

**Suncoast Phoenix Community Choir
Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting
7:00 pm, June 28, 2025
At St. John's United Church, Sechelt**

Chair: Rachel Manley, Board Chair

Minute taker: Susan Blockberger, Board Secretary

1. Call to order – 7:00 pm. Rachel noted that a quorum was present.
2. Adoption of agenda - Moved (Catherine Hanson), seconded (Sheila Tyner) that the agenda be adopted. CARRIED
3. Adoption of minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting – Moved (Sheila Tyner), seconded (Lise Kreps) that the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting be adopted. CARRIED
4. Reminders – Rachel reminded choir members about the importance of checking themselves in on the attendance sheet each week, familiarizing themselves with the choristers' handbook posted in the members section of our website, and exploring the wealth of other information on our website- <https://suncoastphoenixchoir.ca/>
5. Attending by Zoom – Rachel noted that since the pandemic we (usually) have the option of attending rehearsals on Zoom. This is useful for those who must miss practice due to illness, travel, or other urgent reasons. However, a Zoom practice is not as beneficial for you or the others in your section as an in-person practice would be. If you want to sing in our performances, it is important that you rehearse with the group.
6. Fundraising – Rachel noted that we will be fundraising next year. If you have ideas for fundraising events, please email these to Sara. (see also item below)
7. Nominations for the 2025-2026 board of directors:
As required by our bylaws, all directors resign at the end of the year. However, all of the current directors are willing to stand for election again this year. This year, the Board decided to try to expand the size of the Board slightly. In response to Rachel's request for volunteers we are very pleased to announce that Serena Trinder has stepped forward and volunteered to join the Board. Therefore, the slate of board members for 2025-26 is as follows:

Rachel Manley	Jane Mossop
Catherine Hanson	Susan Blockberger
Nancy Webber	Sheila Tyner
Sonia Koehler	Lise Kreps
Serena Trinder	

There being no further nominations, this slate is elected by acclamation.

Board Reports:

a) Treasurer: Catherine Hanson.

Catherine gave highlights of the year end financial report that was pre-circulated to members. Our main source of revenue is from dues, divided in the report into fall term (56 paid members), spring term (62 paid members), and Rutter (45 paid participants). Rutter refers to the Rutter Requiem which was performed on Remembrance Day. Our traditional requiem performance each year is optional for choir members, and singers from other choirs are invited to participate as well.

Catherine noted other sources of revenue: donations by members (thank you!), \$1416 which was our share of the proceeds from the BC Choral Federation raffle from tickets we sold, a Music Festival award of \$300., and a Community Investment Program grant of \$500. from the District of Sechelt for next year's requiem performance.

Notable expenses include insurance and the rising cost of music. We ended this year with a balance of approximately \$9000, which is slightly less than this time last year.

There was a typing error in the total expenses budget number in the pre-circulated financial statement. The correct number is \$29,120. A question was asked about website hosting expenses. These are about \$150/year.

MOVED (Catherine Hanson), seconded (Michelle Stobie) to accept the financial statement as corrected.

b) Musical Director – Sara Douglas

Sara submitted the following:

As the Music Director of The Suncoast Phoenix Community Choir, I am very pleased to present my report for the 2024-2025 Season.

Membership: Our numbers increased, especially in January. We had 63 singers on the list, with some folks joining on zoom for a variety of reasons, and most joining in person. We will continue to actively recruit male singers for the new season.

Rehearsals: We continued to have rehearsals in person at St John's United Church. We also broadcast our rehearsals and concerts on Zoom, (which were recorded when I remembered to hit "record"), so that singers could join in from home when they were ill, away or chose to be zoom only members. This practice has served us well and will continue next year.

Performances: We presented three sets of concerts this year- two concerts of the Requiem by John Rutter on Remembrance Day, two concerts in December, plus a sing-out at the Botanical Gardens, and two concerts in the third week of May. All of the concerts were very well received by our audiences and were financially successful as well. Audiences seemed to love all concerts, and I am told we had many converts to choral music, especially after our May concerts!

