

Holland Chorale
Board Meeting
Monday, September 13, 2021 via Zoom

Attending: Julie Anderson; Keon Atkins; Tom Busa; Patrick Coyle; Mihai Craioveanu; Jenny DeGraves; Jean Lemmenes; Betty McLarty; Maura Reynolds; Sarah VandenBrink; Carol Zeh

Absent: Terri Borgman; Mark DeWitt; Jay Gainforth; Ruth Hofmeyer

1. Jean called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm with 9 voting members present (a quorum).
2. There were no additions to the agenda.
3. The board voted unanimously to approve a consent agenda for these items (moved by Julie, seconded by Jenny)
 - a. Approval of minutes for August 2, 2021 board meeting
 - b. Approval of minutes for August 31, 2021 annual meeting
 - c. Approval that *Music Mondays* will continue once a month, until another board decision is made
 - d. Approval that the Chorale will perform its Holiday Concert once at 3 pm, rather than twice
 - e. Approval to change the date of the October board meeting from October 11 to October 4 due to the cancellation of *Adventures in Harmony*
4. Treasurer's reports were posted separately.
 - a. Julie reported that our financial situation was better than in 2020 and similar to our situation in 2019.
 - b. We're doing well with cash and holding expenses.
 - c. Expenses for *Grand Night for Singing* are yet recorded; those should be set by the October board meeting
5. Working board and staff reports were submitted online (posted separately).
6. Covid and vaccination proposal
 - a. Much has changed since the board met in early August.
 - b. No matter what decision we make, some singers will refuse to sing.
 - c. Jean has been studying our mission statement: taking into account our mission to present outstanding choral music, how can we make our best decision?
 - d. How can we both honor our commitment to fine choral music and preserve the health and safety of all?
 - e. Discussion of summary of results from survey of 39 Chorale members.
 - Keon noticed that most were comfortable with mask and vaccine requirements
 - Carol was struck by the heartfelt longer responses; turning someone away would be difficult.
 - Mihai wondered why people who were fully vaccinated would not sing if there were not a vaccine mandate.
 - Tom, like Carol, is torn as singer board member. Singing with masks is challenging. There's concern that while singers may begin singing in masks, some may drop out finding that too difficult.

- Patrick expressed concern that if many dropped out during the season, the Chorale may be too small to present an outstanding concert
 - Jenny wanted us to know that a judge ruled today that WMU soccer players who appealed WMU's mandate that they wear masks do NOT need to wear masks. Jenny is not able to give an opinion about whether our acceptance of MCACA funds makes it required that we follow state guidelines.
 - Jean shared vaccine and mask policies from Holland and GR Symphonies, St Cecilia Society, Cincinnati Men's Chorus.
 - Given the information from HSO, the viability of the Beethoven concert may be questionable.
 - Tom asked Patrick if there were a number of singers needed to support our mission of making "fine choral music." Patrick reported that programming would be difficult with fewer singers and without our strongest singers. He expects that we will lose more people throughout the year because of singing with masks.
 - Keon wondered what the response to other arts organizations' protocols has been. That's unclear since their seasons have not yet begun.
 - Jean encouraged us to consider the glass half full: we can't guess about what our situation will be, but we need to make a decision. She feels strongly, however, that we need to keep pushing on.
 - Keon encouraged us to think about baselines: most singers who responded to the survey want to have a vaccine mandate. Carol reminded us that, according to the survey, most people will participate with or without a vaccine mandate.
 - Julie pointed out that 36 of the 39 who participated in the survey are fully vaccinated; they will sing regardless of vaccine mandate.
 - Patrick wondered: if we have a vaccine mandate, how would we check for vaccination? What exceptions would/could be made? If there are exceptions, why have a mandate? Per their board, HSO has a vaccination mandate with religious and health exceptions.
 - Jean wondered about Hope's policy. Mihai reported that vaccinations are encouraged, not required; masks are required indoors.
 - Jean wondered to Jenny: how will today's court decision affect businesses? Jenny is not certain, but wanted us to know that the decision was made based on First Amendment principles: the soccer players claimed religious exemptions. Jenny is concerned that requiring proof of vaccination will violate HIPAA regulations.
 - Patrick reported that Park Church does not require a vaccine mandate; their lawyer believed that doing that would violate HIPAA, as Jenny mentioned.
 - Jenny believes that groups might face risks if someone sues for HIPAA violations regarding vaccinations. The amount of risk is uncertain.
 - Keon wants to assure that we're doing all we can to make everyone safe.
 - Sarah encourages us to realize that what Hope College is doing may not be a good model for Chorale: Hope is testing wastewater and doing random testing for the non-vaccinated. She encourages us to do what we can: if not a vaccine mandate, let's insist on social distancing and masking.
- f. Keon moved that vaccination be required for all Chorale singers and staff; Julie seconded.
- Sarah wants to explore a discussion of medical exceptions.
 - All agreed to close discussion
 - The motion failed.

- g. Carol moved that we not make a vaccine policy at this time and that singers themselves decide on participation; Mihai seconded.
 - Jenny strongly recommends a release/waiver form for singers and staff, regardless of their vaccination status. Social distancing is in place in our current policy.
 - All agreed to close discussion
 - The motion failed.
 - h. Keon moved that vaccination be required for all Chorale singers and staff and that medical exemptions be possible; Jean seconded.
 - Carol wondered about the medical exemptions: are we exposing others to Covid because of these exemptions?
 - All agreed to close discussion
 - The motion failed
 - i. Jenny moved that mandatory vaccination be required, allowing for both medical and religious exemptions. Those with approved exemptions would be subject to testing 48 hours prior to gathering at Chorale rehearsals and events. All members shall also sign a hold harmless release to the Chorale as a condition of participation. Sarah seconded.
 - Motion was approved with 7 in favor and 2 opposed. (4 members were absent)
 - Jean will inform the singers, but the implementation process will be set by the executive committee.
 - j. Jean moved that the executive committee set the implementation process for the approved motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
7. We have two extra tickets for *Grand Night for Singing*. Board members should contact Betty if they know of potential patrons we could invite; they could attend without charge.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm

Next concert/event: *Grand Night for Singing* Thursday, September 16, 2021 6 pm at Windmill Island
Next meetings: Board meeting: Monday, October 4, 2021
Executive committee meeting: tbd