

RSCDS Boston Branch 2024-25
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 30, 2024, 7:15 pm

Location: Zoom
for Zoom access use link in email OR call: 1-617-417-1621

Attendance: Linda McJannett, Cathy Crabtree, Kat Dutton, Marsha Byrnes,
Missing: Robert McOwen, Alena Taylor,

- I. Minutes from the previous meeting (**Alena**)
 - a. Correct a-vii: "Previously from an alternate source" -> "and discussed"
Marsha is also an AGM delegate (decided after) "Since our meeting, we have been assigned a fifth delegate (*Marsha Byrnes*)
 - b. Correct d-i strike "which", just "four delegates" and then include Marsha above

- II. Treasurer's report (**Cathy**)
 - a. October - we are just getting started in the new fiscal year!
 - b. SAGM has been paid for
 - c. CD is listed at the amount we put into the bank, it will pop in February and give us 2k. We will probably renew it then.
 - d. Summary to give to SAGM is presented
 1. Pinewoods: Last of Scottish Pinewoods information in: shortfall of just over 1k, primarily because attendance was low, a few more covid refunds, etc. Big surprise expense: umbrella policy for insurance went up from 1000 -> 1500 (all insurance is going up, this is in line). We should consider also that Pinewoods is not just Scottish sessions, but also ESCape. This means we are somewhat balanced out by ESCape having a windfall of ~1600

Highland Ball weekend: Improved attendance, showed a surplus. About 34% increase in ball attendance, with same ticket prices from '23 to '24. Welcome dance moved to North Chelmsford Town Hall (rent only \$90 vs the \$270 charged by the church in Weston where the Welcome Dance had been held in prior yrs. Had to pay slightly more to Melrose in order to rent the piano.

Fall concert/ceilidh: New venue and format -- Arts at the Armory instead of Scottish Rites Masonic Hall. Successfully combined concert and ceilidh elements (rather than only concert). Applied for

and received \$1200 grant from NHScot. "What are you doing with the money if you made any?" --we're going to keep applying it forward to advertising and promotion of this year's event

Membership: Last year F24 237 vs F23 229 -- slightly different makeup of benefactors/supporters/etc meaning slightly different takes. Paid about 46% to headquarters. (in F23 was closer to 41.5%). We use the remainder to meet most administrative costs (insurance, music subsidies, other fees as they come up). "we don't quite make it, but that's why we have a surplus at ESCape"

In general, made money at Highland Ball and Ceilidh

Music Subsidies: Last year paid 8 subsidies to branch classes and parties - Brunswick, Albany, Nashua, Fairlee, Belfast, Kennebunk, Cambridge, Chelmsford (Some classes do not seem to participate). Bedford is not in the position for a party, Great Barrington does not, Northampton did prior year but not F24

Administrative: Increase in tax prep. Marketing - a little over \$600 (including paying MCs and Musicians for Dancing on the Greenway, prior year was publicity postcards). Software - Branch Zoom Account. Insurance – increased.

Demo Team: Rent is less -rehearsing at the Armory which is much cheaper than Lexington. In F23 there was some catchup paid to teachers, did not need to repeat that.

Bottom Line: Increase of \$1,267

III. Reports from Class liaisons

Great Barrington, MA: (Emily) Sadly, the beginner class had no takers. Mostly this was due to too little, too late on the publicity front. Publicity for a new event as well as for the ongoing class is a bit of a challenge. The ongoing class is going a little stronger than before, but still needs a few more regular dancers to keep from cancelling so often - still, we are cancelling a little less often than before. Ted attended and taught at the Albany Class's Fall Frolic this past weekend, and two other members of the class made it to the weekend.

Northampton, MA: (Emily) no report received

Albany, NY: (Emily) Fall Frolic happened last weekend! I did not hear back yet from Lois about it, but did get an unofficial report via Ted: Jen Schoonover was the featured workshop teacher, while the TAC Summer School teacher candidates who are members of, or are closely associated with the Albany class (Sam Bemis, Bethany Wright, David Wasson, and Ted Randolph), taught the formations workshop and the party review workshop. We taught based on the dances we MC'd on Saturday night. There were 8-10 in our classes; about 40 or so registrants in all. All in all it was a fun experience.

