

Siskiyou Singers Board Minutes
May 16, 2020 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Zoom conference

Board Members Present: Mark Reppert, Mary Van Wesep, Cynthia Tank, Katharine Lang, Laura Barlow, Mary Bergstrom, Michael Zuzel, Scott Nelson, Rich Gleitsmann, Howie Seay, Laurie Morey

Board Members Absent:, Jim Gleaves, Jay Morse

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM.

April minutes were approved, (moved, seconded) with the following changes:

- Old business, action item 1: was presented by Michael, not Scott.
- Action item #3: clarification- after the cancellation of our Rotary-funded outreach performances, we have a small balance left over. It is unlikely that we will be able to perform any outreach performances in the fall, so we will need to return the remaining balance to the Rotary.
- We will send a synopsis to choir members, in the regular email, not as a separate email. For more detail, members can contact Laura.
Scott: Since we don't have a public minutes page, only members can access our minutes, change to "members' minutes page".

Treasurer's report:

Balances are almost exactly where they were at the end of April 2019. P&L statement shows 15K excess, so why are the balances equal? Several large concert-related expenses were late in billing. Next month the balance will be reduced by those amounts, leaving us more in line with a year ago.

P&L statement: Advertising revenue refund checks have been written, for about \$500. Jay has not heard back from several advertisers, so we have to assume that they are OK with not getting a refund. If they need documentation or a refund we will wait until they request. SOU has still not sent us a bill for Xmas concert (they are always late). Shawn has not billed us for the work he did for the spring concert. Mark and Mikiko have received a pay increase since the Rotary grant proposal was submitted. The difference between the two pay rates will be paid out of general choir funds rather than the Rotary grant.

To access the full profit and loss (P&L) report, contact treasurer Laura Barlow

Artistic Director's report:

The "Cabaret" video was a big success. Mark is thrilled we have 1000+ views. Can this be used as a rehearsal device in the fall? As far as the concert goes, we could put a concert online. Technology is not a problem, but rehearsal is tricky via Zoom. There is a time delay which is inconsistent, person to person. Mark is confident that we can make this work. If you hardwire to your WIFI hub you have a faster connection, Mark will ask the board for cables for members to assist in this.

President – Mary Van Wesep

No report

Membership – Laurie Morey

No report

Publicity and Programs – Michael Zuzel

Your publicity chair was thrilled to have something to publicize over the past few weeks of continued lockdown.

The “Life’s NOT a Cabaret” video was posted to YouTube on Wednesday, April 29, just prior to what would have been our spring performance weekend. I promoted the video much as I do our concerts, except for posters and advertisements.

These efforts were worthwhile; as of this writing, the video has been viewed 1,040 times and generated 44 YouTube likes.

- I sent out a news release to local media on Friday, May 1; we got no immediate takers, but Geoff Riley at JPR says the video (well, the audio portion of it) will be included in the First Friday Arts Segment on the *Jefferson Exchange* program on June 5. (Instead of taking live phone calls from arts organizations, the show is now assembling virtual performances submitted by those groups in advance.)
- The video replaced the “concert canceled” notice on the siskiyousingers.org home page. Sally promoted it on our Facebook page.
- At Mark’s suggestion, I tagged the video on YouTube with a number of terms (COVID-19, parody, virtual choir, etc.) to help it get noticed. About one-third of our views have come from within YouTube itself (most common search term: “covid song parodies”).
- We sent links to the video via email to choir members as well as to approximately 350 audience members on our email list. Nine of the latter responded, all with positive comments.
- I posted the link several times to my rather limited personal Twitter audience as well as to almost 50 local and choral-singing-oriented Facebook groups. About 60 percent of our external views have come from Facebook. As of this writing, the video has received more than 80 Facebook likes, several shares, and more than a dozen comments, all positive.
- I sent the link to Chorus America, which is collecting virtual choir performances for eventual publication on their website and/or magazine.

I’ve shared some ideas with Mark and Mary about how we might do even better with the next video, including promoting its release a week or so in advance to build anticipation and interest, and perhaps creating a virtual “tip jar” to generate a little cash.

UPDATE: 1,085 views of our Cabaret video on You Tube as of today.

Old Business

Action items - We will be putting a note in the minutes on the members’ page regarding Treasurer’s report (for more financial information, contact Laura). This or a similar summary, will be included in the emails to the choir.

