

Minutes of the Pioneer District Management Team (MT) of SPEBSQSA, Inc.
held on October 19, 2012, in the Boardroom of the McCamly Plaza Hotel

Attendees:

-----Members of the District Board of Directors present: Doug Weaver (president), Dan Bezaire (executive vice-president), Jim McMahan (secretary), Brian Dunckel (immediate past president, and also MT director of financial development)

-----Members of the District Board of Directors absent: Robb Smith (treasurer)

-----Members of the District Management Team present: Jerry Ditto (director of Events), Ron Eubank (director of C&J), Joe McDonald (director of CSLT), Rob Pettigrew (director of CDD)---plus Paul Ellinger (director of Membership) (late arrival)

-----Members of the District Management Team absent: Cliff Dake (director of Music & Performance) and James O'Dell (director of Mktg. & PR)

[NOTE: The position of director of YIH is currently vacant.]

-----Guests: Jim Sams (Society Board member-at-large), Sean Devine (director of development for Harmony Foundation)

[NOTE: The secretary documented that Greg Humbel was present as a guest, but he did not introduce himself.]

I. Call To Order:

President Doug Weaver began the meeting at 10:04 a.m., and asked Rob Pettigrew to lead the group in the singing of "The Old Songs".

Because of the large number of persons who were new to the meeting and also the presence of several guests, Doug asked everyone to introduce himself.

II. Minutes of the MT Meeting at the Spring Convention:

The minutes had been prepared by Joe Serwach, the previous District Secretary. The current secretary did note that Paul Ellinger was identified therein as "Pail" Ellinger.

Brian Dunckel asked that a reference to his financial development report should indicate that there "appeared" to be a mistake because he had not received information on auto-renewals. However, the data was correct.

Ron Eubank moved that the minutes be approved (with insertion of the word "appeared"). Brian Dunckel made the second. **Motion approved.**

III. Financial Report:

Robb Smith had e-mailed his report to Doug Weaver, but Doug had just gotten it printed minutes earlier via a circuitous route through the hotel front desk. Because Robb was absent, questions about the report would have to be referred to him later.

Since a treasurer's report is never "approved", but is always received, there was comfort in acting upon the report in this manner. Joe McDonald moved that the report be received, and Dan Bezaire gave the second. **Motion approved.**

[Arrival of Paul Ellinger noted.]

IV. President's Comments:

Doug Weaver expressed his appreciation to the various individuals who had recently agreed to step into vacancies in the District leadership. It had been noted during introductions that Jerry Ditto was stepping down after 14 years the Events role. A member in the District with convention experience has said that he might accept this role, since he'll soon be finishing up or terminating other responsibilities he has.

Doug indicated that he plans to introduce all of the members of the Board and the Management Team at the House of Delegates meeting. Doug has learned that a lot of our members don't know who the leaders are within the District. He also plans to have the District leadership come onto the stage after the quartet prelims on Friday night for introductions at that time. Everyone was advised to come to the back stage area around the time of the end of the contest. Sean Devine offered to give a reminder to us around that time.

V. Directors' Reports:

Because of the turnover in the various District staff positions, the only persons who had submitted written reports were Joe McDonald, Paul Ellinger, and Brian Dunckel. All the others had not been on their jobs long enough to do anything.

---CSLT:

Joe McDonald drew attention to the request in his report for some financial support for the "Supercharging Your Chapter" program. He noted that the expense to the five chapters that were involved was \$230 each. He envisioned this kind of support as being a gesture of encouragement to those chapters for the progress they have made using the SYC concepts.

Doug Weaver noted that action on this issue needed to be referred to the Board of Directors.

Joe also mentioned that he would like to have support for this program (and similar events) to be considered when the 2013 budget is developed. He asked to be considered when numbers are inputted for that item prior to the January board meeting.

Rob Pettigrew gave a testimonial to the value of the SYC program. He noted that his chapter has experienced a 20% growth after it began using the SYC concepts two months earlier.