Bedford, MA: (Emily) Current class continues weekly. Two new members this month, others dropped out so I usually have 8-14 dancers. We have started reviewing the PBB dances.

Cambridge, MA: (Robert) Had a wonderful Halloween party. Everything seems to be going fine.

Greenland, NH: (Dave) met consistently throughout October about 3 couples. One new member has come twice, and we are hoping for repeats.

Nashua, NH: (Dave) Loren says extremely variable -either 8-12 or 3 dancers (had to cancel twice). Susie Bruckner-Long was filling in while Loren was away. New Years Day party plans are coming together (it is on branch calendar, but doesn't have full details yet)

Lancaster, NH: (Dave) Bill Tobin says, "we're doing well". Planning on their 26th annual spring frolic in Lancaster Town Hall - June 7th. Sherri Mancusi has been talking about various social media and has potential Facebook/Instagram suggestions and might be willing to give insights/phone call, help with marketing

Kennebunk, ME: (Anne) In general, Maine classes are going well.

Belfast, ME: (Anne) classes are going well

Brunswick, ME: (Anne) Tonight is the last Scarborough newbie class, it's going well. One new dancer even came to the party!

Bucksport, ME: (Anne) classes are going well.

Fairlee, VT: (Connie) forgot to reach out but did attend Fall social, was quite fun had four sets and a potluck dinner afterwards.

Salem, MA: (Connie) Everything is status quo, Mary Ellen has questions of SAGM. 1. Would like to be on agenda as Nominating committee rep, 2. Suggests date should be put on calendar and notice sent to membership (it is

now on calendar, and we will send notice!) [Susie Petrov would also like to be on the agenda for TMC and also to talk about publicity, excellent idea]

Chelmsford, MA: (Connie) No report received, but Cathy reports being there second Friday of the month "good turnout for that class"

Note – Chelmsford meets the first Friday of the month and Stow meets the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

- IV. SAGM prep—Announcement; arrangements— Zoom
 - a. Adding MaryEllen (nominating committee) and Susie Petrov (publicity) to "other business"
 - b. Linda will send this along
 - c. PUBLICITY Susie Petrov will likely make an appeal to the general membership at the SAGM. Alena Taylor has a friend who will send a portfolio of publicity work they do
 - d. Please bring snacks everyone on committee!
 - e. Please arrive a little early to help set up chairs
 - f. John is setting up the zoom

- V. Choose Band for Highland Ball
 - a. Elizabeth and Ben Anderson, plus presumably a piano player – Marsha to reach out, paying approx. \$2200 including piper
Other possibilities:
Elka Baker and Liz Donaldson
Torrent – Maybe not two years in a row, but keeping on list for the future.
Katie McNalley and Neal Pearlman
Lesley Webster (Cam Webster's mom) and Mariele Webster as fiddler "The Celtic Beats"

- VI. New Gender Free SCD Class in Somerville (**Kat**)
 - a. It's going well!
 - b. To be sponsored by the branch (INSURANCE) needs 4 members
 - c. Primary purpose must be teaching and performing SCDs - check!
 - d. See Kat's email for more details

- VII. Possible additional day for PW Scottish Sessions--PCI "feeler" (**Linda**)
 - a. Do we want Scottish Pinewoods to go one extra day? -> Saturday instead of Sunday
 - b. PCI might consider one of two things (giving us one additional day to use as we see fit OR giving PW staff a day off)
 - c. It would be 2026 if it happens
 - d. Kendra and Jeremy are co-chairs that year, and Keira and Marc --what do we think?
 - e. We want to fill camp if we're adding time!
 - f. Could it increase the weekend?

