

**Boston Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society  
Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting**

March 26, 2014

**Present:** Betty Allen, Beth Birdsall, John Crabtree, Kat Dutton, BDan Fairchild, Jean Farrington, Alex Hall, Bob Littlehale, Lance Ramshaw,

**Absent:** Vickery Trinkaus-Randall

The meeting was conducted by conference call, and was called to order by Jean Farrington at 7:17 pm.

1. **Minutes from the previous meeting:** MSP to approve them as distributed.
2. **Treasurer's Report (Bob):** Bob reported the figures below, which do not include income received for the upcoming Pinewoods sessions.

[On the following day, Bob sent email to Exec members that he had neglected at the meeting to ask for approval of a music subsidy request from the Salem class, for more than 3 musicians, thus a \$300 subsidy. Seven emails with "yes" votes were received, so that subsidy has been approved.]

Century	\$36,678.29
Lloyds	\$403.35
Total	\$37,081.64

**3. Reports from Liaisons.**

- a. **Fall concert** [Nov. 7-8, 2014] (John): Not much new to report. John met with Linda (who will be doing publicity this year) on Saturday to review notes and go over immediate plans.
- b. **Highland Ball** [May 10, 2014] (Bob): Sara and Ed still have the VT classes to cover in their round of class visits to promote the Ball. They have received 50 applications at this point.  
Lance noted that Laura Billmers sent email raising a concern about the plan May 9 date for next year, reporting a conflict with a major Folk Arts Center event also planned on that date. Bob noted that the Melrose Hall would not be available on the first Saturday in May, since the Melrose Symphony has that hall for the first weekend in every month. While Exec regrets the conflict, we opted to proceed as scheduled.
- c. **PW Benefit Ball** [Dec. 6, 2014] (Betty): Nothing to report.
- d. **ESS Pinewoods** (Jean): Applications are coming in at roughly the same rate as last year.
- e. **PW Scottish Sessions** (BDan): The cochairs report that they are on track for a full camp, with 117 so far for session I, and 125 for Session 2, a bit better than last year at this time. (It's mildly surprising that Session 2 is doing better than Session 1.) There are 19 first-timers so far, and 8 intercontinental applicants. They have invited Beth to join them when they run the lottery, so that she can see how that works. Jeremy has also been working on documenting all the various tasks

associated with Pinewoods, for use by future chairs. Once the lottery is run, admittance emails should be able to go out, probably the second weekend in April. Everything is smooth sailing so far.

Bill Card's term as our RSCDS Representative to the PCI board ends in November. He is willing to continue. MSP to appoint him to another term.

f. **NH Highlands** [Aug 22-24, 2014] No news

g. **Branch Activities at NH Highland Games** (John): No news

h. **Teaching Music Committee** (Betty): [Before the meeting, Betty and Jean sent around by email a proposed budget from the TMC for inviting a guest teacher for the June 20<sup>th</sup> Advanced Class. They are estimating \$200 travel, \$54 hall rental, and \$50 total for the honoraria for the teacher and musician, with estimated income of \$200 (20 dancers), for an estimated net loss of \$104. There was some email discussion, with positive comments about the chance for a guest teacher to build enthusiasm for the series, but also concern about the size of the honoraria. Nine votes were received to approve the budget.]

Betty thanked people for voting by email regarding the budget for the June Advanced Class. TMC has arranged with Stella Fogg to come and teach that class.

Kent has finished the cribs for the Pinewoods evening programs, which are being reviewed.

The committee is making progress on preparing a list of Core Dances. They currently have 30-31 dances of each type nominated, which they are hoping to cut down to about 20 of each. They plan to post the list on the Branch website, in the hope that teachers and classes will use them in classes and parties.

Gregor has sent out a letter about the Candidate Classes, to see who is interested.

We also discussed the travel portion of our class music subsidies. Bob reported that Ed Pearlman has been raising concerns about this issue in regard, first, to the Ball, and then more recently in regard to the Kennebunk class party. Ed recently sent an email to all Branch musicians concerning the travel portion of the music subsidy, which he apparently finds confusingly phrased.

Bob suggested rolling the travel portion into the general subsidy, rather than keeping it separate. We discussed the history behind the issue, and how a separate travel allowance made more sense when this was presented as a recommended fee schedule, and perhaps makes less sense now that it is only a partial subsidy.

