

Minutes of the Pioneer District Board of Directors of SPEBSQSA, Inc.  
held on October 20, 2017, in the Custer Room of the McCamly Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek, Michigan

Attendees:

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

Mike Hansen (President)  
Dave Montera (Executive vice-president, and also Director of Music & Performance)  
Jim McMahan (Secretary)  
Chris Berry (Treasurer)  
Dan Bezaire (Immediate past president, and also Director of Marketing)  
Jamie Carey (Director of Chorus Director Development)  
Roger Boyer (Director of Community Outreach)  
Brian Dunckel (Director of Contests & Judging)  
Roger Lewis (Director of Events)  
Aaron Pollard (Director of Youth In Harmony)  
Ed Bax (Member-at-large)

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

(none)

-----Guests:

Rick Taylor (Harmony Foundation representative)  
Holly Gellar (BHS chief marketing officer)  
Craig Roney (observer of District Secretary function)

1. Call to order:

President Mike Hansen called the meeting to order at 10:29 a.m. He asked that everyone present identify himself/herself and his/her position.

When Holly Kellar introduced herself, the secretary pointed out that the program for this convention had a historic significance. It is the first Pioneer program to have picture of a female on it.

As he introduced himself, Craig Roney mentioned that he is job-shadowing the secretary to learn and assist with this function.

During his introduction, the secretary complimented Holly for being the first Society representative that has provided a photo and bio for the program in a timely manner.

When Mike Hansen concluded the introductions, he noted that the positions of District Secretary and Director of Events have been identified as jobs that have a lot of complexity, and therefore should have a succession plan in place. Mike thanked Craig for accepting this role, and noted that he and Roger Lewis have been seeking to identify someone who can begin to learn Roger's role.

Dave Montera was asked to lead the group in the singing of "The Old Songs".

2. Adoption of the agenda:

President Mike Hansen referred to the agenda that had been submitted, and then subsequently modified. Jamie Carey verified that some last minute suggestions from him had been included in the modification. Discussion of the status of the Marquette chapter was not there, but Jamie elected to put that topic into his report when it was presented.

Dan Bezaire offered the motion to adopt the agenda. Chris Berry seconded it. **Motion approved.**

3. Minutes of the BOD meeting on April 21, 2017:

The minutes were previously prepared and distributed by Dan Bezaire. The secretary expressed appreciation to Dan for handling this responsibility in his absence due to a health problem.

Dave Montera moved that the minutes be approved, and Brian Dunckel made the second. **Motion approved.**

4. Treasurer's report:

Chris Berry projected his report on a screen, but also provided copies. He noted that everything was shown after an initial summary page (Report 1). He began by indicating that the District has just under \$30,000 [**\$29,598.68**] in its main account. The QCA has \$2722.83. The savings account has \$47,149.89. He pointed out that the Security Benefit annuity account has been eliminated by transfer to the main savings account.

Chris addressed a question from Jamie Carey about the reserve that is supposed to be maintained. That amount should be sufficient to run two conventions. That figure is \$50,000. As noted earlier, the amount in the savings is now around \$47,000.

It was pointed out that the current profit/loss balance is at \$312.92, but most of the income from this convention is not yet reported.

Upon request from Roger Lewis, it was clarified that the \$47,000 figure is through September 30, 2017.

Chris noted that the QCA had an agency account that wasn't being used. Now the QCA has its own checking account. The agency account was closed down via a \$1678.40 transfer---which made it look like QCA was making a big profit somewhere.

Because none of the income from this convention is entered yet, the books show a "profit" of only \$312 for the year. Chris emphasized that all monies are held by the District, but the QCA is split out for bookkeeping reasons. That caused his report to show that QCA was up about \$2000, but the District was down by the same amount.

A request was made at the last BOD meeting for information about the activities of the District through cost centers, so the next section of the report (Report 2) began with Administrative costs. This is an area that logically should never make a profit. Cost centers were defined next for the last four conventions. Chris observed that the Spring 2017 convention had a \$4218 loss

He went on to the Top Gun cost center which lost about \$1000. However, the Harmony Marketplace center went up. Again, the numbers there do not reflect anything for this convention.

The numbers for Bush League were received late in September. At this point, B/L appeared to be down about \$300. Chris had a report that showed more detail on this activity.

Chris cited a loss on Quartet Boot Camp, and noted a donation was given to the Harmony Explosion Camp.

Finally, there was a cost center on Contributions. Most of this was member dues, or donor choice monies from H/F. The \$5100 expense was the donations made to groups that competed at International.

Chris jumped over the Balance Sheet report (Report 3) to the Profit-&-Loss-By-Class report (Report 4), but suggested that it be skipped since the data was summarized in the cost centers report.

He emphasized that the conventions are being tracked individually through the cost centers. This will have an advantage when the District returns to Traverse City at the Spring 2019 convention

4. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Chris referred to the administrative expenses section (page 2) of the P&LBC report (Report 4) before moving on to the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual report (Report 5). It was clarified that the Budget column on this report is for the whole year even though only nine months have elapsed so far.

Dave Montera observed that costs for the Traverse City convention in the spring went over budget a little over \$2000 compared to projected income. Some of that was due to higher costs for the stage and the lighting. The other overage was in the cost of lodging for staff as reported on page 6. This is a matrix issue that needs further discussion.

It was reiterated that the first page of the P&L(vs)A report summarizes this info.

Chris returned to the Balance Sheet (Report 3). Other than exceeding the costs for the Traverse City convention, he indicated he had not seen anything unusual. That situation had been expected.

Dave Montera observed that the District is still maintaining its fund balance, even though it is down \$2000 in the checking account because of the transfer to the QCA.

Roger Lewis commented on the copy of the convention matrix that Chris added to his report. He saw some things that needed to be revised there. There are some changes that Chris would like to change as well.

Chris returned to a discussion of Bush League. He had not printed out a copy of the report that is specific to that event. He noted there was a modest increase in attendance. The Traverse City chapter is asking for a different model on how the event should be run.