Sunshine Coast Festival of the Performing Arts: we participated in the festival with Geordie Roberts as the adjudicator. The choir sang Earth Song by Frank Ticheli and Here Comes the Sun, arranged by Kirby Shaw. Geordie had many compliments about our singing as well as our sense of community and the obvious regard we have for each other. Geordie also delighted the choir with suggestions for improvements in the conducting, which I did try to implement in our May concerts.

Challenges and Future Goals: While we celebrate our achievements, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges we encountered and outline our continuing goals:

1. Attendance and Commitment: We will continue to emphasise the importance of regular participation in rehearsals in person and home practice for those who wish to sing in the concerts.
2. Expansion of Repertoire: The fall season will begin with some new languages in the repertoire and some new styles of music. Choir members will have the opportunity in September to join the main choir for a program of about 8-10 songs, as well as the Requiem choir, who will perform the Requiem in C Minor by Cherubini on Remembrance Day.
3. Community Outreach: A sing-out was held at the Botanical Gardens in December, and one was scheduled for early June, after our May concert, but illness in the choir made it prudent to cancel the sing-out, as it was scheduled for a senior's care facility. The plan is to schedule sing-outs in the future.
4. Music Education and development: Once again, I am hoping for the opportunity to incorporate some workshops and masterclasses by guest artists and indeed, by

members of our choir who have expertise to share, as we aim to enhance our skills and broaden our musical horizons.

Plans for next year:

We will begin our fall season on September 4 at St John's United Church with a drop-in event to pick up music and enjoy some social time together. There may be treats!

Regular rehearsals will begin on September 11 at 6:45 pm.

December Concerts are planned for December 12 and 13, with a Sing-out the following Monday at the Sunshine Coast Botanical Gardens.

September Retreat at the Sunshine Coast Botanical Gardens- Saturday Sept 20 at 1-4 pm. A time to sing, to make merry and to learn! All singers are encouraged to attend!

Remembrance Requiem: We will be practicing and presenting the Requiem in C Minor by Cherubini for Remembrance Day this year. A small group will also present the Lux Aeterna by Morten Lauridsen. Rehearsals will start on Sunday, September 14 at 1 pm, and will run each Sunday until the concerts at 2:30 and 4:30 pm on November 11.

I will also hold some summer rehearsals for the Requiem - date TBA

Our choir has had a full year of wonderful concerts, fabulous music and truly lovely friendship. Thank you all so much for your time, dedication, talent and hard work. I look forward to our music making next year.

Enormous thanks to Tom, our pianist for his truly awesome musicianship, leadership, talent and hard work. I would also like to thank our section leaders, Sylvain, Jon and Susan F for their leadership.

c) Librarian: Sonia Koehler

Sonia described her role as librarian which includes organizing a team of volunteers to assemble music packages according to the repertoire Sara develops. The librarian and her team also collect and refile the music at the end of each term. The librarian keeps track of members who have returned their music and follows up with members

who have not. This summer we plan to cull the music collection. Once the collection has been culled, Lise Kreps will join the team to help with cataloging the music and tracking numbers of each music score. The current catalogue has not been updated for several years.

Sonia thanked Kathleen Wagler who graciously allows us to store our music in her home, and is a key member of the volunteer team, doing a lot of filing on her own time. Sonia also thanked Evelyn for her assistance on the team.

Finally, Sonia thanked members for erasing any marks on their music, putting it in alphabetical order, and returning it in an envelope with their name on the front at the end of each term. This is tremendously helpful to her and her volunteer team.

d) Publicity: Sheila Tyner

Sheila reported that she publicizes our concerts through a posting in the Coast Cultural Alliance, and the Coast Reporter calendar, and also emails CBC's North by Northwest requesting an announcement in the upcoming events portion of that radio show.

