

**Western Massachusetts Sacred Harp Community, Inc.
Minutes from the Annual Member Meeting November 5, 2006**

The meeting was held at the Arm Music Center of Amherst College, Amherst Mass.

The meeting was convened at 4:45 p.m. by Jenna Strizak.

In attendance were 24 members including 5 Board members.

From the Sacred Harp 99 "Gospel Trumpet" was sung to open the meeting.

1. Approve Minutes of the Nov. 5, 2005 Annual Meeting

After some study by the members present, a motion was made and seconded that the minutes of the Dec. 5, 2005 annual meeting be approved as printed.

The motion carried.

2. Reports

President's Report – Jenna Strizak presented the President's Report (see 2006 *President's Report*). Items to note:

- WMSHC, Inc. 501(3) status was officially granted by the IRS, with thanks to previous board members and Peter Irvine for seeing this through.
- WMSHC, Inc. and the CD committee re-issued the 1999 Convention CD, re-mastered by Dan Richardson and with artwork rendered by Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg.
- WMSHC, Inc. created a Financial Policy, Travel Grant Policy and a Records Retention Policy to help guide the current board as well as future boards.
- The board worked to increase membership communication throughout the year and informed the membership that minutes of meetings are available on the web site.

Clerk's Report – Sheldon Finlay presented the Clerk's Report (see 2006 *Clerk's Report*). Items to note:

- As of Nov. 4th, 2006 WMSHC, Inc. has 55 members, with 41 members renewing and 14 individuals becoming new or re-established members.
- Members were thanked for renewing their memberships, paying dues, and keeping their contact information up-to-date.

Treasurer's Report - Paul Butler presented the Treasurer's Report through 9/30/2006. (see 2006 Annual Budget and Financial Report). Items to note:

- Donations received are up significantly partly in thanks to WMSHC, Inc. non-profit status.
- The convention officers did an excellent job of keeping convention related expenses down.
- CD sales are down this year, but the re-release of the 2001 CD should bolster future CD sales. CD sales and donations are historically the largest sources of revenue for the organization.
- Travel Grants are up substantially with \$2,000 awarded during the past year and a generous \$1,000 anonymous donation has helped fund the travel grants.
- WMSHC, Inc. has a surplus available for outreach activities, singing schools and future CD projects.
- Some of WMSHC cash is being placed in short-term (six month) CD investments to earn the organization interest on its cash holdings.

Convention Officers' Report – Kelsey Wessels presented the Convention Officers' Report (see 2006 Convention Officers' Report). Items to note:

- The 2006 Convention ran very smoothly. Convention Officers enlisted more participation and support from our community of singers.
- The CFA continues to be a great spot for the convention in many ways. However, WMSHC, Inc. should revisit how large we want the convention to become (publicity & travel grants) and the limits of the CFA to accommodate the convention.
 - A location committee has been active off and on over the past couple years to scout out potential locations that could accommodate the convention's growth. Sheila Kelley has a criteria list for vetting possible locations. If people are interested in working to find a new location they should talk to the 2007 convention officers.
 - Safety is an issue with the numbers of singers present. Anna Maria Irvine has been the safety coordinator in the past and ensures that exits are unlocked and unobstructed and there are tall and loud people on hand to point out exits in the event of an emergency.
- Convention officers encouraged singers to donate food and resources rather than seek reimbursement from WMSHC, Inc. which helped to keep expenses down. Additionally, WMSHC, Inc.'s non-profit/tax-exempt status was useful in receiving discounts for rentals.

3. Review of WMSHC, Inc. Committees

Members who were active on committees during the past year spoke briefly about the activities of their respective committees.

Library Committee – Rosie Wojcik discussed the Library Committee which she heads with Kelsey Wessels. The library committee is attempting to archive recordings, songbooks, videos, photos, and other Sacred Harp material which can then be accessed by the membership. The committee hasn't been very active over the past year but is always open to assistance, ideas and donations from the membership.

CD Committee – Current members are Eliza Cavanaugh, Peter Irvine, and Jenna Strizak. The committee reissued the 1999 convention CD. The committee is interested in member participation and any ideas the membership may have regarding future CD projects. Peter Irvine stated that economically the CD's are very beneficial to WMSHC, Inc and the committee has been brainstorming for a unique and focused shape note CD (Harp of Ages, multiple book recordings, etc.) to help bolster sales.

Web Site Committee – Sheldon Finlay discussed the web design committee which consists of Sheldon Finlay, Paul Butler, Allison Schofield, Kshama Ananthapura, and Laura Timmerman. The goal is to evaluate the existing web site and implement a new web site that better addresses the needs of the WMSHC, Inc. community and our annual convention. The committee is still in the discovery phase in regard to the larger project of redesigning the WMSHC.org and members are urged to participate by joining the committee or making suggestions.

Bylaw Review Committee – Jenna Stizak discussed the bylaw committee which consists of Paul Butler, Jenna Strizak, Rosie Wojcik, and Ed Smith. As WMSHC, Inc. grows the bylaws need to be reviewed to ensure they are still serving the organization in an effective and efficient manner. The bylaw review committee finds discrepancies and shortcoming in the bylaws and suggests changes to the membership. This is an ongoing committee and members who are interested in the workings of the organization should consider joining the bylaw review committee.

Travel Grant Committee – Anna Maria Irvine discussed the travel grant committee which consisted of Anna Maria Irvine and Linda Shea during most of 2006. The travel grant committee reviews applications from WMSHC members wishing to travel to outside sings as well as outside singers looking to travel to our annual convention. \$2,000 in travel grant funds were distributed in 2006. Grants were awarded for singers traveling to WMSHC from Texas, Alabama, Oregon, and Ecuador. Linda Shea will be leaving the committee and Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg and Kshama Ananthapura have expressed interested in joining. Other members interested in joining should talk to Anna Maria Irvine.

4. Presentation of Proposed Bylaw amendment and Vote on Bylaw Amendment

Paul Butler briefly presented to the membership an explanation of the proposed bylaw amendment regarding instant run-off voting (*see 2006 Proposed Bylaw Amendment*). With participation in WMSHC, Inc. elections increasing, situations can

arise where an election can be tied among the candidates. The proposed bylaw amendment would enable members to rank the candidates in order of preference. In the event of a tie, a run-off election would enable WMSHC, Inc. to break the tie in a method that is fair to all voting members (present, proxy, and absentee).

The membership passed the bylaw amendment unanimously.

5. Voting

Paper ballots were distributed to members to vote for 2 board members and 3 convention officers. Ballots were tallied by Sheldon Finlay and Jenna Strizak. The membership elected Mathew Wojcik and re-elected Paul Butler to the WMSHC, Inc. board. The membership elected Laura Timmerman as Convention Chair, Joanne Fuller as Vice Chair, and Kelsey Sunderland as Secretary of the 2007 WMSHC convention. The membership and candidates were thanked for their participation.

6. Other Business

The board has been discussing giving a gift to both Peter Irvine and Dan Richardson to recognize their hard work and contributions to our community. The membership was asked if they supported using WMSHC funds to make the gifts.

A motion was made and seconded. Motion passed by the membership.

The membership discussed what amount the gifts should be. The gift is a token of appreciation and not a representation of actual wages. A question was raised whether it is permissible under the IRS tax code for a non-profit to give gifts. WMSHC, Inc would have to show that it is a token gift and not wages. The board had budgeted \$300 towards a gift for Peter and Dan.

A motion was made to use this money towards a gift. The membership also expressed interest in taking up a collection to add to the gift. The motion was seconded. The membership voted by affirmation and the motion passed.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sheldon Finlay.