When the Gaylord chapter ran it, it was tied to a chapter show which generated ticket revenue. However, Traverse City wants to do it as a stand-alone event. Chris will be working with the chapter this weekend to develop a new budget. He noted that there was only \$500 income from registrations. There were expenses for judges' travel, hotel, and meals. Expenses were also incurred for teaching quartets. A performance fee and the cost for one hotel room night were paid to "Upper Deck". The quartet that won at the 2016 B/L was also brought back as per past practice. This idea must be revisited. Finally, there were costs for medals, and a venue cost of \$360 that was split with the District. The chapter lost about \$1000. That loss could not be offset by ticket sales---despite ~\$700 that was received from that source.

Chris had determined that the District lost about \$1500 in its support of the event. Mike Hansen asked about the anticipated expense that had been budgeted by the District (\$2500). Chris noted that the District did not reach that figure because Traverse City absorbed \$1000. Although \$2500 has been our normal obligation for the event, Chris indicated that figure may have to change if the District absorbs all of the cost by running it as a District event. The Traverse City chapter has concluded that it can't justify a second show.

Mike observed that the District board has historically been committed to support of B/L, but the event may need more support in the future. Chris noted that the chapter will probably need all of the \$2500. However, there should not be a need for additional support beyond that figure. The board will also need to decide if the concept of an evening show will continue. If it is, then the District will have to absorb that cost.

Chris suggested that rethinking is needed about the District's plans for three events it is running--- Bush League, Top Gun, and Quartet Boot Camp. Can they be rolled together for budgeting purposes?

Jamie Carey noted that B/L was the child of the Gaylord chapter, and it was done in conjunction with the chapter's show. It was a big event, all of the northern chapters came, and it was well supported. He had hoped the acquisition of the event by Traverse City would continue that trend. Unfortunately, the event had to be held in Bellaire for economic reasons. Traverse City is still interested in hosting it, but as an independent activity. The question is now whether Bellaire is the best location. Perhaps it should be held in a more populated region where the show concept can be maintained.

4. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Dave Montera reported that the executive committee of the board had considering tying the event to the Quartet Boot Camp and the Quartet Factory in the Okemos location. The contest concept could be retained, but an extra venue cost would be eliminated. The combination of the events would add a built-in show audience of QBC and QF attendees. It would also give more support for those individuals. This approach would entail the District taking over B/L from Traverse City. It would also place the event in a more centralized location.

Jamie Carey admitted that he was a traditionalist relative to B/L, and liked the experience of the large number of quartets that would arrive on Friday. Often, quartets would be organized that night for the next day. He recognized, however, that the combined events concept would offer more help to those quartets who compete.

Roger Lewis observed that the B/L tradition was to have it as a "north country" event. That was why Traverse City was asked to take over the event. He added that the purpose of QBC was to coach quartets prior to the date of B/L. That was why it was held about a month earlier. He reminded everyone that those who pay the \$50 fee to attend QBC, and then pay the \$50 fee to go to B/L get a refund of the first \$50.

He mentioned that the QAC tried to be involved with coaching of quartets during the afternoon of B/L, but realized that wasn't soon enough. Therefore, QAC offered to do free coaching on earlier dates. That led to the creation of QBC. There have been as many of 14 quartets at QBC.

QAC would still like to do coaching in advance. Roger noted that this kind of coaching is often the only coaching a quartet may get in an entire year. He concluded that putting events together sounds good, but it doesn't fulfill the purpose.

Jamie Carey mentioned that his quartet has gotten some good connections with Charlevoix and its Venetian Festival. At one time, there was even a Society chorus in Charlevoix, and a few of the members of that group are still around. Jamie emphasized that Charlevoix has a lot of money and a strong interest in the arts. He wondered if B/L was brought to that community (or a similar one), there might be interest in working with it and sponsoring a show. He proposed that we encourage the creation of an event in August or September. The District would still run B/L, but the community would run the show.

Mike Hansen indicated that Traverse City has currently accepted that it has the responsibility for running B/L. The chapter would like to continue to do so, and Dale Hanson has committed himself for life to assist with the management of the event. Dale is still involved with that chapter to make the event happen. It was noted that Charlevoix is not too far from Traverse City.

Jamie agreed to talk to Dale about the plans for doing it at Traverse City. He did feel, however, that it didn't make sense to run it as a one day event if it is District-sponsored, and is held that far north. He admitted he liked Roger's idea about using QBC as a means to prepare quartets for B/L. He thought that having a bigger show and a larger venue would increase the attendance at the event.

Roger Boyer commented that the creator of B/L didn't design it as a north-country event, but merely a way to give novice quartets a place to compete. Roger also urged that the event be moved closer to the center of the state so there would be more participation.

Mike Hansen reiterated that QBC and QF are currently sited in Okemos—a more southern location.

Dave Montera observed that the District has not done a Top Gun chorus event in a few years. He suggested a combination of that activity and B/L to create a show opportunity. He saw the possibility of doing coaching of both types of groups in the morning and afternoon, and then having an evening show that featured both types. That event could then be followed by the QBC. He saw this as a way by which the District's goals of education and coaching could be combined.

4. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Mike Hansen perceived that as an area of responsibility within Jamie Carey's CDD function. He asked Jamie and Chris Berry to work with the Traverse City chapter to develop a program that determines how to do it, how it should be structured, who is involved, and finally, how the budget is defined, i.e., to establish how much comes from the District and how much comes from the chapter. He noted that there is only \$2500 budgeted right now from the District. If more is needed, it will have to be approved by the board.

Jamie Carey reiterated his concern about having an event in the northern area of the state. He thought that tying it with a chorus coaching event might be a good option, but felt that something to the north would still be a challenge for those groups.

Dave Montera agreed that running an event up north is less advantageous because it is harder to get chorus members from southern locations to attend, or to get them to stay an extra night at a hotel. He noted that we must talk to Dale Hanson who had said that the original intent was to do the event---but not necessarily to hold it up north.

Roger Boyer mentioned that Dale had talked to both the Mt. Pleasant and Gratiot County chapters about hosting the event. Speaking on behalf of Mt. Pleasant, the secretary noted that his chapter had the same problem with trying to do it in conjunction with a show. Doing it as a separate event was considered since Mt. Pleasant has its show linked to the Harmony Explosion youth camp.