Dan Bezaire asked Joe about the kind of support he was envisioning---a fixed amount per event, or per capita assistance. Joe noted that he was looking first for support for events that were complete. He had put specific numbers in his report. He also noted that there were additional expenses incurred by chapters and individuals. He didn't have firm numbers for the latter, but he estimated they were about \$2200-\$2400. He noted that 152 individuals from 16 of the 28 chapters in the District experienced the program. Six of the chapters had over half of their active membership involved. He specifically asked for compensation in the amount of \$1300 for the five chapters that hosted the SYC sessions.

Joe mentioned that he and Paul Ellinger are seeking to train more persons within the District to serve as trainers for chapters that have not yet been reached. Several individuals have been identified who are interested. Joe expected that those persons would have to meet for a weekend for that training.

Brian Dunckel requested that firm numbers be submitted soon to Larry Parker (as the incoming District Treasurer) for development of the 2013 budget.

---(An aside):

Jim Sams asked if all who were present had received the HOD reports from Society CEO Marty Monson and Society President Alan Lamson. He praised the reports as being filled with a huge amount of info that was initially communicated via a distribution that was made to chapter presidents. Jim offered to send them again to chapter presidents and secretaries to insure that they were received. However, Doug Weaver confirmed that he had received them, and would send them out again to our chapters to reinforce their importance.

V. Directors' Reports:

---(An aside) (cont.):

Jim remarked about one unique item in the reports---the possible development of a Society affiliate organization structured for mixed quartets.

---Financial Development:

Brian Dunckel had nothing to add to his report, but emphasized that we were exceeding last year's numbers. Doug Weaver noted that Sean Devine had a display in the registration area about the various giving programs of Harmony Foundation, and that the display would be moved later on to the auditorium.

In response to a question, Sean reported that the District has 19 members in the President's Council, and 149 identified as Ambassadors of Song. This represents a participation level of 17%---versus a 3% level a year ago. Sean had no data on participation by our Canadian members in Sing Canada.

---Membership:

Paul Ellinger did look back at one achievement---100% participation by District chapters in Operation Harold Hill. He observed that his main emphasis was to look to the future, and look for ways to grow. He felt that follow-up on activities was the key. Everyone must stay "on plan". We must maintain contact with chapters that want to participate. We can't push programs on chapters, but hope that successes will speak for themselves.

Doug Weaver reported that some chapters have not heard from their "Harold Hill". He was going to ask the chapters at the HOD meeting how long it been since they had been contacted. Doug emphasized that chapters who had not gotten a response from their H/H should ask for a new one.

Paul urged that we plan to make multiple contacts with chapters via phone calls and e-mails. He suggested that we re-activate the process of having District staff be responsible for contacting two or three chapters on a regular basis.

---(An aside):

Doug Weaver reminded the District staff that each of them should prepare work plans prior to Leadership Academy during the first weekend in January. Doug will send out examples of the work plan format.

---YIH:

Although this position is currently vacant, Joe McDonald pointed out the addendum to his CSLT report described plans for the 2013 Harmony Explosion Camp, plus some statistics from the 2012 camp.

Doug Weaver reported that a person has been identified who may take on the District YIH role.

---Events:

Jerry Ditto clarified that his resignation from the Events role after this convention was not due to him going anywhere, but that he and his wife planned to spend more time in Florida, and also do some overseas travel. He felt that this was a good time for him to leave since many of the upcoming conventions were all set.

Specifically, he mentioned that Traverse City was scheduled for spring of 2013, Kalamazoo was set for fall of 2013, Grand Rapids was set for spring of 2014, Muskegon was set for fall of 2014, Battle Creek was set for spring of 2015, Kalamazoo was set for fall of 2015, and Grand Rapids was set for spring of 2016. A contract for fall of 2016 has not yet been signed; two options are being considered.

