

**Suncoast Community Choir Board Minutes**  
**2:00 August 22, 2025**  
**At Susan's home, Halfmoon Bay**

Present: Rachel Manley (chair), Nancy Webber, Susan Blockberger, Catherine Hanson, Jane Mossop, Sonia Koehler, Lise Kreps, Serena Trinder, Sara Douglas

Regrets: Sheila Tyner

Call to Order: 2:14 pm

1. **Adoption of Minutes:** Moved by Sonia, seconded by Jane to adopt the agenda as pre-circulated. CARRIED
2. **Adoption of Minutes:** Moved by Nancy, seconded by Catherine to adopt the minutes of the June 26<sup>th</sup> board meeting as pre-circulated. CARRIED
3. **Welcome to our new board member** – Serena Trinder, who will be taking over membership from Lise.
4. **Business arising:**

a. Future directions and strategic goals of our choir:

Sonia noted that future directions and strategic goals are usually guided by an organization's mission statement. Susan noted we have a mission statement but it is old and suggested we revisit it to determine if it needs to be updated. Rachel located (via Chat GPT) some information about what sorts of things might be found in a choir's mission statement.

**ACTION: Catherine** will circulate our current mission statement

**ACTION: Rachel** will circulate information she found about what might be included in choir mission statements.

**ACTION: Bring forward** review of mission statement to next board meeting.

The board discussed aspects of our choir that we would like to see continued in the coming year. These included:

- A repertoire which is diverse, both in style and complexity

- Diversity of members
- A commitment to inclusiveness
- Striving for further improvement in the quality of our singing
- Continued and/or increasing expectations for choir members' commitment to do the work to improve.

The board discussed the choir's challenges and brainstormed on ways these may be addressed.

- Our choir is very soprano-rich. To have more balance we desperately need to recruit more tenors and basses. In general, shoulder-tapping friends and acquaintances is the most effective way to recruit more members, and we will all be encouraged to do this.
- People who wish to sing in the choir but are unable to sing in tune represent a challenge to our desire for continuous improvement, however this is balanced by our desire to be an inclusive community choir. Sara is considering some sort of screening process, both to ensure that people are singing in the appropriate section for their vocal range, and to identify those who struggle to pitch match. Sara could then encourage the latter to take individual lessons before joining the choir.
- We need to continue to stress that choir members must do the work to learn the music and that this involves more than just singing once a week at choir practice. Learning tracks are a useful tool, especially for those who are less able to read music.
- Susan noted that professional learning tracks may be purchased, at least for some pieces. These have the advantage of being error-free. Although they do cost money, they would be a huge time-saver for Sara, and in the case of the tenor learning tracks, would make it less likely that she will damage her voice by trying to sing out of her natural range. Given her history of voice problems in the past this is an important consideration.
- There was some confusion this year about whether specific seating was assigned at the beginning of the year. This caused some conflicts in the choir between people with different opinions on this issue. However, there is no rigid seating arrangement beyond just generally seating yourself in your section. It is not possible to have weekly choir practice exactly replicate concert riser placement for a number of reasons, however perhaps for a few practices just before a concert we could try to approximate our riser placement to get used to the voices we will hear around us in the concert.
- Despite good intentions, in recent years we have not done many community sing-outs other than a Christmas sing-out at the Botanical Garden. This year

Sara has included “sing-out friendly” pieces in the fall repertoire and we will endeavour to schedule sing-outs at Christiansen Village and Silverstone. She noted that sing-outs require only a small group of singers.

- Leadership support and succession planning were discussed. Sara has mostly retired, and her husband is soon to retire as well. She would like to have flexibility so they can travel a bit but is constrained by a desire to not miss choir practices. Serena and Catherine both shared information about how other choirs that they have sung in handled this challenge by having an assistant director who was part of the choir and therefore familiar with the repertoire. This person could be mentored and would be able to step in when the director was away. Sara agreed to consider this issue.

b. Future fundraising goals

Based on the draft budget pre-circulated this summer by Catherine, it was noted that our cushion between expected expenses and expected revenue has slowly shrunk over the past two years since our last major fundraising endeavour. Expected or desired increased expenses include music purchases, purchase of learning tracks, and expanding section leader pay to include payment for concerts. There is a consensus on the board that we should plan a fundraising event (or events) with the potential to raise at least several thousand dollars. It was noted that folks enjoyed the musical entertainment in the fundraising event several years ago. Suggestions included holding an event in the spring which would also publicize our spring concerts, or combining a fundraising event with our solos concert in June. Rachel also suggested that we consider soliciting sponsors for our concerts. A fundraising committee which should include board members and other choir members will be formed in the fall and tasked with planning fundraising activities.

## 5. Reports:

- a. Treasurer – Catherine noted that some budget lines will be adjusted as plans firm up (e.g. Requiem budget line for musicians). She is planning to pursue another Community Improvement Grant from the District of Sechelt this year, and will also be exploring several other grant opportunities. Membership dues for this year were discussed.

**Moved** by Rachel, seconded by Jane that membership dues be set at \$130 for the fall session and \$140 for the spring session. **CARRIED.**

As always, if a choir member has difficulty with the fees they should talk to Sara or Catherine as we do waive fees in some circumstances.

- b. Music Director – Sara reviewed the fall repertoire. Although it is larger than usual (17 songs), several are pieces we have recently sung so we should be able bring them up to performance standard fairly quickly. The Christmas concert will begin with an audience sing-along as this was extremely well received last year.

The choir will hold a retreat at the Botanical Garden on September 20<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00.

- c. Librarian – Sonia reported that Evelyn assisted her in filing away last season's music. All packages have been returned except for 2 which Sara is following up on. Thank you to the choir for erasing markings and placing pieces in alphabetical order. Christy has volunteered to help with filing in the future. Thank you Evelyn and Christy.

Over the summer Sara began the cull of music that has not been suitable or of interest. Further culling will occur. This has given us a bit more space for our new music. Culled music has been offered to other choirs. Once the culling is complete, an updated inventory of the library will be done. Sonia will be asking for volunteers to help with this task.

An immense thank you to Kathleen once again for letting the choir keep its cabinets full of music in her home.

- d. Publicity – no report
- e. Concert coordinator – Christmas concerts scheduled for Dec 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, and sing-out at the **Botanical Garden on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**. (**NOTE: date has been corrected**). Spring concerts scheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.
- f. Membership – Lise will arrange to meet with Serena to fill her in on membership duties and routines.

Lise has taken over the website. We will continue to post minutes of the AGM and board meetings in the members section of the website. Financial statements are available from the treasurer on request.

g. President – no report

## **6. New Business/Miscellaneous**

a. Start up – Choir will start up on Sept 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 to sign up, collect music, and have a social opportunity.

**ACTION: Board members** will each bring treats for 10 people. First full practice will be Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, choir retreat on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>.

7. Adjournment – Moved by Rachel, seconded by Susan that the meeting be adjourned.  
Adjourned at 4:45 pm

**NEXT BOARD MEETING – Oct 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm on Zoom.**