Chris Berry moved on the topic of the 2018 budget. He admitted that it was a "work in progress" and a monstrous document. It was not included in his earlier handout, so it had to be reviewed on the screen.

He indicated that the document showed 2017 income and expenses, and then was constructed for 2018 on the basis of previous conventions held at the scheduled locations. Chris had also included some numbers for the Music Summit event that Jamie Carey is developing. He left the projected member dues contributions the same as 2017.

In response to a comment from Mike Hansen, he asserted that it was not a continuation budget because of changes later in the document. As an example, he referred to numbers for the next convention in Grand Rapids which were based upon the last time it was held there. He felt that those numbers would change. He also based his projections for the cost of the next convention that will be held in Battle Creek on past experience.

Chris observed that the Harmony Marketplace managers still expect to make money because of changes that have been made in the selection of inventory.

Chris had plugged in a cost for another CDWI, even though that event is not currently planned. As previously noted, the Music Summit event had been added. The numbers he used for B/L were based on the 2017 experience. The figures for QBC and Top Gun were also carried over.

Based on those items, the projected income for 2018 would be \$75,000.

Chris asked for clarification of our level of support for the Mid-winter convention. It was affirmed that the only cost there was for attendance by the District President. Meanwhile, support figures for competing quartets and chorus were elsewhere in the budget. Chris indicated those numbers were the same as those for 2017---\$3000 for the chorus, and \$1500 for three quartets. There would be \$500 of support for the senior quartet going to Mid-winter---which is a slight increase. Mike Hansen confirmed that change had been approved.

It was noted that nothing is included for support of a Young Men in Harmony chorus. Aaron Pollard mentioned that he would be reporting later on numerous changes that have occurred in that area.

4. Treasurer's report (cont.):

Finally, Chris displayed a final budget for 2018 that did include some approximations. It is the document that would be submitted to the HOD that afternoon. Mike Hansen asked Roger Lewis if he was comfortable with it. Roger said that he was---based on a quick glance. Dave Montera offered a reminder that it can be amended if changes become necessary.

Chris admitted that the process is scary because of the cost of plans for B/L, QBC, Top Gun, and other District events. He also was unsure of plans to provide support again for the Harmony Explosion camp, so he had added expenses for it. As a result, the proposed budget shows an \$8000 deficit.

Mike Hansen indicated that he was uncomfortable with approving a budget that was projecting a deficit---even though there is a good fund balance. He acknowledged that one-time issues must also be handled.

Chris Berry stated that he had put in numbers that he felt were indicative of current spending. That means ultimately that there must be more convention attendees, or costs must be cut. Convention cost cutting can have a bigger impact, but there is the option of ending support for some District events.

Roger Lewis verified that Chris would be sending the budget document to all board members.

Dan Bezaire observed that restructuring of the board would affect the convention matrix costs.

Roger Lewis also noted that there will be \$2000 donations from the local convention bureau for this convention and the one in the fall of 2018. Those numbers are not reflected in the budget proposal.

Mike Hansen asked if there was a comfort level with approving a proposed budget with a deficit. Roger alluded to an earlier remark that a budget is always flexible and can be changed.

Roger Lewis moved that the budget be presented to the House of Delegates for approval, and Dan Bezaire made the second. **Motion approved.**

Mike asked Chris if he wanted to review the convention matrix shown in the last two pages of the budget. Roger Lewis asked that he be allowed to examine that part of the document, and then send it later to the executive committee.

5. Harmony Foundation report:

Rick Taylor was invited to give his report as the representative of the Foundation. He began by thanking everyone for providing all of the information in advance that he needed to know about this event.

Rick indicated he needed help on one topic. He made a request for everyone to spread the word about how donations to H/F can help the chapters and the District through the donor-choice program. He noted that he can assist current donors who are not signed up for donor-choice while he is here at this convention, or they can call the Foundation. He emphasized that up to 30% of one's donation can be allocated to a chapter, or the District, or a combination thereof.

Rick mentioned that some chapters get back thousands of dollars. He noted that, later on, he would be presenting a check to Mike Hansen for the Lansing chapter that is over \$7000.

Mike thought it was interesting that the Foundation encourages donor-choice, since every dollar that comes back to a chapter or the District is a dollar less for H/F. Rick responded with the idea that those dollars can be perceived as a local re-investment, but they keep the bigger picture visible.

Rick felt it was surprising that so many H/F donors have not heard about the program, or have heard about it---but have not pursued it. He asserted that those who are connected to it feel very good about it, and feel they are doing something for the greater good and for their chapter(s) and district.

5. Harmony Foundation report (cont.):

Roger Lewis mentioned that there are plaques at Harmony Hall that are identified with the phrase "Keep Melody Ringing". They are there in memory of past barbershoppers. When donations in memory of an individual exceed \$1000, the person's name goes on a plaque.

He observed that there will be a five-minute video shown on Saturday night in honor of Johnny Wearing. Afterwards, Roger will encourage donations to a fund being collected on his behalf. He noted that Rick has cards that can be used to direct donations to that fund.

6. Barbershop Harmony Society Update:

Holly Gellar echoed Rick's thank-you for receiving info prior to the weekend. She noted that this was her first district convention.

She looked on this experience of part of her learning process. She noted that she was in her eighth month with BHS.

She observed that coming to Kalamazoo was a bit of homecoming. Her first career position was as the marketing director for the Kalamazoo symphony (1997-2001).

While her more formal role on behalf of the Society will occur later at the HOD meeting, she extended thanks on behalf of the Society to the District leadership for its work. She noted that her role was to listen, to learn, and to convey messages back to the Society. She also offered to seek answers to questions that individuals might have.

Mike Hansen pointed out that Holly is on the executive team, and membership is part of her area of responsibility. Holly added that the chief marketing officer is a brand new position for which she was hired. The marketing team is responsible for social media, audio-visual, promotion, public relations, communications, and oversight of the membership team. However, she agreed to talk about any other areas of interest.

7. Consent calendar reports:

The secretary confirmed that reports for all of the functions had been submitted, but that he still needed to get a physical copy of Dan Bezaire's report for the archival packet---a process started in 2013. He added that he must also receive copies of the financial documents from Chris Berry.