V. Directors' Reports (cont.):

---Events (cont.):

He noted that the Society considers us to be set for five years out. However, he felt that we should have a date set for spring 2017 to meet that criterion. He did observe that we have a date set for Grand Rapids in 2018 which was confirmed by virtue of an every-other-year three-year contract.

Jerry pointed out that all of the confirmed dates are on the back of the post-convention report, and they have been provided to the District webmaster.

Jerry mentioned that he would be going to the auditorium for final setup that afternoon. He was pleased to note that we didn't have a conflict this year with a stockholders meeting.

Doug Weaver expressed appreciation to Jerry for all of his advance work. Later on, he'll be telling the attendees at the HOD meeting that many districts frequently don't know right now where their spring convention will be held. We are well prepared, and this allows us to keep costs down.

VI. Chapter Visits:

Doug Weaver observed that board members who've been around a while have found that visits to chapters by a District staff person have been greatly appreciated. He noted that he, Roger Lewis, and Brian have been to every chapter in the District. He and Mike O'Neill had just visited the Saginaw-Bay chapter on the previous Wednesday. He was hoping that other board members could make similar visits this year. It will help us keep track of what is happening in those chapters.

Brian Dunckel pointed out that if a chapter knows someone is coming, they may pull in some members from another nearby chapter.

Doug noted that he and Mike O'Neill tried to visit some non-competing chapters just prior to the convention. They were at the Grand Rapids meeting on Tuesday, and then they went to Saginaw-Bay on Wednesday. Saginaw-Bay invited some other nearby chapters to come, but got no response because they were preparing for competition. As a result, there were only ten S-B members there on Wednesday. Mike did a great job working with that small group, but it would be better if there had been more present.

It is known that either Mike or James Estes will be here for a week in March, so it is hoped that we can maximize the benefits of their time with us.

The secretary reported that he had tried to create a network among the chapter secretaries who have come to his Secretary Track class at L/A. In his new role for the District, he is looking forward to visiting the chapters where he has not established contacts. He wants to visit specifically with the chapter secretary to develop a liaison, to provide some coaching, and to help solve any problems.

It was asked what our plan should be for making chapter visits. Doug responded that he spoke during the rehearsal break to thank the group for its hospitality, and to extend an offer to help. Usually a few members will then approach afterwards with questions. Frequently a comment can be made about a new program or topic that has come up. He felt the main purpose of a visit was visibility.

Joe McDonald suggested that comments made during the break can be an opportunity to describe things you've seen elsewhere that might be helpful for the chapter's activities. He noted that a few places he had gone, the chapter was not prepared to deal with a guest.

VII. Forum in Las Vegas:

Doug Weaver observed that everyone on the District board will be there. It is planned that Brian Dunckel will cover the YIH role on a temporary basis. Roger Lewis will also be there because of another role he will have. Fortunately, last minute rooms were obtained for Larry Parker and Joe McDonald. We will have a total of 12 attendees.

VII. Forum in Las Vegas (cont.):

Doug will coordinate the submittal of info about our attendees to the Forum person who is preparing the nametags.

During the weekend of the convention, Doug was planning to obtain the arrival and departure times of all of the attendees so that we can coordinate usage of the free shuttles out to the Green Valley facility. He and Dan Bezaire will be going out on Thursday night since their first meeting occurs at 1:00 p.m. on Friday. Doug has asked that a room to be provided for a special meeting on Sunday morning of Pioneer attendees.

Dan noted that the free shuttle leaves from the airport every two hours beginning at 7:30 a.m., and ending at 9:30 p.m. Doug pointed out that Green Valley Ranch was 10 miles out from downtown Vegas.

Dan also identified that a free shuttle runs from the Mandalay Hotel to Green Valley every two hours between noon and 8:00 p.m. The free shuttle directly to Green Valley is the best deal; otherwise, the cost of a taxi is \$30 each way.

