

The Vernon Chorale, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting #7: Season 2022-2023

Date/Time: January 10, 2023 - 6:30 pm

Location: St. John's Episcopal Church (523 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066)

- I. Call to order
- II. Acceptance of Minutes
 - A. Minutes from December 6, 2022, meeting [here](#)*(Please review prior to 1/10 meeting)
- III. Reports
 - A. President*
 - B. Treasurer
 - C. Artistic Director
 - D. Publicity
 - E. Development
- IV. Unfinished business
 - A. Follow up re: quality of livestream
- V. New business
 - A. Welcome to Steve Walker!
 - B. January auditions
 - C. Member feedback from Annual Meeting
 - D. Covid/Masking Policy member feedback
 - E. April guest musicians to hire
 - F. Choral Fellows' potential return
 - G. Question from church secretary at FCCV

Next board meeting February 14, 2023 6:30 pm at St. John's

VI. Adjournment

*President's Report:

- I had reached out to Justin Kurtz, our sound engineer, as well as Deacon Mike from St. Bernard to offer some feedback about the poor sound quality experienced in this December's concert livestream to seek their advice on potential causes and solutions. I heard back from both of them; as mentioned at the Annual Meeting, their answers were essentially that there was a different livestream operator this year from St. Bernard, as Cindy was unavailable this year for our concert. Also, last year Justin had come for a rehearsal during the week, where he was able to work with Cindy and Deacon Mike to complete a sound check and troubleshoot issues with connecting St. Bernard's PA mic to his superior quality recording setup; due to time constraints, this was not possible this year. In his own words:

The Vernon Chorale, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting #7: Season 2022-2023

Date/Time: January 10, 2023 - 6:30 pm

Location: St. John's Episcopal Church (523 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066)

- Thanks for the feedback. I apologize for the issues with the stream. There was a difference in that I did not attend the rehearsal the day before this time which ended up not affording us sufficient soundcheck and testing time before the concert. There was also a different person running the video stream this time. Unfortunately for the cost I am charging I am no longer able to make two trips and work over two days. I thought perhaps coming in earlier in the afternoon the day of the concert to get started and then returning 6-7:15 pm would be enough, but there was just too much to set up and test in that short time. Any slight hiccup and there was no time to fix it. This is what happened with getting a feed from the PA mic for this concert. Last year we had time to set that up and test it at the rehearsal. As far as the low level goes, in the past I believe the video streamer had adjusted it on that end when necessary. I guess that did not happen this time. Again, if we had had the rehearsal we could have likely been able to fix that.

In an attempt to keep the cost the same I thought I could make it work without attending the rehearsal since I've done it with the same video crew twice last year. I apologize for that miscalculation. In the future, if you want to livestream we will need at least a full 2 hour setup before a rehearsal with the video crew there. At St. Bernard's the mass schedule makes this very difficult. Pushing back the concert start time to 8:00 or 8:15 would help, but also we need a rehearsal and the ability to leave most equipment in place until the concert.

For venues other than St Bernard's, if we can get in for setup at 3pm the day of the concert with the video crew, and I am able to leave all my stuff setup straight through until the concert, we could use the warmup as a soundcheck. So the other two concerts this season should be doable for the current cost as long as that is the case.

I understand that the chorale is a community group with limited budget so I'm trying to keep it affordable, but in order to make two trips and work over two days the minimum I could charge would be \$800. Even that is a significant discount from what I normally charge for similar work over two days. I understand that may not be possible for the group.

One option would be to not livestream the concerts at St. Bernard's, and only do it at the other venues where we can get sufficient setup time. Or, consider changing the schedule of concerts at St. Bernard's to provide for more setup time before the concert, perhaps on a different day or time.

At this point, Deacon Mike responded again, saying:

- We are thrilled to be a part of the community who supports the Vernon Chorale by making our space available. When you have time, we could talk about hosting the concert on a different day or a different time. As you know, the Church is busy but we can find a way to work it out.