8. Old Business:

a. Leadership Academy:

Mike Hansen acknowledged there have been conversations about what to do about this activity, and Jamie Carey has offered some ideas. Mike referred to the fact that the last L/A was in 2014. The 2015 event was cancelled due to low projected attendance. The 2016 L/A was done jointly with the Johnny Appleseed District. It was reported that 12 persons from Pioneer attended that event. Members who live in southeast Michigan found the distance to Columbus (OH) was about the same as going to Mt. Pleasant.

Jamie Carey had learned from talking to Paul Ellinger, Joe McDonald, and others that they would like to see the event come back. The question was where it should be held. Jamie felt there was interest among the District chapters. He suggested that it might be done in a different format. It could be done as two events. One of them would be just for chapter secretaries, treasurers, and presidents. The other one would be focused on general chapter activities. Jamie volunteered to organize L/A, because he would like to see it return.

8. Old Business (cont.):

a. Leadership Academy (cont.):

From his perspective as District Secretary, the secretary noted that there have numerous changes because of creation of the new Member Service Center, and there are new chapter secretaries who have come into those roles recently. He felt a desperate need to communicate to them so he can avoid doing piecemeal, one-on-one problem solving.

Mike Hansen observed that L/A has always been held in January. He asked Jamie Carey if he was thinking about that option. Jamie said he was wrestling with that idea, but knew it had to be planned soon---perhaps as soon as November.

Dave Montera observed that chapters will get reminders from the Healthy Chapter Initiative about financial filing requirements in the first quarter of the year.

Jamie Carey asked the secretary if a L/A scheduled in the February would be helpful. The secretary responded that some chapter obligations begin as soon as October and November after new officers are elected. Although these duties would apply mostly to existing officers, he asserted that some things may have to be taught, and then remembered for many months. While scheduling of a L/A this fall might not be timely for this year, eventually things will get caught up.

Jamie asked if it would be best to have a L/A in November. Mike Hansen pointed out that chapter elections are held shortly before then. November might be a good option. December, however, would not be a good time for other reasons. Jamie concluded that planning in advance for something in November of 2018 might be worthwhile. Meanwhile, something immediate could be set up for January or February of 2018.

Ed Bax observed that many chapters do get their officers elected in October, but others "drag their feet" for some time. The secretary was not concerned that some chapters don't have officers defined right away. He wanted them to know that they have obligations to fulfill as soon as the task is done. These are things that should be in a chapter's "to-do list". Dave Montera suggested that reminders also be given at the HOD meetings in both spring and fall about these tasks.

Jamie Carey asked for concurrence that November was a viable option for scheduling a L/A, but December was not. Jamie was also optimistic that something could be planned for January. He wondered if a L/A could be arranged as soon as this coming November. Dave Montera noted that many districts hold their L/As then.

Mike Hansen concluded that we should encourage attendance at the JAD event this coming January, and look forward to having a regular Pioneer L/A beginning in November 2018. Jamie Carey said, however, that he would still like to plan something in the interim for the early spring of 2018. It would be a one-day event, 9 AM to 4 PM, at some central location. That might in the Lansing area, or back at Mt. Pleasant. Jamie will work with Joe McDonald on the planning of the event.

Dave Montera reported that Joe has agreed to become the District EVP, and has been asked to help with L/A planning.

Roger Lewis mentioned that he had just sent some e-mails to check availability of some possible L/A sites in Lansing and Okemos.

b. Chapter contacts:

Mike Hansen reiterated that Joe McDonald is coming in as the next EVP. It was noted that Joe has been asked to take over the responsibility for handling chapter contacts. It has been found that it is hard for board members to do this task, and it is difficult to manage. Often, chapters don't know who their contact is. Therefore, Joe will assume the management of this process. He may not be able to visit every chapter, but he will at least create a relationship. It will also help him to get to know the chapters.

8. Old Business (cont.):b. Chapter contacts (cont.):

Roger Lewis recalled that he, Brian Dunckel, and Doug Weaver visited every chapter a few years ago, and carried a message. Part of the message was about H/F. Roger urged that a message be developed this time to take to the chapters, and that every one of them be visited. Roger suggested that Holly Gellar create a message that supports the marketing efforts of the Society. He then remembered that the past visits were done in support of the all-chapter surveys.

Mike Hansen indicated he would share this idea with Joe McDonald. Roger also recalled that, during the visits done a few years ago, the team went early to meet with the chapter boards.

c. Senior Chorus Festival in 2020:

Mike reported that Pioneer District has not yet organized anything in support of this activity. Pioneer is slotted to participate---if we chose to do so---in 2020. It was noted that choruses do not have to seek to qualify, but are assigned a year by a draw. Five districts are selected for each year. The year that a district participates is not rigid. If it cannot make its assigned year, it can defer to let another district move up if it so desires. Shifting can occur within three year periods.

Dave Montera mentioned that he and Jamie Carey have talked about getting something organized within Pioneer. Cindy Hanson is also interested in helping with this activity. Preparations will be focused on the 2020 date.

9. New Business:a. Chorus chapter pins engraving costs:

Mike Hansen noted that a member of the Grand Rapids chapter had expressed concern about this cost---even though it only involves the addition of the year. The high cost is related to the fact that one cannot predict the number of pins to engrave. Therefore, the District executive board had decided that the cost should be incurred by the winning chapter so that the cost of unneeded pins could be eliminated. The cost was supposedly \$5 each, but Brian Dunckel said that the Lansing chapter has gotten engraving for \$2 each. He added that the chapter members paid the \$2.

b. Support of quartets and choruses going to International:

Mike cited an affirmation at the spring 2017 BOD meeting that the District's contributions to the quartets and chorus that goes to International were still \$500 each for the quartets (senior, youth, and regular), and \$3000 for the chorus. It was clarified that these numbers were not based on any per-man calculation, but flat amounts. The secretary asked if the chorus amount applied if more than one chorus qualified for International. It was assumed that would be the case.

Dave Montera reported that some districts set aside the donors-choice monies they receive from H/F, and use that fund to support International reps. He suggested the setting of minimums of \$3000 for chorus and \$500 for quartets from the budget, but donors-choice could be added to that amount---subject to some maximums. Alluding to most recent \$7000 that the District recently received, and getting a similar amount in the fall, he proposed that pool of monies could be used for this purpose.

