

Country Dance and Song Society

Summary of Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Governing Board, April 13–15, 2016 held in Western MA.

Present:

Board: David Millstone (president); Dorcas Hand (vice-president); Craig Meltzner (treasurer), Brooke Friendly (secretary), Nancy Barbour, Martha Edwards, Mark Galipeau, Katy German, Lorraine Lee Hammond, Katy Heine, Donald Hughes, Frannie Marr, John Mayberry, Sharon McKinley, Hannah Naiman, Pam Paulson, Doug Plummer, David Roodman, John Seto, Natty Smith, Norm Stewart, Chris Weiler

Outgoing board members: Jenny Beer, Nancy Boyd, Natty Smith, Bev Bernbaum

Absent: Michael Hamilton, David Shewmaker

Staff: Rima Dael (Executive Director), Caroline Batson, Bob Blondin, Robin Hayden, Linda Henry, Steve Howe, Pat MacPherson, Lynn Nichols, Sarah Pilzer

MOTIONS APPROVED

- To approve Nominating Committee's recommendation to appoint Chris Weiler to the Board to fill a recent vacancy
- To approve minutes of the Executive Committee meetings on March 28, February 12-13, and February 29
- To approve the minutes of the Special Board meeting teleconference of January 12, 2016
- To approve the revised Investment Spending Policy
- To approve Lisa Greenleaf to the Nominating Committee
- To approve the Song Task Group and the Dance Musicians Task Group for another year
- To approve the both the Executive Committee Slate and the Personnel Committee Slate

Finance: Structural Deficit and Sage Foundation Gift

We have a structural deficit, i.e. a non-alignment between income and expense. We have operated with a deficit budget for a number of years. That, in and of itself is not a bad thing, but it is unhealthy to continue to do so on a long-term basis. Our core education programs don't make money but are mission critical. Camp income is critical to ongoing operational health.

The goal for the Spread the Joy (StJ) Centennial campaign was \$1million. Prior to the Sage Foundation gift (\$1million over five years) we raised \$667,000 through StJ. \$400,000 of the Sage gift will go to complete the StJ campaign. The 2016 Sage installment will be used for goals of the StJ campaign—most importantly the goal of upgrading technology. Much of the 2016 remainder will be used for evaluation of our Centennial year programs, to begin rebuild our operational reserves, and to conduct research into creating a better presence in Canada.

The Sage gift shows we are an organization worthy of funding. It does not solve the structural deficit but gives us the opportunity to invest in the future. Over the course of the year we will work on solutions to eliminate the structural deficit as we begin the process to develop a new strategic vision.

Strategic direction/vision for 2017 and beyond

We did a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to determine what we know as well as need to know and think about as we begin a yearlong process to develop a new strategic direction for CDSS. We brainstormed a list of ideas for use of Sage Foundation money, especially beyond 2016—big picture thinking to keep in mind. We are looking at this as strategic direction (rather than plan) so it is a broader look at where we want to go. The Governance Committee will take the lead on this process.

Camps

We discussed current camp numbers, what we could do to boost registration, and various options for the future of camps with low enrollments. The Board and Rima need to discuss if we are willing to risk money over the course of a couple of years towards developing a new program, and, if so, how much, and for how long.

Year of Song

The Board reaffirmed that CDSS should include song as part of its name, include song in its mission and strategic direction, and support and promote song on an ongoing basis. We discussed what is being done for the 2016 Year of Song:

- Song of the month on CDSS website
- CDSS Sings—ongoing column in the newsletter

- American Traditional Song Symposium
- A project in North Carolina for a Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles Centennial Celebration commemorating their 1916-1918 song collecting in NC and Appalachia

Committee and Task Groups

Awards Committee would normally have a report for the AM with a recommendation for Lifetime Contribution Award (LCA), but with the turmoil in the office this January, both the staff and the committee decided to postpone this year's deadline. We will call a special Board meeting later in the year to approve the LCA nominee.

The Regional Hubs and Programs Task Groups will disband.

Problem People Advisory Group

Rima formed a Problem People Advisory Group. We had an article and invitation to participate in our winter News. We had interest from several people in US, Canada, and UK who want to be involved. The goal is to gather information from communities and jointly develop mini-scenarios and discussion guides to share back with those communities, then have communities report back to CDSS so we can share solutions and ideas on our website.

Relationship Between Board and Executive Director

We discussed how the 2004 Board-Director Relationship policy document fits with how we work now and how we want to work in the future. We are consciously shifting the culture of the Board around how we work and improving communication among and between Board and Staff. We are morphing away from Carver model. Rima and the Governance and Personnel Committees will share the lead on this process.

Traveling Exec Meetings will be November 18-20, 2016 in Madison and February 2017 in Atlanta.

2017 Annual Meeting dates will be April 19-21, 2017. This will be the Wednesday-Friday before NEFFA.