e) Concert coordinator: Nancy Webber

Nancy noted that the concert coordinator position includes arranging both the venues and the set-ups for our concerts. She thanked the choir members who regularly help with the risers, but more assistance in riser setup, takedown and transporting is needed. She also thanked Sara's husband Dave who consistently helps with our choral performances and Mary for creating our fabulous posters. Nancy stated that the audience response to our concerts is very positive, and she thanked Sara and Tom for their inspirational leadership.

f) Secretary: Susan Blockberger

Susan reported that she takes minutes at board meetings and handles some correspondence on behalf of the choir. She enjoys working with the lovely folks on the board and urged members to consider volunteering to join the board.

g) Membership: Lise Kreps

The membership person is responsible for tracking attendance at practices. Lise noted that as we have reverted to a paper attendance sheet it is important for all to remember to sign in at the start of each practice session. The choir has continued to grow this year, with 62 paid members in the spring term. All told, there were a total of 115 different singers who sang with us in the requiem group and/or the fall term group, and/or the spring term group. Lise has agreed to take over responsibility for the website next year.

h) President – Rachel Manley

Rachel reported the following: “It’s been my absolute pleasure to be your President for the past few years. I appreciate all of your hard work and efforts to be one of the best choirs on the coast.

This season, we had the joy of performing all of our concerts to wonderful audiences. Each performance showcased our evolving musicality and the dedication of our members. Special thanks to Sara for your energy, your vision, and for believing in what we can achieve —often long before we do. We would be lost without her. And let’s talk about Tom. Honestly, how did we get so lucky? His playing is flawless and his timing is impeccable. Tom makes the music come alive. We’re incredibly blessed and grateful to have you.

Our membership remains strong and continues to grow. We’ve welcomed many new members this year, proving that choir is still the best way to meet people who love singing. It’s been a joy to see friendships grow and harmonies improve.

This year, we also enjoyed our festival and choir retreat and thank you to Sylvain for teaching us to stand on our sits bones!

I want to thank the Board for their ongoing commitment. Your time, energy, and behind-the-scenes work make everything possible. I definitely can't do what I do without the help of my team. We also deeply appreciate our volunteers who assist with everything from riser setup to raffle ticket sales.

Our finances remain stable thanks to careful stewardship and support from our audiences, sponsors, and fundraising efforts. And yes we will be doing more fundraising this year. Thank you to Catherine for keeping our numbers straight.

Next year holds exciting opportunities as we plan for our upcoming concerts. I encourage each of you to continue to practice and attend as much as possible. Please read your membership handbook and all of our board meeting minutes are available to read on our website.

It’s been an honour to serve as your President. Thank you for your trust, your voices, and your spirit. Together, we’ve built more than a choir—we’ve built a musical family.

8. Nominations for the 2025-2026 board of directors:

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Sonia Koehler
Serena Trinder

Lise Kreps

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9. Questions: Rachel invited members to ask any questions they may have.

Question from a member: Are we accepting new members this year? Sara responded that we need to balance the sections as we have many sopranos and not enough basses and male tenors. In the tenor section, she specifically wants to recruit male tenors as the timbre of the male voice is different from the female voice. She has publicly announced that the soprano section is closed but would consider admitting an exceptional soprano. She may be asking some members to switch sections.

10. Fundraising continued: Sara requested further discussion about fundraising. She noted that the cost of music is getting ever more expensive, and she has refrained from buying pieces that she wants us to sing because of their cost. Several fundraising ideas were proposed, including a karaoke event, another beer and burger event, and a Scottish dance event. A member suggested we consider raising dues. Catherine Hanson proposed sending out a questionnaire to gather feedback on these ideas and also to give people a chance to think about and propose other fundraising ideas.

Some members proposed fund-spending ideas (as opposed to fundraising ideas). These included giving financial support to music student(s) and supporting or sponsoring visiting choirs such as our upcoming hosting of the youth choir from Slovenia.

Several members spoke to the urgent need for a larger more suitable performance venue and suggested that we work towards this goal.

Sara reiterated that if you have an idea for fundraising send it to her and she will bring it to the board for discussion.

11. Adjournment: There being no further business, MOVED by Jane Mossop, seconded by Nancy Webber, that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.