Mike Hansen observed that this approach would still leave a hole elsewhere in the budget because of the loss of the donors-choice monies. Dave, however, thought that this allocation might serve as an incentive to get more persons to participate in the donors-choice program, while an allocation to the general fund might be a dis-incentive.

Mike asked if a separate fund should be created in the budget for support of quartet champions. Ed Bax felt we were already doing that. Mike admitted that it would be good to earmark donors-choice monies for the PR value. Ed liked the earlier thought that a specific percentage of the money be allocated for this purpose.

9. New Business (cont.):

b. Support of quartets and choruses going to International (cont.):

Dave Montera urged that we still set minimum and maximum amounts on the contributions. That way, there may be some accrual for later years when the need is greater.

Chris Berry understood the thought before these ideas, but asserted that donors-choice monies are currently being put into the general fund, and then are being given to chapters directly, or through programs that benefit the members. He felt that concerns about what is done with donors-choice dollars should therefore be allayed. Someone then noted that the selling point to making donations to H/F is that they are coming back to the members in some form.

Chris acknowledged that there are some members who will not drive any distance to attend a convention, or go to International, or sing in a quartet. Those persons will never be sold on the value of making donations. Because of them, he had no concern about where the money was allocated. However, putting all of the donors-choice money to support quartets and choruses will have an effect on other programs.

Dave Montera recognized the concern that Chris was expressing, but felt that it is still helpful to say that H/F-sourced money is being used for things that some members support---as opposed to less-exciting things like District staff lodging

Chris suggested that line items for member contributions be created as an account, and then show specific expenses against that income. Then questions from members about where the money goes could be answered with examples.

Jamie Carey chose to present an idea---without trying to answer questions about the source of the money to pay for this plan. He realized that a \$7000 deficit currently exists, but asserted that the present level of support for quartets and choruses is archaic. He felt the time had come to modernize that system---as Doran McTaggart has advocated for several years. He knew that there is a potential for sending more than one chorus to International. He celebrated the fact that three quartets were sent there for the first time in 20 years.

Jamie proposed that the District purchase four early-bird registrations. This would be a gift to the top-scoring quartet. This would change the level of support from \$500 per quartet to around \$920 per quartet. He added to his proposal the idea that any additional quartets that qualified would receive this same amount, but would have to pay the difference between the early-bird and the late registration fees. If three quartets qualified, that would make the total level of support around \$2760. Compared to the \$29,000 current fund reserve, he saw that as still having a small impact.

Jamie indicated he wanted to address the issue of support for choruses separately. As an aside, Roger Lewis mentioned that chorus support was set years ago at \$50 per man---which was the cost of registrations at that time.

Dave Montera observed that increased support for quartets by the District removes one of his arguments for support of the Jug Fund. That fund allocated \$500 to each quartet to pay toward its registration, but did not cover other costs. As a member of one of the quartets that went to International in 2017, Jamie Carey agreed that the \$500 really helped.

Jamie added that younger quartets have even less resources to cover their costs. The cost of hotels and airfares adds to the challenge. That can contribute \$1100-1200 to the expenses. Any help that the District can offer will be appreciated. Roger Lewis noted that registration is only about 20% of the cost of going to a convention. Jamie foresaw that future quartets will also be confronted by these costs.

Jamie reiterated his proposal that (1), the District purchase four early-bird registrations (at an estimated cost of \$920 each) which would be given to the one quartet that is sure to be sent to International; and (2), additional quartets that qualify will be given a donation equal to that value. He indicated that he was making this as a motion.

9. New Business (cont.):

b. Support of quartets and choruses going to International (cont.):

Mike Hansen pointed out that the early-bird tickets would have to be made as facsimiles since the actual tickets are not available in October.

Jamie added to his motion to include a donation of the value of early-bird tickets to those additional quartets that qualify for International. Roger Lewis asked if his motion included senior or youth quartets. Jamie said that it did not include youth. Roger pointed out that the term "International quartets" normally does include them. He suggested that they be included, but noted that their registration is half price. Jamie asked if the youth quartets were currently receiving support, and learned that they were not.

Aaron Pollard explained that youth quartets who also compete in the regular quartet competition do not get any support from H/F. He would be reporting on this topic later in the meeting, and noted that it gets a bit hazy. Quartets who are competing only in the youth contest get scholarships from H/F that would cover registrations and some airfare. He thought that those quartets who are in both competitions may be getting some support from the Windsor Sendoff and the Jug Fund.

Jamie chose to clarify his motion so that it applied to regular and senior quartet competitors. Mike Hansen affirmed that youth quartets who are also in the regular competition get no H/F support. Aaron Pollard agreed, but observed that they would then be covered under this proposal.

Roger Lewis offered a second on the motion.

Chris Berry asked if the proposal applied in perpetuity, or just for 2018. It was established that this was a policy change. Dave Montera observed that this would become part of the District policy manual.

Roger Lewis declared that we have been years overdue in addressing this issue. Jamie Carey thought that Doran McTaggart would be so proud of this action.

Mike Hansen asked Chris Berry what was in the proposed 2018 budget for this expense. Chris indicated that he put in \$3000 for the chorus and \$500 each for the three quartets. Dave Montera calculated that this proposal would add about \$1260 to the anticipated deficit.

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

Jamie Carey moved on to the issue of support for choruses. He cited the fact that there is no special support for them other than the Windsor Sendoff. He thought that some support at that event was also given to quartets, but Dave Montera clarified that the institution of the Jug Fund eliminated that kind of usage.

Jamie observed that if \$3000 is divided among 50 chorus members, that amounts to \$60 per man. He wondered if that amount should be changed. He recognized that it would be irrational to try to pay for every chorus member's registration unless the chorus was very small. He suggested that, if the level of support is changed, it should be not defined as a total amount but as a per man number. He still felt there had to be some total maximum amount. Mike Hansen observed that there is a maximum at the moment, but it is defined as a "per chorus" number.