- g. Can we give it to ESCape somehow? Yes but it will throw off the ESC/S1/S2 balance
- h. When will a decision be made? - for TMC reasons

VIII. Brief report on: Zoom meeting with Jon Berridge, COO of RSCDS,org/HQ
(**Linda and Cathy**)

- a. Speaking of HQ finances, Open to hearing what we're doing in other places, Nice way to build connection between Boston and HQ
- b. What are other branches challenges (finding new members)
- c. Takes more than just membership fees to run an org
- d. Talking about other sources of income (summer school! winter school! autumn gathering!)
- e. More fundraising to "build an endowment fund"
- f. Mostly a skeleton crew --lots of people working two jobs within org, lots of turnover, looking for longer term solutions
- g. Sounds like HQ might be interested in more regular worldwide meetings to hear from other branches and share ideas and information
- h. Linda points out we do more to provide value for our membership (discounts, etc)
- i. Was a very worldwide meeting! NZ, Scotland, Vancouver, Australia, Boston...
- j. Had a few myths he wanted to dispel:
- k. Membership costs are too high - Compared to 25 other fraternal/social/cultural orgs. We're lower than all of them! (membership, rentals, staff, etc)
- l. HQ owns their property in Coates Crescent --they are debating selling it because it's very desirable real estate and maybe buy someplace with a hall. HQ is very tight but they don't *want* to raise membership costs, they would rather find other ways of doing it
- m. Gender Free calling --does not appear to be happening in other branches yet. Linda is suggesting that maybe this is how you attract younger dancers. One of the Canadian teachers mentioned briefing in Seattle and being asked to use gender neutral terminology. Kat mentioned that the Gay Gordons are absolutely doing some gender-neutral stuff, this is not new or limited to us.

SCHEDULED REPORTS FROM LIAISONS

- IX. Teaching & Music Committee (**Kat**)
 - a. Lance and Kat are going to write the Ball program
 - b. Pinewoods MCs chosen Teacher Liaisons sorted
 - c. Publicity talked about, let's keep doing it!

- X. Boston Scottish Country Dancers (**Marsha**)
 - a. Meeting on Sundays, preparing for the concert & ceilidh

- XI. Highland Ball (**Marsha**)

- a. Mary Ellen and Cathy are doing coaching/support for Dawn
 - b. Hired Derek Khalish for sound
 - c. Caterer has it on their calendar
- XII. Nominating Committee (**Marsha**)
- a. MaryEllen will address membership at SAGM. They have elected a chair. They should be thinking now who is up for election/re-election: Marsha(VP), Cathy (Treasurer)
- XIII. Fall Concert (**Cathy**)
- a. Can sell 275 tickets, we're not quite there yet. Working thru logistics – ex. The performance hall's screen is awkwardly placed when down and shows a bunch of boring ventilation system when up. Advertising continues.
- XIV. ESCape (**Connie**)
- a. Finalizing staff list for this year. Discussed allowing children at ESCape as well as Scottish Sessions, ideally not going to advertise as child-friendly but will allow under 13s on a case-by-case basis.
- XV. Scottish Sessions Pinewoods 2025 (**Kat**)
- a. See notes above.
- XVI. Membership (**Anne**)
- a. As of Oct 27, Boston Branch had 155 members, but we're now up to 170. We want to send a directed email to people who've signed up in previous years but not this year.
- XVII. Website and Calendar (**Robert**)
- a. The “who’s who” has been updated.
- XVIII. Equipment (**Connie**)
- a. Thom went to Brunswick, they gave him a stipend, it's all very good
 - b. Emily mentioned Brookline's class might still have equipment/CDs in their church where they used to be. We will do further investigation!
- XIX. Publicity and Social Media –possible help? (**Alena** has a contact)
- a. Susie will make a pitch at SAGM hopefully to bring some fresh ideas and energy in.
 - b. Sherrie from Greenland NH class might help? Encourage her to attend SAGM via zoom to maybe provide insight!
- XX. Loon Mountain Games 2025 (**Marsha**)
- a. Loon Mountain --Merrill Henderson is the point person. No report.

XXI. Bookstore (**Emily**)
a. No report received.

XXII. Tartan Times (**Linda**)
a. Collecting materials for 5th issue this year! Theme is "class acts" --excellence in music and dance

CONTINUING BUSINESS

XXIII. Confirm final dates for remaining 2024 meetings: Dec 4 (for Nov). Jan 8 (for Dec), and Jan 29 (for Jan.); Update on Pinewoods issue;
a. November meeting: December 4th
b. December meeting: January 8th
c. January meeting: January 29th

XXIV. Delegates review HQ AGM proposals and candidates (will happen when Robert can join us, possibly after formal meeting adjourns)

Next Meeting **December 4, 2024, 7:15 PM**

Optional reports: Archives (Emily); Calendar (Marsha)