I am not sure if Justin could start earlier on Saturday to leave time for the sound check or if the sound check could be done earlier, before the break for Mass. We need to have his equipment out of the way by 4:15 when people start to come for 5 PM Mass and he can start his final layout at 6 PM. Since there is only 1 hour between six and seven and not all of that time is usable for a sound check, perhaps we can get it done by starting earlier on Saturday.

The option for a Friday night concert is interesting except during Lent which is roughly February, March and April. If the schedule could skip these months at St. Bernard, we could make the setup time contiguous on Fridays during the rest of the year.

The Vernon Chorale, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting #7: Season 2022-2023

Date/Time: January 10, 2023 - 6:30 pm

Location: St. John's Episcopal Church (523 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066)

While we do livestream which includes our choir, our audio equipment focused more on delivery of the spoken word and is not near the quality of Justin's music oriented setup so he adds a significant upgrade to the audio experience that is delivered to homes through the livestream.

Perhaps we can talk and explore options to be a part of the Vernon Chorale season.

- We're thrilled to officially welcome Steve Walker to the board – thank you so much for stepping up to fulfill this vacancy for us; we look forward to working with you
- January auditions went smoothly, although one of our potential candidates was a no-show; the other wasn't accepted at this time and has been informed about the results
- Membership indicated that the feedback from our December concert was very positive; some members discussed the potential for singing as a group more outside of rehearsals, both for community building, as well as just having a means to exercise the vocal mechanism more after such a long hiatus of not singing as part of a group due to Covid and virtual choirs – maybe carol singing or visiting nursing homes or hospitals at various times of the year would be a possibility, depending on singer availability and interest of potential venues; maybe we could increase our community outreach and attract younger singers by singing in the community more or by collaborating with RHS; discussed livestream issues and program printing issues; Kate reminded everyone of the upcoming soup party at her house. Official minutes from the annual meeting are [here](#) (Thanks, Sarah!)
- The only feedback I heard from people directly after rehearsal (4 separate people) was that they strongly believe that we should continue to exercise caution and maintain our current masking policy based on the color code system; people recognize that the board put a lot of thought and consideration for our membership's wellbeing when deciding this system; it was mentioned that no one knows what the long-term effects of Covid will be to our collective bodily systems, so we shouldn't take the chance; while one person even mentioned that while she trusts fellow VC members to be responsible, others in our society are 'stupid' and can't necessarily be trusted to act with the greater good in mind; one mentioned that while she wouldn't necessarily stop singing with us if it was decided to make all rehearsals mask-optional, she'd definitely feel more comfortable keeping the masking in place for now, even though it's not ideal for singing; as of 10:34 am on Friday, 1/6/23, I haven't received any email communications from anyone about this – what have the rest of you heard from folks?
 - **Update 1/10/23:** Heard from 5 different people via email: 3 of the 5 would be comfortable with us deciding to make masks optional at this point, with an emphasis on reminding people to stay home when they're sick; 1 would strongly prefer we keep our protocol as is, because there are "those of us who could be severely affected by this virus and I still take it seriously."
- We will need the following musicians for our April performance:
 - Saxophonist (Ehren's East Hampton HS colleague, Andrew Groves)

The Vernon Chorale, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting #7: Season 2022-2023

Date/Time: January 10, 2023 - 6:30 pm

Location: St. John's Episcopal Church (523 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066)

- Guitarist (rock/jazz) - Bryan Neidermeyer; Brittany Martin; Ehren might have a student, Zack Marshall
- Bassist
- Percussionist (drummer)
 - Cost for each will be \$200.00, which is reflective of their attendance for 1 rehearsal and 1 performance; do any of you have leads for other local folks to hire for guitar, bass, and drums before I reach out?
- Can we potentially fund our choral fellows if either of them is available to come back to sing for April? I hadn't heard from them after reaching out in December, but Ehren recently heard from Grace, who was wondering about the possibility; however, she won't know her schedule until later in January after the semester at ECSU is underway
- Stephanie from FCCV reached out to say that they have a screen they use up in the pulpit. She's wondering if we need a screen or if we need them to take it down?