Dave Montera alluded to a document that has been circulated to the District Presidents Council. It is called the "line of sight" document. It is a comparison of activities of the different districts. One of the line items is the amount that each district contributes to its International chorus rep. He noted that Pioneer is right in the middle of the table. Several districts give \$6000. One gives \$6200. However, most of the other districts are in the \$1500 to \$4500 range. All of the data is on a per chorus basis. It was suggested that districts that send several choruses may be among those down in the \$1500 range.

Jamie Carey proposed that the topic be tabled for now. Roger Lewis agreed that this issue could be examined at the Spring BOD meeting.

9. New Business (cont.):b. Support of quartets and choruses going to International (cont.)

Jamie wondered if there were things that a winning chorus could do in service of the District. He advocated the return of having the chorus do a show at the spring convention.

Dave Montera agreed that tabling of the issue was appropriate at this time. He stated that he would send the district support line item from the "line-of-sight" document out to the board members. He suggested that topic be discussed electronically before the spring BOD meeting in preparation for a decision then.

x. Convention matrix (extra item not on agenda):

Roger Lewis distributed copies of a three-page document. He indicated that he would talk about the first page in more detail, while the other pages are more similar.

The option of holding the fall 2019 convention in Kalamazoo would cost more because there is a rate change at the Radisson. The ninth floor is more expensive---even with a rebate. However, the Grand Loft is on that floor, and is an incredible facility. Two suites on the eighth floor will be thrown in on the deal. There would be 164 rooms available. There would be a cost of \$2500 for use of the ballroom, and there would be a cost of \$2000 for the hiring of personnel to operate the sound and lights in it. The facility is willing to reduce the rate if multiple-year contracts would be signed.

Using McCamly Plaza in Battle Creek as the location for this convention would result in slightly lower room rate with more rooms available. Use of the Kellogg auditorium would entail a \$6300 cost. However, there would be a \$2000 check from the convention bureau.

The two hotels in Muskegon would offer a good rate with a \$10/room rebate that should be worth about \$4000. They would also provide one suite per 35 rooms (compared to one per 50 at the two sites noted earlier). That benefit is worth a few thousand dollars. The theater in Muskegon would cost a little more than the Kellogg in Battle Creek. Roger noted that it was also higher the last time an event was held there, but he observed that not as much of the complex was used then as anticipated. This site will offer more free rooms if a two year contract is signed.

The Crowne Plaza at Grand Rapids would also offer a good room rate with a \$10 rebate, two free suites, use of a hospitality suite, and the same number of comp'd rooms as Kalamazoo. The DeVos auditorium there would cost about \$4300.

Roger put the info about Muskegon in bold type because he is thinking about going there in the fall of 2019.

He moved on to a discussion of the spring 2020 convention. He noted that the numbers are similar to those presented earlier. and he is looking at Grand Rapids as the location for that event. He mentioned, as a reminder, that spring of 2019 is already scheduled for Traverse City.

When he moved to the fall 2020 convention at Kalamazoo, he pointed out that the dates are earlier than usual because of the date of the Sweet Adeline convention.

For spring of 2021, Roger is looking at returning to Grand Rapids. He was no longer considering Traverse City because the room rates are much higher, and there is a resort fee of \$15.95---plus taxes. The cost of staying in the Tower could be as high as \$175. Other problems with the Traverse City site will probably price them out of the market. It is also the most distant site for many of our members. This is why Roger is looking instead at Grand Rapids for that convention.

The fall of 2021 convention is likely to go back to Battle Creek, since the numbers are mostly unchanged. Roger did get some quotes from the Doubletree Hotel in Grand Rapids, but it would only guarantee 100 rooms---despite having 200 available. He liked that the Doubletree was competitively priced. However, it only has two suites, and they are not as good or as large as others.

9. New Business (cont.):

x. Convention matrix (extra item not on agenda):

Roger mentioned again that the Battle Creek convention bureau makes a \$2000 donation.

He had added the spring 2022 convention to the document because the Crowne Plaza in Grand Rapids might offer a better deal if a contract was signed for three events.

Roger cited a hope expressed by the Society that districts would use theaters, and not ballrooms, for the hosting of their conventions. Those venues offer better sound and better facilities. He noted that Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, and Muskegon all have good theaters. However, Kalamazoo is a ballroom. Nevertheless, he liked working with the convention hosting organization in that city, and the location is continuing to improve. He still saw this location as a good site.

Assuming the locations he mentioned previously go into place, Roger indicated that the next step will be to go back and begin working on contracts. Possibly, improvements can be negotiated. He was surprised that hotel room rates are still low. Mike Hansen thought we were lucky to have events in April when other groups are not having meetings.

Roger favored going out as far as 2022 because he liked being ahead as much as 4 to 5 years. He was sure there were some districts that do not know right now where their next spring convention will be held. Other districts may only be 18 to 24 months out in their planning. Meanwhile, Pioneer has always been much farther out. Roger felt that working ahead enables us to get competitive rates. Some possible locations are missing because they are already unavailable.

Mike Hansen asked if the individual gets the rebate on a hotel reservation. Roger clarified that it comes off of the District's bill. The cost of the comp'd rooms is also deducted. Basically, the rebate comes off of the venue cost.

Mike also asked if we could get sponsorships from businesses for a convention. Roger thought it would be great if we could. He specifically thought of the Battle Creek Community Foundation as a possible source of something like that.

Mike wondered if a motion was needed on any of the actions that Roger was discussing. Roger felt that it was not necessary unless the board wanted to make a motion of confidence. His main concern was that there is awareness about the process.

There was a consensus that the places Roger identified are ones where our members have gone before, and are well known to them.

Chris Berry asked if he had considered seeking vendors. Roger mentioned that he had tried to get some---especially in Traverse City. He was willing to try again. He had talked with people in the Southwestern District where several vendors have appeared, but has not been able to learn how it should be done effectively. As Roger acquires some help with his function, he sees this as an area that can be delegated for research.

c. Business plan and board structure for 2018-2019 (back to agenda):

Mike Hansen reported that the Executive Team of the board had met to talk about future directions. For that meeting, Dave Montera created a business plan that was distributed to the board. The intent of the plan was to think about the role and purpose of the District. With a plan, the responsibilities of the board members can be aligned with it. Also, the plan will help to drive budget decisions in the establishment of priorities. It can help to define the services that the District provides to its members, can determine how the structure of the board aligns with the District's mission, and can determine the implications for its budget.

