

VILLAGE RINGERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Thursday, December 28, 2023 – 10:00 am
17652 SE 82nd Woodlawn Avenue, The Villages, Florida

I. MEMBERS ATTENDING - Bonnie Fisher, John Higbee, Ron Drozd, Emily Spann
MEMBER NOT IN ATTENDANCE – Amy Cornwall Robinson

II. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Bonnie Fisher, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and welcomed board members.

III. AGENDA CHANGES/APPROVAL

Bonnie distributed copies at the meeting agenda and asked if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda. Hearing none, all members voted to approve the agenda.

IV. MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING/APPROVAL

Emily had previously emailed copies of the minutes from the May 15, 2023 board meeting for review to board members, and provided copies as needed at the meeting. John moved that the minutes of the meeting be adopted as printed. Ron seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The minutes will be filed for review.

V. REPORTS

1. President's Report

a. Bonnie expressed to board members that she felt the Village Ringers group was exceptional this year! Members were dedicated and willing to work hard, as evidenced by the great Christmas concert! The concert reflected several new ideas and experiences, such as having the ringers on the floor level of the audience, asking for volunteers from the audience to come up and play the bells, having a processional from all around the fellowship hall, and performing a wide variety of music and styles.

b. Bonnie told the board members that the 'projected' net amount from the concert should be approximately \$3400, with 310 tickets sold. The New Covenant Methodist Church will take 30% of the sales for use of the facilities. John suggested that the church venue may have helped in the increase in ticket sales. Bonnie asked if the reduction of the ticket price to \$15 made a difference in

attendance. Ron did not think the price of the ticket caused much difference either way.

c. Feedback from the Concert:

- (a) Line of Sight: John said that having the ringers on floor level did not provide as much line of sight as in the past. However, he noted that the back ringers were hard to see when on the stage at past concerts. Ron stated that he was standing in the back and could see the faces of the ringers very well. Bonnie mentioned that the church may make renovations to the fellowship hall, but did not have any details at this time.
- (b) Content of the program: Everyone agreed that the concert was wonderful and the music was very appropriate.
- (c) Appropriateness of the slides: Some discussion regarding the Ukrainian bells slides ensued, but all agreed that the slides added much to the program.
- (d) Any additional feedback: No one had anything other than praise for the concert!

d. Attendance at rehearsals. Discussion regarding attendance at rehearsals began with Emily telling the board that no one missed more than 2 rehearsals. Bonnie proudly told the board that she had perfect attendance, and three other ringers had perfect attendance: Carole Green, Lana McKinzie and Thomas Eggleston.

e. Bonnie told the board that the Village Ringers group has been blessed with nice articles written about the group in the "Villages Friends" magazine, as well as a detailed article in the Daily Sun, and pictures in the Daily Sun in several newspapers before Christmas.

Bonnie explained that she wrote formal thank you notes to thank and encourage these media sources to continue to keep the Village Ringers on their radar.

The next Village Neighbors magazine deadline will be very soon, so Bonnie is already working on an article before the Spring Concert.

f. Bonnie proudly told the board members that the Village Ringers Facebook site continues to receive additional "likes." Bonnie stated that if anyone leaves a comment, she makes a point of responding.

g. Bonnie expressed great thanks to John Higbee for continuing to keep the website current and posting videos of our concerts and other events!

h. Only four completed email notification forms were received from the concert. John suggested that Bonnie check with officials from the church to see if any additional completed forms could have been turned in. Ron stated that emphasis should be made that only two (2) emails per season would be sent out to the email notification list. John stated that he could design something on the website where people could provide their emails online for Village Ringers email notifications. The board members all told John that would be such a great help and would appreciate this feature.

i. Bonnie told the board members that the Village Ringers group currently has all of the handbell equipment needed for now.

j. Bonnie expressed how supportive the New Covenant United Methodist Church has been to the Village Ringers. Support includes advertising, ticket sales, and housing of equipment, as well as serving as a rehearsal venue. Although the spring concert date has been set, the church officials have not yet met to determine the church 2024 calendar of events, including the next Village Ringers Christmas and spring concert dates. That meeting should occur during January 2024.

k. The Spring concert will be held on Sunday, April 14, 2024, at 3:00 pm. This will be the first time for a Sunday afternoon concert. The theme will be "Put on Your Dancing Shoes!"

l. Ron said that he was very impressed with the concert audience's willingness to play the bells. Everyone agreed that people loved getting to play the bells on two Christmas songs.

Emily mentioned how effective the Villages Recorder group was this year, and all agreed that the recorder group and Cathy Bullock's quartet group added so much to the concert!

m. The Village Ringers played for the Bonnyville Women's Club at the Churchill Recreation Center on December 14, 2023. The audience was rather small, but were very appreciative. The group gave a \$100 donation to the Village Ringers and sent a formal invitation to play again next year.

n. Bonnie told the board that she is grateful to have reliable and very good substitutes this year! One or two people ended up subbing every week.

o. Bonnie asked for feedback regarding auditions for this next season. Discussion ensued with board members offering ideas and feelings regarding whether to have formal or informal auditions. The basis of the discussion indicated that the board members have great confidence in Bonnie's ability to evaluate members' abilities and fit within the group. John suggested having people express interest in joining the Village Ringers by completing an interest inventory located on the website. He further suggested that a time for an informal audition be made and the decision on the group be made at that time.

Emily moved that the board accept the President's Report. John seconded and all voted in approval.