Bob moved that we eliminate the statement about travel, and roll that amount (\$65) into the basic subsidy amounts. This would begin with the 2014-2015 program year. The motion passed unanimously. Lance will send the revised schedule to Betty to pass along to the TMC. Once the TMC has seen it, Lance will also send it to the class contacts, for the information of those who might already be planning for next year.

i. **Tartan Times** (Beth): Beth passed on word from Barbara, who is setting up to work with Evelyn as the Layout Editor. Barbara reports that they have been making good progress toward using the Pages program to do the layout digitally, and are hoping to have the new process in place for the next issue. She suggests a joint meeting with Beth once the new procedures are worked out, to help smooth the transition.

- j. **Demonstration Team** (Alex): The team is rehearsing for NEFFA., with the choreography mostly set. They also have an April 12 gig at the Worcester Public Library.
- k. **Membership** (Bob): Nothing new to report, other than that the directories are finally done. The cost of mailing them, \$1.40 per copy, is a concern. MaryEllen tried to get as many passed out directly as possible. She suggests that a different schedule might coordinate better with a major event where more directories could be distributed.
 

Electronic distribution is another option. Bob notes that we spend \$420 or so to print the booklets, plus the postage to distribute them. While the suggestion was raised of posting it on the members-only section of the website. Beth noted the clear sense back when we were talking with the Webmasters was that a single shared password would not be secure enough for posting material that includes members' addresses and e-mails. There is a workable electronic alternative, sending the directory out by email to the Branch email list. If additional security was desired, we could password-protect the PDF that we send out. That approach would also allow us to send out updated versions more than once a year.

While we don't think that this would put any extra burden on the Webmasters, it would be good to mention it to them, and then to put it on the agenda for the AGM, so that members will know about the plan.

Before the membership forms for next year can be finalized, we will need to set the dues. We discussed the issues some, including perhaps adding a surcharge for hardcopy delivery of the Tartan Times. Before our next meeting, Bob will send around some summary figures showing how Branch expenses compare to membership fee income.
- l. **Nominating** (Beth): The Nominating Committee has sent their proposed slate to Jean and Lance: for President: Jeremy Thorpe; for Secretary: Susan Haines; for Member at Large (2-year term): Dale Birdsall; for Member at Large (3-year terms): Merrill Henderson and Linda McJannet. MSP to approve that slate. Lance will send that out with the preliminary notice of the AGM, including the by-law instructions for submitting additional nominations.
 

We discussed candidates for appointment to the Nominating Committee. We will need one person for a 1-year term and one for a 3-year term. Jean will contact people.
- m. **Web Site and Publicity** (Kat): Not much to report. Meyer has done some background work to automate the posting of Exec minutes.
- n. **Bookstore** (Vickery): The bookstore inventory has been posted on the Web. Mike and Dawn won't be able to come down to the Ball, but if people want to order something in advance, we could arrange for pickup there. Anyone taking the Candidate Class will presumably need a copy of the manual
- o. **Class Liaisons:**
  - 1) Albany: No report.
  - 2) Belfast: No report

- 3) Brookline: No report
- 4) Brunswick: No report
- 5) Cambridge: There was no class on Memorial Day. The AGM will be there on June 9. They will be hosting Veronica's Attic on April 14, with a double social hour format. Their Summer Party will June 30.
- 6) Chelmsford: No report.
- 7) Fairlee: They did a demo last Friday at the Town Hall. Their Spring Fling will be May 17.
- 8) Great Barrington: No report.
- 9) Greenland: No report.
- 10) Kennebunkport: No report.
- 11) Montpelier: Their Social Dance is coming up on April 12. Flyer and information is posted on the Branch website.
- 12) Nashua: No report.
- 13) Northampton: Their end of season party will be on June 7. (There was an error in the recent Tartan Times listing.) Music by Peter Macfarlane and Jerome Fung. Class attendance has been generally thin, with 3-4 couples typically. The church talked about raising their rent, but after discussion, agreed to keep the current rate.
- 14) Salem: No report.
- 15) Stow: No report.

#### **4. Old Business**

#### **5. New Business**

- a. HQ has sent around email regarding a web survey for Branches covering membership and promotional efforts. We discussed our concerns, particularly the high membership rates, and noted the generally UK-centric questions on the survey. Roughly 2/3 of our membership income goes to HQ, which is a very serious concern for our financial future. There is a danger that overseas Branches may be forced to dissolve and reorganize as Affiliated Groups, though our Branch, as the first overseas branch, would be quite reluctant to do so.

#### **6. Next Meeting**

- a. April 30 – John's house, with the Webmasters invited to join us to discuss backup coverage and other issues.
- b. May 28 – This meeting could be by conference call. There was some discussion as to the tradeoffs of that format.

Adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lance Ramshaw