Cynthia thinks Treasurer’s report should be in the minutes, although Scott has concerns about our website not being secure.

Currently, all workshops will be held at the Methodist Church until we decide otherwise. We usually reserve about 6 months in advance. It is likely we will not be able to have the workshop this fall, and it up in the air whether they will allow us to reserve tentatively.

October 3 is our workshop date.

Planning for over-budget expenses: 2022 McNair soloist (\$4K including all travel expenses etc.). We will be open to ways to fund this expense.

Fourth of July: City of Ashland has decided there will be no parade, no fireworks. City team is working on ideas to show our civic pride, and that we should stay tuned for updates.

Membership:

Michael deals with email inquiries, and usually answers them, so this duty will be removed from the Membership person's job description. Laurie thanked Rich for taking over her duties and offered to mentor him in taking over membership duties, as needed.

New Business

Mary has a letter from Rotary, thanking us for donation (of tickets) to their Crab Feed, asking for us to allow them to rollover the donation to the next Rotary fundraiser.

Raffle: We have email address for our ticket buyers, we will send out an email, and will offer 4 tickets (to each buyer) for the next Siskiyou Singers' concert in lieu of Britt or OSF tickets (which are shut down).

Action item: Jay will contact these people

Laura: We should look at postponing a large holiday concert this year as things are so unknown at this time. The viability of rehearsals is another issue. Fundraising at this time will be difficult as well, as many people have lost money and donations may not be something they are able to do.

Mark's conclusion is that the large group performance should not be done this year, but we can still do online activities. He has learned so much during the Cabaret process, that he will be able to walk people through the process via video instruction. This will be a shorter concert, perhaps 50 minutes, with a few interesting pieces, for the holiday. We will decide later what this will look like. Michael: We could post 6-8 pieces individually, or as a concert (to be watched at the viewer's convenience) or both. This can be promoted much like a concert would be. There could be an online tip jar, using PayPal.

"Sure on This Shining Night": Mark is planning to send an email out to invite people to participate in singing this song together via Zoom. There would be a couple of warmups and rehearsals. He will put out a conducting video linked in with the rehearsal tape (Mikiko playing) for each participant to contribute their individual part. Each piece would be done this way. It is not sure how long this would take, hopefully comparable to the usual rehearsal time, starting in September. We all are appreciative of Mark's enthusiasm for learning this new process.

Scott thinks this will be more difficult, and we may need to work on one piece at a time, focusing on finishing each piece before moving on to the next. Mark disagrees, as this is a learning process and the first one will be crappy. Flexibility is needed! The future is uncertain, and even if Phase 2 is in place by the fall, rehearsal still may not be doable. Hopefully we can do a "reopening" concert in the spring, although this is not probably a good idea until a vaccine or treatment is available. Our choir members' ages as well as our audience population ages are a consideration here, as we are mostly in the vulnerable group. We are establishing a policy, as a board, that we will not hold rehearsals or concert until there is a treatment/vaccine. An email will be sent out to members to this effect, as well as suggestions as to how we will continue to gather, visually. Mary V. will send this email out, before Mark sends out his invitation to join in virtual rehearsals & concerts. The musicians and soloists will be contacted to let them know we will not be having a fall concert.

Action item: Mark will do this, and hopefully they will be available in 2021.

We will sing together when it is safe to so, until then it's Zoom. "Sure on This Shining Night" will be happening soon and starting in Sept. we will start meeting via Zoom to work on other pieces. Until there is a vaccine/treatment, we will not meet face to face, as we are vulnerable groups (singers and audience). This will not happen until Phase 3 is enacted. Mark may ask, at some point, for some payment related to the time he is taking to learn and use technology. If this situation continues, a Carpenter grant may be submitted to support this. Also, microphones & earphones make Zoom work much easier, (for Mark and Mikiko) and Mark will be comprising a wish list for equipment. He has been investigating mikes and has found one for under \$100.

We need to be closely in contact over the summer, not actual meetings, but Zoom gatherings, as things change.

Meeting adjourned at 11:41AM.

ADDENDUM:

On Saturday, May 16, 2020 at 3:31PM the following concern was presented via email:

...it seems unlikely in light of today's discussion that we would feel we were in a position to complete our Outreach program in the fall. Do you think we should just offer to refund the amount remaining on the grant, which would be \$190?

The board decided to refund the \$190.