

WMSHC, Inc., Annual Meeting November 4, 2012 Minutes

The meeting was held at the home of John and Greta Holbrook at 5 West Street in Hadley, MA.

The meeting was convened by Allison Steel, who led 348b. There were 28 members present.

1. Allison Steel read the Minutes from the 2011 Annual Meeting. They were approved without change by the membership.

2. Allison Steel read the President's report. Paul Butler distributed the financials and gave the Treasurer's report in the place of John Holbrook, who was unable to attend. It was noted that WMSHC, Inc., sells Sacred Harp books for \$20, which is slightly less than the cost of the books. Christine Andrews gave the report on the 2012 Western Massachusetts Sacred Harp Convention.

3. Allison Steel discussed having a special fundraiser for singers from Poland and other international singers. She offered to design a print to be used as a fundraiser and asked for volunteers to help with sending out the prints. Emily Sills Hale volunteered. Eliza Cavanagh suggested fund matching by WMSHC.

4. Linda Shea asked if anyone would be able to take on the position of Events Contact. Matthew Leger-Small volunteered.

5. Linda Shea raised a question about the Children's Lesson that we have held for the past several years at our convention. She said that this is not a normal part of conventions in other places, and that we should have a good reason to deviate from the norm. She suggested that it might be time to discontinue the Children's Lesson in its current format. There was extensive discussion, including:

Christine Andrews mentioned that she had received positive feedback about the Children's Lesson from at least one parent and said that it is important to show that the community is growing.

Peter Irvine said that he thought the Children's Lesson was inspired by Children's Lessons at other conventions, but they may have been led by children (rather than adults, as has been the case at the Western Mass Convention). He suggested having the goal in the next year to organize a children's singing school. He also suggested that

whether or not to have the Children's Lesson should be left to the discretion of the Chair.

Kelsey Wessels said that we should be very clear that we are in favor of the Chair making this decision and empower them. As a community, we should not give them a hard time, whatever decision they make.

Allison Steel suggested that if the Chair decides not to have the Children's Lesson that they should let parents know so parents can talk about how to engage kids in singing/at the convention. She asked about voting on it.

Lydia Vernon Jones noted that the convention is 3 months away and thought it was unlikely that we would have a children's singing school before then.

Laura Timmerman said that we recognize young people through the Children's Lesson, and it is a time for visitors to see them. She said that it provides a less scary time for children to get involved and that she thinks it is worth the time.

Amy Finlay said that she appreciated the Children's Lesson as a parent and that Erin was excited to participate with the other kids. She said it was nice for parents to be able to lead by themselves.

The group discussed the idea of holding a children's singing school as a way supporting young people in singing and agreed that it was ultimately up to the Chair to decide whether or not to have the Children's Lesson at the 2013 Convention.

6. Lydia Vernon-Jones raised the topic of our singing space for the monthly Amherst singing. She reported that the First Congregational Church was raising the rental cost for the space to \$50 for members of the church (Lydia is a member). The group discussed our options moving forward. We like that space, but this would double our cost for the year to \$600. One option would be to start passing the hat at the singing. It was noted that this tends to be a smaller singing. Peter Irvine noted that there have been security issues at this space. Tim Eriksen volunteered to look into finding a new space for the Amherst singing.

7. Tim Eriksen offered some thoughts on the history of singing in Western Mass and the processes we have developed for making decisions. He observed how quickly the real reasons for why we do things can become historical. He said how much he appreciated that we have an open forum for discussion so that power is not bottlenecked with a few

people and that we have been successful in trying to share responsibility. Tim also said he hoped to write a history of WMSHC - that it seemed useful to present that information about what we are doing and why.

8. Linda Shea gave the Travel Grant report. We are making some changes to the travel grant policy. Moving forward, singers can submit applications for a travel grant up to two weeks before the event they wish to attend. We are also increasing the maximum size of travel grants from \$300 to \$500. Emma Brown said that traveling is one of the most important parts of Sacred Harp singing and wondered if we were participating in that as a community in the fullest way we can. Kelsey Wessels mentioned that there have been times that the Travel Grant Committee has not been able to give money because of the applicant missing the application deadline.

9. The election was held and results were announced.

Chair: Emma Brown

Vice-Chair: Molly Merrett

Secretary: Mike Nord

Board of Directors: Eliza Cavanaugh and Matthew Leger-Small

Allison Steel closed the meeting by leading 70 in the Harp of Ages.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Shea