It was observed that the scheduling of the Forum in Las Vegas instead of Dallas did not lead to an expected savings on airfares.

VIII. Nominating Committee Update:

Brian Dunckel reminded everyone of the nominees---Dan Bezaire (Exec. VP), Jim McMahan (Sec'y), and Larry Parker (Treas.). Doug Weaver is in his second year of a two-year term, so he is not up for election. Brian Dunckel remains in his non-elected position until Doug's second year is over.

It was mentioned that if the person who may take over the MT Events role agrees to accept it, the position is filled by appointment---not election. The secretary noted that there was a comment in the HOD minutes from the spring of 2012 where this point was clarified for the membership.

IX. 75th Anniversary:

Doug Weaver reported that at least two chapters---Lansing and Grand Rapids---were planning to present a joint 75th anniversary show using a suggested script from the Society. The secretary noted that Gratiot County and Holland are also participating in this joint effort. The Lansing show is scheduled for March 9, and the Grand Rapids show will be in May.

Doug wondered if the board could further promote this activity so that members of other chapters might join in. It was reported that the opportunity has been mentioned on the Pionet and on Livewire. It is identified on those locations as "Celebrate Harmony". The show package includes music and learning tracks. It was decided that this program should be mentioned by anyone visiting a chapter. Doug noted that he would mention it at the HOD meeting that afternoon. It was clarified that Lansing initiated the idea of holding joint chapter shows.

The secretary reported that, during the weekend, representatives from the four chapters named above would be meeting to begin their coordination.

Paul Ellinger observed that the original intent of the "Ologycat" songs was to develop repertoire that could sung at joint events such as this.

As an afterthought, Paul suggested that we follow-up after these joint shows are held by conveying to non-participating chapters the success of those events.

X. New Considerations:

Because of the recent changes that have occurred in the membership of the Management Team, Dan Bezaire asked if the policy should be clarified on who is entitled to free registrations. Doug indicated that he was going to cover that topic at the BOD meeting immediately following.

X. New Considerations (cont.):

Dan also asked if we still provided pins that could be worn at events like the Forum, and which identified each of us as Pioneer District staff. Doug wasn't aware of them ever existing, but Brian Dunckel affirmed that they did at one time. Doug indicated he would check further on the topic.

Joe McDonald acknowledged he was bringing up an old topic when he urged that we try to expand the usage of the Pionet for communications. He proposed that we develop some incentives.

In response to a question, it was reported that the number of persons who are currently using it are in the mid-300's.

Joe suggested that we re-build the system with an "Opt-Out" approach rather than asking members to "Opt-In".

Paul Ellinger noted that he offered a sign-up opportunity during the convention registration process, and got about 50-100 more members into the system.

However, Paul also shared a complaint he often heard from people who left the system because they got too many messages each day. He advocated that we tell people about the "digest version" of Pionet. This version gives you only one distribution a day, and the titles and senders are listed. If the recipient has no interest in a message, or an item from a particular sender, he can immediately delete.

Joe indicated that he was interested in an expansion of the e-mail list of persons to whom Pionet messages go, and not a conversion to a Google or Yahoo group. We know that chapter officers sometimes do not forward info, but there are usually members who are inquisitive and are communicators.

Paul advocated that all messages on the Pionet that come from District staff be "branded" so they are not connected with "firestorms". Joe then asked if we should re-establish the system and monitor it so that "firestorms" are removed beforehand. He acknowledged that this would be a form of censorship.

It was observed that if messages from some people were removed, it might cause them to drop out of the system entirely.

Doug reiterated that the "digest version" was probably the most effective way to allow readers to escape objectionable content.

Doug bemoaned his experience as moderator of the .cpres.Yahoo.group when he discovered how many people were on it that had not been the president of a chapter for years! After he deleted all of those persons, he sent a message to known chapter presidents---and only four replied to his message! He attributed some of that poor response to decisions they had made to leave the position. Therefore, he is planning to send out another message to all incoming presidents.