9. New Business (cont.):c. Business plan and board structure for 2018-2019 (back to agenda) (cont.):

The plan document was broken into two parts---External Outreach and Internal Outreach. The activities in each of those areas were identified. The plan lists the board member with responsibility for each activity.

A corresponding document to the plan was the board structure sheet. Mike noted that the name of Joe McDonald could be added now to the document in the EVP slot.

Mike noticed a reference in the business plan to the "Pop Gun" program, and asked what it was. Chris Berry explained that it is a coaching program for lower scoring quartets. Dave Montera got the term from the Johnny Appleseed District. Jamie Carey wondered if this was a program like Quartet Boot Camp. Dave explained that it was not. It involves a higher level (Top Gun caliber) of coaching for lower qualifying quartets.

Mike appreciated Dave Montera's efforts to create this business plan. Dan Bezaire suggested that the plan be attached to the policy manual.

Dave pointed out that the business plan begins with a theme: "Lasting Friendships—Enduring Music". He had debated about creating a theme because the District has survived for several years without one. However, he decided there should be a theme. He developed it about the time that Johnny Wearing was in his final days. It dawned on Dave that one of the great things about Pioneer is the friendships that have been garnered over the years. The other great thing is the music that we enjoy. That was why he developed this theme.

At the start of this meeting Dave had distributed buttons that displayed this theme. He noted that quantities of them were being provided at the registration desk as well.

Dave wanted to insure that items in the business plan address either the friendship or the music modes of the theme, and that the theme remains as our focus for the year.

Mike Hansen asked for a motion to approve this business plan for the next two years. Ed Bax made the motion that this action be taken. Aaron Pollard offered the second.

The secretary questioned if Ed could make this motion because it was his understanding that Ed had stepped down as a board member. Dave Montera clarified that Ed was still on the board as a member-at-large as of this meeting.

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

Mike Hansen thanked Ed Bax for his service as a board member. It was explained that Ed was stepping down as of end of this meeting. Mike acknowledged Ed's service related to structural and functional aspects, and thinking about budget responsibilities. However, with the creation of the new business plan, it has been determined that member-at-large positions will not fit well into it. Ed added that it makes sense in consideration of the new direction that the District is taking.

It was also noted that this would be the last meeting for Dan Bezaire as the Immediate Past President. He will, however, continue to serve as the Director of Marketing.

The secretary observed that the board structure sheet should have Dan's name added for the marketing function.

d. Youth choruses and quartets (extra item):

Aaron Pollard reported that the original Society plan last fall was to have youth quartet contests at the district level in the fall. The videos that would be generated would then be submitted to qualify to compete at the International level.

9. New Business (cont.):d. Youth choruses and quartets (extra item) (cont.):

That plan has now been modified. The Varsity quartet (age 25 and under) competition will still be held in the fall, and videos will be submitted to qualify for the International competition in July. Meanwhile, the Junior quartet competition (age 18 and under; male, female, or mixed) will be moved to the Mid-Winter convention.

The Varsity chorus competition (the category in which The Voice Barbershop Chorus would fall) will move to the International location in July. The Junior chorus competition (age 18 and under; male, female, or mixed) will stay at Mid-Winter.

To maintain his goals of having youth at District events, and not having youth competitions being used just to get videos for qualifying to be in International competitions, Aaron is planning to organize a youth festival that happens concurrent with the district convention. He felt the original model of having quartets compete in the regular competition on Friday or Saturday will not work in conjunction with the changes noted previously. At a youth festival event, he expected to include male, female, or mixed groups that are under age 25. He expected that TVBC would be involved with a kick-off of this activity.

Since the Varsity choruses will now be back at International, Aaron expected that 20 of them will be allowed. He was optimistic that TVBC would be among those selected until the event begins to reach some maximum.

To summarize, Aaron hoped to see the creation of some kind of youth festival at both the fall and spring conventions. At the point, however, the details are yet to be determined. He expected to have a proposal ready to offer the board at its spring meeting.

Mike Hansen asked about the status of the youth chorus in Michigan. Aaron indicated that he plans to apply for TVBC to be considered each year. Since they would compete at the July International, he planned to submit an application soon after this convention.

Mike also about the status of youth quartets. Aaron replied that "Frontier" is currently the only such quartet in the state, and its members will age out this next year. He planned to get the next generation (the 18 and under group) involved in barbershop activities. He has contacted a number of music educators in Michigan high schools to get barbershop added to their programs. He said that has gone fairly well. The next thing is to have something that those students can attend, i.e., a festival.

Mike observed that Aaron would have to work with Roger Lewis and Brian Dunckel to create a festival. It would be a challenge to do it since our convention schedule is so full. Aaron envisioned having it during the time when the tag contests are being held, rather than adding something to the present contest schedule.

Roger Lewis noted that the qualification of youth quartets has been separated from the other activities of the District. Nevertheless, he saw it as being important to the District to applaud and support those groups. He appreciated Aaron's work to keep the board and the District involved.

Aaron had learned from Joe Cerutti at the Society that there wasn't enough to be gained in membership through the district model that we have been using. However, districts that use the festival model have been more successful in increasing membership. The old model only works with established quartets that know barbershop. This new model that involves male, female, or mixed groups seems to reach high school students and music educators. Aaron's goal is to bring that model into the District, and thereby eliminate the cut in the ties to the District.

Roger Lewis concluded that, for competing at International, the timing is not good. However, he thought that having a festival at a location like Mt. Pleasant would be good.

Aaron Pollard emphasized that he had only talked with Joe Cerutti about these programs in the last month, since it had just been released.

9. New Business (cont.):d. Youth choruses and quartets (extra item) (cont.):

The secretary reported the Mt. Pleasant chapter had some problems in publicizing its first quartet camp in conjunction with its Harmony Explosion youth camp. However, there was tremendous excitement among the attendees who wished they had known about it sooner. A large interest in this program is anticipated for the 2018 camp. Aaron Pollard thought that quartets evolving out of that program could go on into the Junior quartet program that he will be organizing.

e. Status of the Marquette County chapter (extra item):

Jamie Carey reported on what he has learned when he visited the chapter. He admitted that he is accustomed to the old style of all-male chapters, and did not have high expectations. However, he was very impressed by the group, and was pleased by what they did. He felt the chapter needed some guidance, however. The secretary reported that he had been working with the chapter secretary on a number of administrative problems.

