

VILLAGE RINGERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Monday, June 15, 2026

First Responders Recreation Center, Brave Room, The Villages, Florida

I. MEMBERS ATTENDING/ABSENT

In attendance: Bonnie Fisher, Ron Drozd, John Higbee, Judi Higbee, Cathy Bullock

Excused: Amy Cornwall-Robinson, Donna Kagan

II. CALL TO ORDER

Bonnie Fisher, President, called the meeting to order at 9:58 a.m.

III. AGENDA CHANGES/APPROVAL

Bonnie had emailed the agenda to board members to review before the meeting. All voted to approve the agenda without changes.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A copy of the previous minutes (April 20, 2026) had been emailed to board members for review. A motion to adopt the minutes was made by John and seconded by Ron. All voted in favor and the minutes will be filed for review.

V. REPORTS

1. **Treasurer's Report**—As part of her report as the new treasurer, Judi distributed a chart of accounts (income and expense categories) she devised to help keep Village Ringers finances in order. As John pointed out, one can argue about which categories expenses belong in, but the goal is to use the chart to help keep it simple and straightforward. He added that the chart's categories represent the fundamental dimensions of accounts and line up well with the categories for the state for annual reporting. Bonnie noted that the chart looked good.

Judi handed out reimbursement checks to Cathy for music and to Bonnie for the U-Haul and for Christmas decorations. In response to a question from Ron, Bonnie said the truck worked out well for moving equipment to Trinity Springs for a concert.

Judi has developed expense vouchers for future use, and she gave them to Bonnie and Cathy. It was decided that only Bonnie and Judi would have the group's credit card number. When Cathy needs to order music for Village Ringers TOO, she will go through Bonnie.

Judi then moved on to the financial summary. The March 10 statement showed a balance of \$6,608.34. Judi reported that the June 10 balance will be \$6,724.34 once checks clear the bank. Bonnie questioned why the amount shown for gift cards was an odd figure (\$227.34) and decided that it probably includes the \$50 in gift cards for the pianist and Donna plus a lunch. Discussion about how such expenses should be categorized followed, with the conclusion that “Fees for Service” would be the most appropriate category.

Judi directed the board’s attention to a list of ticket income and the various expenses (ads, music, truck rental) from the spring 2026 concert. Based on these figures, the concert netted \$791.73. Bonnie noted that she wouldn’t include the U-Haul rental in the spring concert calculations because it was for the Trinity Springs concert. She added that Trinity Springs had agreed to send an honorarium but that none has been received.

That concluded the treasurer’s report. Bonnie asked if there were questions. Hearing none, Bonnie thanked Judi. John moved to approve the report and Ron seconded. All voted in approval.

- 2. Music Director/President’s Report**—Bonnie pointed out that her total for the spring concert (\$1,770) didn’t agree with Judi’s (\$1,810), but Judi explained that an additional \$40 in cash was given at the dress rehearsal.

Bonnie made three minor amendments to her report. First, she removed Ron Drozd’s name from point 3, which dealt with the meeting to update bylaws. Second, she combined points 7 and 11, which both dealt with updating signatures at the bank. Third, she corrected the audition date, which was erroneously given under point 10 as September 7. It should be September 14.

Bonnie said she thought the Trinity Springs concert went nicely, although she would have liked to have seen a better crowd.

She expressed thanks to John, Judi, and Cathy for their work updating the bylaws at a meeting held at her house May 11, 2026.

Bonnie announced that the theme for the 2026 Christmas concert will be “Stars.” The hall will be set up with tables for the audience to sit around rather than with rows of chairs. In response to a question about space, Bonnie assured the board that the new configuration will seat at least as many people as we’d expect for the concert. She has already purchased star-shaped plates. There will be cookies

at each table, and everyone will have a small bell that can be rung on our finale, “Silent Night.”

Bonnie thanked John for pulling together the video of spring concert highlights for the Village Ringers website. She noted that others—including other bell choirs—are looking at our site.

The Florida business papers have officially been filed and our license renewed. Ron, Judi, Cathy, and Bonnie went to Citizens First Bank (now SeaCoast Bank) and brought signatures, etc., up to date.

Bonnie wrote formal “thank you” notes to Emily Spann for her time on the board and for her excellent work as secretary and to Amy Cornwall-Robinson for her exemplary work as treasurer.

Bonnie reported that New Covenant has changed their policy and will now collect 50 percent of ticket income instead of 40 percent from groups giving concerts in the church’s facilities. The church may apply an additional charge for use of the screens going forward. This would be an hourly charge to help pay for A/V people and would not be covered under the increased share of ticket income.

John asked how this compares to other churches or venues. According to Bonnie, others don’t do what New Covenant does. North Lake Presbyterian and Hope Lutheran do outside concerts, attract large crowds, and are not cheap. However, New Covenant provides us with storage space, rehearsal space, custodial care, concert ushers and greeters, and program printing. Because the concerts held there—ours and those of other groups—are small, the church doesn’t make a lot of money from them.