Brian Dunckel observed that the .cpres group used to include directors, since they often have more continuity than the presidents. Another thought was to change the target of that Yahoo group from presidents to chapter contacts.

Joe McDonald urged that someone on the board be responsible for oversight of Pionet. It was clarified that James O'Dell already has that role. It was noted, however, that Matt Tipton is the moderator, and Jim Styer also works with it.

Paul Ellinger observed there were some logistical limitations on conversion of Pionet to an "Opt-Out" configuration. While the acquisition of e-mail addresses from .ebiz would be easy, names can only be inputted to the Pionet database at a rate of 12 names per day. IOW, it would take two weeks to add 144 names.

The bottom line is that it will take time to rebuild the system. Joe McDonald asked if we should consider switching to another product. Rob Pettigrew recommended that we stay with the current system since it is strictly an e-mail system. Asking people to change to something new might be troublesome.

X. New Considerations (cont.):

Joe volunteered to work with James O'Dell on determining if or how we should implement this change. The goal would be to have something to propose at our meeting on January 5, 2013.

Jerry Ditto reported that the microphones for the convention had arrived just before the meeting, and would be taken to the auditorium.

Doug Weaver that he had brought the trophies, but had not yet received the pins. The pins should come directly to the hotel.

Doug reminded everyone of the reception in his room (1407) at 4:30 p.m.

XI. Adjournment:

Adjournment of the meeting was announced by Doug Weaver at 11:03 a.m. Rob Pettigrew led the group in the singing of "Keep The Whole World Singing".

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

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held on October 19, 2012, in the Boardroom of the McCamly Plaza Hotel

Attendees:

-----Members present: Doug Weaver (president), Dan Bezaire (executive vice-president), Jim McMahan (secretary), and Brian Dunckel (immediate past president)

-----Members absent: Robb Smith (treasurer)

-----Guests: Jim Sams (Society Board member-at-large) and Sean Devine (director of development for Harmony Foundation)

I. Call To Order:

President Doug Weaver began the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

II. Minutes of the BOD Meeting at the Spring Convention:

Doug asked if there were any corrections to be made to those minutes. Brian Dunckel recalled that he had noted a few, but had to make a quick review to locate them. While he was so engaged, Jim Sams asked about a 3% to 17% change in YIH. It was clarified that this referred to an increase in donors to Harmony Foundation; it was not YIH-related. Doug commented that the increase was a result of the visits that were made to chapters. Brian mentioned that was following up with anyone who does not renew.

Brian Dunckel moved that the minutes be approved, and Dan Bezaire offered the second. **Motion approved.**

III. Treasurer's Report:

This item was received earlier at the MT meeting.

IV. President's Comments:

Doug Weaver indicated he had nothing to add to what was said earlier at the MT meeting. He will also mention some of those items at the HOD meeting.

V. Historian in Toronto:

Doug reported that John Baker had updated the display in preparation for its usage at Toronto. A new cabinet costing \$400 has been acquired in which to house it. John is planning to go to Toronto, and the cabinet will fit in the back of his van. It was proposed that the District cover the cost of John's mileage and half of his hotel room for five days---but not his registration.

It was wondered in a representative of the chorus that represents the District could transport the display and set it up. This assumes that there would be no maintenance required.

Brian Dunckel moved that the District cover John's mileage (at 25¢/mile) and half of his hotel reservation for five days. Dan Bezaire made the second. **Motion approved.**

VI. Structure of the Board:

Doug reminded the board that he had advanced a proposal to expand the membership of the board. In preparation for further discussion about the why and how aspects of this proposed change, he indicated that he would be asking the DPs and EVPs of the other districts about how their boards are structured, why they chose those structures, and how the structures are working.

As best we know, we are only one of four districts that have boards that are limited to only five members. Others that had a structure like ours in the past seem to have evolved into larger memberships.