2. Treasurer's Report

Although Amy was not present, she left a printed report of all expense items and additions to funding. The Christmas Concert amounts were not yet available at the time of this report, but the total funds available were \$3,055.33. Bonnie estimated that approximately 310 tickets were sold and an additional \$3,400.00 should be the net amount for the Christmas Concert.

Bonnie told the board how expensive music is now, even though she receives a 20% discount for music purchased through Jeffers Handbell Supply Company.

The Village Ringers automatically donate 30% of the ticket sales to missions that are determined by the New Covenant United Methodist Church. The ticket company receives \$1.50 per ticket, if the ticket is purchased online and ahead of time. Bonnie admitted that people understand this and many are buying tickets at the door, with no ticket surcharge included.

After discussion about extra funds available in the treasury, John suggested that the Village Ringers consider donating to a local school music program, in addition to the mission selected by the church. John suggested that a list of needy school music programs be developed and the Village Ringers consider giving a stipend to the music program(s). Bonnie said that Cary Robinson should be able to provide a list of school music programs needing funds.

John moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Ron seconded the motion. All voted in approval.

VI. Old Business

1. John Higbee had previously emailed Bonnie explaining that the renewal notice for the web hosting service through Wix is up for renewal in the discounted amount of \$528.00 for a two-year renewal. As the annual rate would normally be \$324.00, with a two-year renewal, a savings of \$60 would be realized at \$264.00 per year. John recommended that the board take advantage of this savings. Ron made a motion (via email) to accept the 2-year web hosting service renewal and Emily seconded the motion (via email). All members voted in approval of the motion.
2. A large group of Village Ringers members met on June 28, 2023, at Bonnie's house and developed a list of Village Ringer Promotional Ideas. All, but one of the ideas have been developed and utilized. Only one idea could not be developed due to church policies. The list with completed or not completed status is below:
 - a. **COMPLETED** Develop a sign advertising the Christmas Concert when playing at Lake Sumter Landing and at the Musical Showcase.
 - b. **COMPLETED** Ask John Higbee to develop a promotional video to be played outside the entrance to the Musical Showcase.
 - c. **NOT COMPLETED BECAUSE OF CHURCH POLICY** At all events, ask people to sign up for the email notification list and award winning prizes to people who sign up.
 - d. **COMPLETED** At concerts, leave the final upcoming concert screen up until everyone has left the room in order to advertise the next concert.

- e. **COMPLETED** At concerts, invite audience participation by letting audience members play the final piece.
- f. **COMPLETED** Request articles from the Villages Neighbors magazine, The Villages Magazine, and the Daily Sun.
- g. **COMPLETED** Advertise in the Club Connections section of the Daily Sun.
- h. **COMPLETED** Use clip-on stand lights, so Village Ringers can be seen at concerts.
- i. **COMPLETED** Design a Village Ringers logo that can be used on a shirt for the ringers to wear.
- j. **COMPLETED** At this year's Christmas concert, have the Villages Recorder Ensemble play in the concert room for 15 minutes or so before the program begins.
- k. **COMPLETED** At least twice per month, send out emails to the email notification list regarding upcoming events.
- l. **COMPLETED** Ask John Higbee to tape some quick special ads showcasing Village Ringers members stating that a great concert will be held soon. Email that video out to the email list and Facebook friends. Bonnie will compose a couple of ads for these ringers to read and John will come to the September 11, 2023 rehearsal to record the tapes.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. In regard to the last item on the President's Report, the Board decided that an informal method of auditioning would be tried out this season. After discussion, the board decided to make the following resolution:

Resolution:

John made a resolution that the board approve experimenting with an informal audition approach at the first practice of the spring season, instead of a formal audition.

John further resolved that the first rehearsal would be held as normal, but would be considered an informal audition.

Ron seconded the resolution, and all voted in approval.

Bonnie will send out a letter with a link to the website area that John will include on the Village Ringers website. John will make sure a link is on the website front page with a form to complete for the informal audition.

The first practice of the new season, Monday, January 8, 2024, will be an alternative to a full audition.

b. Bonnie mentioned an update on her ongoing knee problem. The latest thing is that she seems to be allergic to a metal in the implant and will have to have further surgery. She thinks that she will need at least four weeks off from rehearsals. Bonnie asked for feedback as to whether to appoint an interim director for 4 weeks to run rehearsals or postpone the concert.

Board members did not want to postpone or cancel the concert and discussion ensued on the best way to handle the 4-week interim period. The board members decided that Bonnie should find out if any of the Village Ringers would like to participate in a “shared interim timeframe,” by serving as interim director for some or all pieces. Bonnie agreed to take care of finding shared interim directors.

c. Bonnie told the board members that she would really like to have an evaluation of her position as director. She says she would like to know of any problems that may not be known. John suggested that Bonnie edit and utilize the same survey that she created some years ago.

After discussion, the board decided that Ron Drozd will be the person to receive all surveys and will compile a report to be read at the next April board meeting. Bonnie will draft the survey and then the board will review the survey for feedback before the survey is sent to ringers. The ringers will have an appointed time to return the completed survey to Ron (email or send in an envelope). Ron will compile the report and bring to the April meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Board members looked at calendars and decided that the next board meeting and election of officers and new board members will be held on Monday, May 6, 2024, 10:00 am, at Bonnie’s house. Emily made a motion to adjourn and John seconded. All voted in approval. The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 am.