Bonnie is considering other options. (Note: We don’t know whether New Covenant will charge us if we continue to rehearse there but perform elsewhere.) As an official Villages group, we can use Villages facilities for free if outside people don’t attend the concert or for a fee (\$175/hour for the 3-4 hours we’d be there) if they do. Advantages to using a Villages venue: This could help us reach out to The Villages. Many of the ringers come from the south end, so holding a concert at such a venue might be more convenient for their friends and family. Disadvantages: It still adds up to fees of \$525-\$700; we wouldn’t have the

screens; we'd have to handle our own ticket sales; we'd have to transport equipment, which could mean a truck rental fee; and we'd have to provide our own ushers, greeters, and program printing.

In terms of the question of an extra charge for A/V services at New Covenant, the board tended to feel that use of the screens enhances the success of the concerts, although Bonnie pointed out that we have no way to measure that.

The sense of the board is that, even though the contract hasn't been signed yet, we're committed to holding the December concert at New Covenant. The board ultimately delegated authority to Bonnie to accept or reject extra A/V charges depending on her evaluation of cost vs. value added. As John put it, we are empowering Bonnie to make the decision and weigh good performance against reasonable revenue expectations.

Looking to the future, John suggested that we could consider a Villages venue for spring 2027 or a later concert. A number of ticketing services are available, including Wix (the company that hosts our website) and Tix (the service the church uses).

In addition to the options of continuing at New Covenant and moving the concerts to a Villages venue, Bonnie raised the possibility of offering a concert at New Covenant and a second concert in a rec center toward the Villages' south end, with the latter open only to residents of The Villages. She suggested that we would still charge for tickets to the Villages event.

John volunteered to check on how ticketing would work through our website and to report on the process and fee structure. He noted that it's standard for those buying tickets to use a credit card and print the ticket at home. Some outfits ask people if they want to add a tip to the tab.

Bonnie asked Cathy what she, as a ringer, thought about holding a second concert on the Villages' south end. She said the current venue isn't perfect because audience members can't see the back row of ringers and added that trying a concert on the south end would let us gauge interest.

John moved to accept Bonnie's report with the minor amendments mentioned earlier. Cathy seconded the motion. All voted in approval.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Bonnie asked whether anyone had old business to bring before the board. Hearing none, she moved on to new business.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Review and Approval of the Bylaws**—Bonnie explained that the bylaws were originally borrowed from the Raleigh Ringers and used to get the Village Ringers established. The current revision is designed to make them our own. She complimented Cathy for pulling together a color-coded copy that incorporated changes suggested at the May 11 bylaws review meeting, which was attended by Bonnie, Judi, John, and Cathy.

Board discussion of the draft that resulted from that May 11 meeting focused primarily on the points below.

- a. Under the revised bylaws, Village Ringers members must be residents of The Villages; we will no longer accept ringers who live outside The Villages. Bonnie noted that this is necessary if we want to be an official Villages group and that there are enough advantages to make it worth the sacrifice.
- b. The revised bylaws carry a new paragraph stating that the audition process is described in a separate document made available to each ringer candidate and that the audition process must be approved by the board.
- c. The revised bylaws called for those seeking election to the board to complete a form stating name, contact information, and biographical information and for the information to be posted on the website, posted on Facebook, and distributed to the members through email. John requested a specific form for information that would be posted on the website in consistence with the bylaws. Discussion ensued about what information should be posted and what should remain private. The section was subsequently rewritten to say that candidates would complete a form and give their name and relevant qualifications, which would be placed on the website and distributed to members through email. The board felt this would provide the information members need for informed voting while adequately protecting candidate privacy.
- d. In the case of dissolution, the bylaws called for assets to be donated to the Handbell Musicians of America. John noted that in the case of

dissolution of a not-for-profit, the proceeds must go to another not-for-profit, and he expressed concern about what would happen if the Handbell Musicians of America ceased to be a 501(c)(3) organization. The wording of the paragraph was adjusted to address that possibility.

- e. The review committee had proposed removing a boilerplate paragraph about prohibited activities. The board reinserted that paragraph to be on the safe side and moved it to the bylaws' final section, which was renamed "Additional Provisions."

John made a motion to accept the bylaws with the changes discussed in the meeting; Judi seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Cathy was charged with making the changes and emailing the revised draft to the board by the next day. It was decided to hold the board's final vote at the June 22 get-together at Bonnie's home.

Ron left the meeting at this point (11:40 a.m.), assigning John to serve as his proxy.

2. **Review and Approval of Audition Requirements**—As Bonnie explained, the revised audition requirements and member contract document grew out of the need to address the occasional instances in which good candidates can't make an audition. In the past, they were excluded from the entire concert season. The revised requirements will allow Bonnie, as music director, to consider a previous ringer's scoring from his/her last Village Ringers audition. Permission must be obtained from the music director to qualify for this exemption.

Cathy raised the question of how many audition periods a ringer would be allowed to miss. Bonnie said she doesn't want ringers missing an unlimited number of auditions but would prefer not to specify so she has greater discretion.

The revised document says that members will be selected by the music director and a majority vote of the handbell ringer members of the board based on auditions. Bonnie said the only time she thinks this approach might be a problem would be if a board ringer didn't make the cut. Cathy noted that the ringer would need to recuse himself/herself from relevant audition decisions.

John pointed out that the objectives in the cover letter should be the same as those listed in the bylaws.

Judi moved to approve the audition requirements and contract and the cover letter with the added changes; John seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT—DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2026, at 10 a.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Cathy and seconded by John. All voted in approval. Bonnie adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.