

November 24, 2024 Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, The Master Singers of Lexington

Attending: Adam Grossman, Music Director; Grant Hicks; Clark Jarvis, Treasurer; Becky Linton, President; Haris Papamichael; Lindsey Nicholson, Secretary; Alison Weaver.

Absent: Lydia Light

Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Music Director's Report
4. Flipcause
5. Tickets
6. Other Business?

1. Approval of Minutes - The board approved the minutes from the last meeting unanimously.
2. Treasurer
 - a. We are tracking perfectly to the 5k in the hole for this season, which is what we budgeted.
 - b. We did ok with attendance at the donation-suggested concert - in total \$1300. We will be up on dues, since we have more singers than planned for, once Rose pays, assuming she comes back. He forgot to budget for insurance - \$500 hit we didn't anticipate in budget.
 - c. We saved a bit by not doing fall mailing, but not much.
 - d. Now that we can take credit cards at the door, a few people paid for tickets that way.
 - e. Update on Insurance from Becky:
 - i. She emailed back and forth with someone new for a new quote, which ended up being 594. Original quote was 300 → 500. So we stayed with the original plan and are covered for another year.
 - ii. Jim Weston, who is usually at the ticket table, said he didn't think people would bat an eye if we raised our ticket prices to \$30. Next season we could think about that, though right now it's not the right time, but in the future we could. Becky would be in favor of that.
 - f. Harris: Asked to confirm the amount of money we got from the first concert; it was \$1300 total income.
 - i. Clark: Can't really say that we got any additional donations from the concert. The one non-chorus donation is from Cindy Niels and that was likely because of the fundraising letter.

- ii. Haris: We had this free concert and encouraged donations; and he wondered if he could assess what the result of that was.
- iii. It doesn't seem like we got anything other than what we got the day of the concert.
- iv. If we had charged tickets, we'd probably get around \$1400/\$1500. And instead, we got \$1300, whether you call that ticket sales or donations.
- g. How concerned are we about the 5k in the hole?
 - i. Clark: We have money to cover it but it would be taking money out of what David has donated; he has a 10k cushion because of his donation to the endowment last year. Was hoping we could make enough money to put the 10k in the endowment.
 - ii. Tom: Doesn't David restrict his gifts?
 - iii. Clark: Technically yes, but legally no. He has mentioned this to David, who would prefer that we use it for endowment.
 - iv. There are some usual donations that haven't come in - it's at least another 6000-7000 that we expect. But those already are in the budget. If we don't get those, we would be more in the hole, though that would be unlikely.
 - v. We will be taking 1500-2000 in interest this year from the endowment, which helps. The 5k short includes that money.
 - vi. Chris and Alison intend to make their donation after Christmas.
 - vii. Raffle - Becky didn't get any responses; please keep in mind anything that would help us generate more income that way.

3. Music Director's Report

- a. We accepted another provisional new member - Ali Herbrandson - we don't know how many altos we have right now. We accepted her provisionally for the Christmas concert with the understanding that people were on medical leave and we may or may not ask her to continue with the season. TBD what will happen with Rose. Auditions committee decided to take her on on a provisional basis.
- b. Not sure what's going on with Debbie and Avi. Debbie has a new job and said she probably wouldn't be able to do the first two concerts, which means she won't be staying moving forward. But it is likely she will stay for the rest of the year.
- c. Eric is having his other hip replaced - potential that he will miss some or all of the pops concert. If so, he has found a substitute who he trusts. We will need to think about how we pay this person - Eric could pay them directly (this is what Adam does when he has a substitute) which would be the simplest. Could be a last minute thing depending on the timing of surgery. His salary might not cover the accompanist's costs - \$175/rehearsal, and more for the concert. Will need to discuss further.
- d. Attendance has not been great but not terrible.
- e. Down to six tenors - makes it hard to plan.