Jamie explained that the chorus sings standard barbershop arrangements, but usually up slightly on pitch. There is one woman who sings baritone (equivalent to a S/A bass), a few females who are singing lead, and several singing tenor.

A former member of the Kalamazoo chapter has moved into the area, so there now are a total of six active male members. Jamie was impressed by the quality of the singing of the group. He said this chorus is composed entirely of strong singers.

With help, Jamie was confident that the chapter can grow. Because of the current direction in which the Society is going, he acknowledged that some chapters that are struggling to survive might need to follow Marquette's example. He suggested that there may need to be changes made so that groups like this one can be assimilated into the Society.

The chapter's goal is to get chartered, so they need our help. The minimum number of male members that they need is twelve---which they have on paper because of the dual memberships held by members of "Chordiology" and "Old Thyme Harmony Quartet". Jamie felt that the chapter should be able to move beyond its current six. He proposed that they be challenged in different ways to help them to get chartered. Jamie noted that Peter Stephens-Brown has a enthusiastic support group.

One of the options that Jamie saw was to get more connection with Northern Michigan University. Marlina---one of their members---is an employee of NMU.

The secretary spoke highly of the enthusiasm of Bob Price, the chapter secretary. With training, he can become very effective in that role. Their biggest dilemma is the lack of a strong person as the chapter president. The Society was asked to consider letting Marlina serve formally in that role, but would not permit it to happen. Unfortunately, Peter has his hands full with the musical direction of the group.

Dave Montera had heard from the Society that it was understood that Marquette will soon make formal application for a charter. Currently the group is operating on an extension of its license. Would they be granted another extension? It becomes a problem when it is known that over half of the chapter's male membership is on paper only, while over half of its singing membership is female. He also expressed concern about their branding, or lack thereof. (It was noted that branding issues have existed in other chapters such as "Vocal Majority", so this problem is not unique to Marquette.) A need on their membership page for info on how to join the chapter was identified as another problem that should be addressed.

Jamie spent some talking with Peter after seeing the chapter, and suggested some things that need to be changed in order for the chapter to assimilate into the Society. Jamie got a positive response from Peter that they would make them happen. Jamie thought that some of the chapter's members are the ones who can best make those changes.

9. New Business (cont.):

e. Status of the Marquette County chapter (extra item) (cont.):

Jamie acknowledged that the administrative side is not his forte. He is more interested in what is happening with the people, and how successful they are as singers. Is the group getting performance opportunities? Is the group growing? Jamie felt that these things had to happen for the chapter to succeed---even if it does get chartered.

Dave Montera asserted that the District is trying to encourage the chapter. He was grateful that Jamie went there to visit them. He noted that the group is slated to sing at this convention in festival style so they can get an evaluation. However, he was reluctant to push for them to be chartered as long as over half of their membership consists of paper-only members.

Jamie said the same thing to the group when he visited. He was glad they now have six active members. How soon can they have fifteen? Marlina can help a lot with this aspect as a quasi-president, but to be chartered, they must elect a male as president. Jamie reiterated that he is committed to helping the chapter in any way he can. He is urging them to send members to the Music Summit.

f. Music Summit (extra item):

In connection with that event, he mentioned that he had sent surveys to 25 Pioneer directors, and got 16 back. The feedback he received was that many choruses wanted something different from the previous CDWI programs. They have concerns about membership, repertoire etc. So that is why he has chosen to forego the classic CDWI approach, and to create something more functional.

When he has asked directors if they were using a particular technique, they often said they didn't know it could be used with a chapter, or didn't know about it. Sometimes one director may be using a technique, but doesn't share with others that he is using it.

Jamie decided to take five essential elements that every director is seeking, and have a day when directors can share their experiences regarding those elements. There could be a focus on best practices. There could be a sharing of techniques that are used by top-scoring Society choruses and coaches. The goal that Jamie and Paul Ellinger have for the Summit is to define a list of consistent practices that all chapters can use.

One example that Jamie cited was the question of whether a chapter uses business cards, and has a well-maintained website or Facebook page. This is something that pertains to exposure and membership.

Another question that Jamie cited was whether chapters are using the techniques that Scott Kitzmiller and Steve Scott are advocating. He wondered why only four chapters might be using them. Jamie cited topics like warm-up procedures, and vowel matching, and ear training. He wanted to see more sharing of these ideas so there would be improvements in the singing level, balance, and blend. He realized that some directors may choose not to utilize them.

In his survey, Jamie found that most directors were interested in these ideas. He only found one director that said he wasn't interested, and that the chapter did not want any help, or attend any meetings, or go to Harmony University. All of the rest wanted to learn and move forward. He asserted that we must supply them with what they need.

After Jamie has compiled the results of his survey, he will share it with the board members. Meanwhile, he did have some copies of the document he sent that could be reviewed.

He reported that the Summit will be held on November 18, 2017, in Okemos (MI) at the Presbyterian Church. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Jamie and Paul Ellinger will be the facilitators. Jamie perceived the session as a chance to get a grip on what should be done, and be a springboard toward a similar event next spring that would include a CDWI. The ultimate goal is to bring up the level of all choruses.

9. New Business (cont.):

g. Chapter eternal ceremony (extra topic):

Dan Bezaire listed the names of the individuals who would be recognized at the ceremony during the HOD meeting, and asked if there were any additions. The secretary added one person from the Gratiot County chapter.

h. Community service project (extra topic):

Roger Boyer noted that the first two projects in Traverse City and Kalamazoo were very successful. He thought the current one in Battle Creek will be as well. He mentioned that the Amazon purchasing capability had been added for this convention. This will allow members to purchase items for donation on-line, and the items will be delivered to the service organization in Battle Creek. Mike Hansen thanked Roger for his leadership on the project.

10. Adjournment:

At 12:46 p.m., Dave Montera moved that the meeting be adjourned. Roger Lewis made the second. **Motion approved.**

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