Doug noted that his proposal had been to add the managers of the Membership, CSLT, CDD, and Music & Performance functions to the board. This would result in a total membership of nine members, and would include many of the active, day-to-day, functions of the District.

It was suggested that addition of the manager of the Mktg. & PR function might be worthwhile. Brian Dunckel also noted that his role as manager of the financial development function (i.e., his liaison to Harmony Foundation) was evolving into a bigger task. He acknowledged he had envisioned expansion of the board when he became DP, but realized that it becomes more difficult to get a quorum for voting when the membership increases.

The earlier comment about districts that have evolved into board memberships of more than five was clarified. Most of those districts have simply added "At-Large" members.

Based on his findings from the Forum, Doug indicated that he would present a recommendation at the BOD meeting at Leadership Academy, and then call for a vote on it at the spring convention meeting. It was suggested that the vote be done even sooner via an electronic vote. However, it was concluded that this change probably requires a vote by the HOD at the spring convention.

In response to a question about the benefit of increasing the BOD membership, it was noted that giving voting power to more of the District staff would offer a greater sense of ownership to decisions. There tends to be a greater "buy-in" if more people have contributed their ideas, and have participated in the voting. However, there is a limit of how much you can increase before things become unwieldy.

One complication of a larger BOD is the necessity of responding to electronic votes so that a majority response is obtained.

It was observed that the addition of "At-Large" members with no specific tasks adds cost. However, addition of existing staff avoids that issue.

VII. Unfinished Business:

(There was nothing to cover in this area.)

VIII. New Business:A. MT Items Requiring Board Action:

(These items all deferred to Item VIII. B.)

B. Financial Issues Requiring Board Action:

The issue of providing financial support for the SYC program was addressed. It was strongly urged that we not engage in paying members to perform services---since the Society is composed of volunteers.

It was noted that members of our District staff might get paid by other districts to perform services, but they are doing so as "outside consultants". However, when they do those same services "in-house", the situation becomes more of a dilemma.

The other aspect of this topic is whether we should assist with the expenses that chapters incur when they offer a SYC program. Even though the chapters that have already hosted SYC events knew that they would have some costs, Dan Bezair urged that, philosophically, we make some kind of statement of support for the program. He suggested the possibility of covering ½ of the cost of past and future events, or of offering a fixed amount per event.

Doug Weaver cited a figure of \$229 of expenses that were incurred by each of the five chapters that hosted an event. From a review of the figures, it was concluded that this was to pay for the registrations of the attendees from those chapters. The secretary confirmed that this had been the plan.

There was a feeling, however, that all attendees should be paying to attend. The consensus was that there should be no retroactive payments paid made of this expense.

As a matter of showing support for future events, there was a consensus that we should provide support if the budgets for them define the expenses on per-attendee basis. The possibility of offering to cover ½ of those expenses was re-iterated.

Jim Sams asked if Pioneer had a "Coaches Guild"---a group of individuals who can go in to provide guidance to chapters on various topics. It was affirmed that we have members who can do this, but they are not defined by any name. It was believed that most of those individuals provide their services free, but their expenses are covered if necessary.

It was re-iterated that the District is still committed to support of educational activities like SYC---even if they are inter-chapter in nature.

There was a brief closed discussion of communications that occurred regarding the funding of a recent YIH event.

C. Convention Compensations:

It was confirmed that the Convention Matrix defines who is entitled to housing and registration comps. The only question was about persons who had recently stepped down from their roles, and whether they were entitled to anything. It was confirmed that all District staff are given free registrations, and they get their housing paid if they actually began their role prior to the convention.

It was noted that the MT meeting at the Traverse City convention will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Friday because of the greater distance that most people will have to travel.

IX. Adjournment:

At 11:44 a.m., it was moved by Dan Bezair and seconded by Brian Dunckel that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion approved.**