- f. This concert is straightforward - orchestra is engaged/ready to go.
4. Recordings
- a. Haris is looking at the recording requests and we only have 12; plus Clark would be 13. Can we make an announcement at rehearsal this week? Haris can put it on the member's section of the website. Recommended to bring laptop/tablet to the rehearsal for folks to fill out form right then and there. People could use their phones too. Alison will bring laptop next Tues.
 - b. Clark's friend Cliff Hayden wants to record our concerts and is willing to do it for \$300 which is half what Ken does. Based on everything he's worked on in the past, he should know enough to do a decent recording. Clark recommends that we try it for the Christmas concert. Clark thinks Cliff is planning to do the editing/processing. Clark will write Ken to tell him that we'll not be using him for the Christmas concert.
5. Vetting the group Flipcause
- a. Sue reached out to Becky after she got a message who would be willing to look at this group that does fundraising for groups. Becky looked at it and is skeptical - if someone else could look at it Becky will forward the email?
 - b. Other board members were also skeptical; Clark discussed that we often get these things and he deletes them. He shared that one time the Master Singers tried to do this before it got us nothing.
 - c. Decided not to move forward with the tool. Becky will tell Sue.
 - d. Discussed other ideas for fundraising:
 - i. We used to have a fundraising committee in the past in which people planned the year's fundraising activities. We could do a cross-analysis and budget, set a goal and think about our fundraising needs.
 - ii. Currently we only send a fundraising letter.
 - iii. In the past we've learned that most of our funds come from the membership - this is our fundraising base.
 - iv. Haris and Adam's mother went to a seminar to help nonprofits figure out their budget/fundraising but it was beyond our reach as a group.
 - v. Could we have a grant writing committee?
 - 1. Becky hasn't heard back from the Lexington one we applied to previously, though that would only be only be \$500-600 and isn't going to tip the scale.
 - 2. Adam shared that he was told repeatedly for a group like this things like Alfred Nash Patterson we could get, but to fundraise large amounts it's about identifying wealthy individuals, rather than pursuing grants. Probably better off having a house party with a concert, and trying to get 25 people there and to get them to give us \$100 each rather than spend time applying to grants. We've done this in the past, catered by Rose and was successful. We did a huge fundraising effort to underwrite a piece in the past as well,

by William Bolcum with a group in Ann Arbor conducted by his brother and we raised it.

- vi. Discussed that we are surviving, but are we doing the things we want or do we not have the money to do what we want?
 1. Over the years Adam has altered the scope of expectations to fit the budget we have, which doesn't bother him on principal. It's more challenging when people make suggestions to do big works, when we don't have the funds. People don't understand the link between repertoire and dollars.
 2. The problem with raising money in a house party is sustaining it. We've never been able to make it an annual event, or maintaining relationships with these people. And is this where we want to be spending our time and energy?
- vii. Our board runs more as an executive committee of getting the chorus functioning day to day. It is not unusual that a group has an executive committee and a board of trustees who are responsible for fundraising. Could we start a more specific fundraising committee who can brainstorm fundraising ideas, without the stress of worrying about the time that we are investing to keep things running?
- viii. This comes up every few years - we are really the management committee. Typically people on the board would be from outside of the chorus, ideally people who could support the chorus financially on a regular basis.
- ix. If we aren't comfortable asking for big money, we have to learn to ask for small money. Alison offered to sit on a fundraising committee; if anyone else is interested, let Alison know. We should also send an email out to the membership.
- x. Would Bob Haliday be open to joining? He's doing some work already with ads and is savvy, knows the group well. It would be good to get members from outside the chorus. (Though they are moving soon so he might not be available). Allison will ask Sue.
- xi. Discussed the idea of talking to Cantata singers since they have strong fundraising- Alison will ask Robert if it would be worth ping-ponging Anne Marie. Anne Marie is manager now of an all women's chorus, Lorelei ensemble. Adam would be tempted to ask her if we could pay for an hour of her time to consult and then she could say no/yes, etc.
- xii. When we talk about money, there are a lot of things that haven't worked, and we won't do those. We have to learn from our mistakes and find solutions. It's frustrating to hear things that don't work/nothing that does.
- xiii. What about putting feelers out to members to work on fundraising? No downside.
- xiv. Need a clear ask. Ask for participating in a brainstorming meeting initially to figure out what might be in our wheelhouse/possible, etc just to see. No one loves this stuff but we gotta do it - money is a stumbling block.

- xv. We have to change the priority/mindset. It might be a matter of survival.
- xvi. If Adam decides to retire and we need to hire a new MD who knows what that would be like and do to our budget. Don't need to take that kind of long term worry on. Adam is not planning on leaving in the immediate future.

6. Tickets.

- a. Lydia is our point person about tickets communicating with Randall - he says he will have tickets printed tomorrow and at rehearsal Tues. Not sure where Randall was last week.

7. Other business?

- Haris has added Ali's info to the roster, website, etc.
- Becky will send a reminder to the group about Tuesday rehearsal; we will meet in the rehearsal room as usual. Becky thinks we will have our normal space.

Next meeting will be held on Sunday 1/12 at 7pm.