before the next convention, we could take an electronic vote to approve usage of the system immediately.

James O'Dell was sure that Merchant Services offers an on-line virtual credit card scanning site. He suggested that we might want to stay with them for all of our services. The device that attaches to cell phones is apparently known as a "square". Larry displayed one that he had purchased for \$50. He pays a \$15/month usage fee. Larry did not know what the fees were for the Merchant Services system.

Roger Lewis cautioned about utilizing the Internet access systems of hotels. Those systems can be very expensive for daily usage. He emphasized that we must rely on cell phones for this service.

Paul Ellinger wondered if the personal system that Larry owned would do this task. If it would, he suggested that we could purchase a second attachment, and pay Larry \$15 for each of the two months of the year when we need to do credit card scanning.

The consensus was that we let Larry make a recommendation on the best system to use, and that we take an electronic vote so that the system can be operational by April.

---Supplies for hosting judges (not on agenda):

Brian Dunckel indicated that he had met recently with Ron Eubank to get the supplies that are used in the judges' room. One of the items that Ron had was a coffee maker. Because the coffee would set around for a long time, much of it would get dumped. Therefore, Ron was bringing his personal Keurig® coffee maker. Brian has purchased one for usage by the District, and requested reimbursement of \$100 for it. Joe McDonald moved this action, and Roger Lewis made the second. **Motion approved.**

---Support for two youth barbershop camps hosted by the Mt. Pleasant chapter (not on agenda):

Joe McDonald asked if action could be taken on a request for \$2190 to assist with the cost of these events. He noted that if we wait until the spring BOD meeting, one of the events will have already been held. Joe felt he should abstain from making a motion or voting on the issue.

It was asked if the amount was the same as the amount requested in 2013. He confirmed that it was. He did not have the budget with him for the two events, but indicated that the total now covers both.

Doug Weaver moved that this expenditure be approved since it is the same as that incurred in 2013. James O'Dell offered the second. **Motion approved.** (For Larry's records, it was noted that this expenditure covers a one-day camp on February 22 and a three-day camp in July.)

VIII. Adjournment:

At 11:51 a.m., Roger Lewis moved that the meeting be adjourned. Joe McDonald seconded the motion. **Motion approved.**