

BELLEVILLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES of January 5, 2026

I. President Bill Rathmann called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the Union United Methodist Church in Belleville. Attending the meeting were President Bill Rathmann; Chapter Development VP Don Koch; Music & Performance VP Paul Schulte; Marketing & PR VP Chuck Cook; Program VP Steve Martin; Secretary Jim Morgan; Treasurer Tom Cunningham; Immediate Past President Mike Dohogne and Board Members at-Large Bill Heine and Steve Hand. Guest David Koch also attended.

II. Additions to agenda — Chuck Cook added Singing Valentines and Jim Morgan added 2025 ASCAP fee to the agenda. Hearing no other additions/corrections, Jim Morgan moved to accept the agenda. Seconded by Paul Schulte. Passed

III. Secretary's Report — Secretary Morgan sent a copy of the November 17, 2025, Board meeting minutes. Don Koch pointed out a few errors via email to Secretary Morgan. Paul Schulte also assisted in cleaning up some grammatical and spelling errors, possibly due to AI (artificial intelligence). He also provided a PDF copy of the minutes. Steve Martin made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected, seconded by Mike Dohogne. Passed.

President Rathmann also noted that the signature card at the bank should be brought up to date, reflecting current authorized parties. This is referred to by BHS as a financial review, separate from an audit. The current people listed on the card; President Bill Rathmann, Treasurer Tom Cunningham and Past Treasurer Dave Howe Tom Cunningham indicated that he would check that this card is up to date.

Secretary Morgan indicated that he would be attend the Illinois District leadership training for chapter secretaries on January 10, 2026, via Zoom from 12:30 PM to 2 PM.

IV: Treasurer's Report — Tom Cunningham: Tom distributed his report to the Board. The report indicated that the December 6, 2025, Christmas show in Breese, IL was a financial success. However, Tom later realized that there was a problem with his spreadsheet and a few discrepancies with the show sponsors income totals. Tom also indicated he believes that he may have paid Doug's director fees twice in the month of October. He also confirmed that there were no rehearsals in December 2025.

A brief discussion was held whether Doug should be paid for performances in addition to rehearsals. More details will be discussed at our next Board meeting.

A motion was made by Steve Hand, seconded by Steve Martin, to table the full treasurer's report until our next meeting on February 9, 2026. Tom indicated the checkbook balance as of January 5, 2026, is \$14,585.35.

Don Koch donated the cost of a thank you card that was mailed to all 2025 Christmas show sponsors. The Board all agreed the card looked very nice and thanked Don for his efforts.

President Rathmann also reminded Tom that the 1099 tax form for the chapter was due by the end of the month. He can upload and submit this form to BHS through the Member Center.

Morgan mentioned the 2025 ASCAP fee of \$310. A motion was made by Paul Schulte, seconded by Mike Dohogne, to pay that amount. Tom will mail the completed form to BHS with a check made payable to BHS.

V. Vice-Presidents' Reports

A. Chapter Development -- Don Koch. Don said that he had emailed both the Board and the Music Team with several ideas to help boost membership growth and outreach for the chapter (e.g. Acappellooza Festival). Schulte had indicated that the Music Team had reviewed this information. Don was thanked for all his great ideas. The Board recommended that anything Don wanted to do with any of his ideas should come with a plan of how to execute his ideas with the chapter and its leadership teams. His first idea was an Acappellooza Festival in our area. This would take a lot of planning and could possibly be considered for next year at the earliest. It was also recommended that this program start small and build from year to year.

Don also brought up the idea of having another Jamboree in October 2026. Steve Martin recommended having Don or someone else from the chapter contact the surrounding chapters to get a feel for their interest in doing this before it is fully planned. It was recommended that this event be held indoors to account for possible cold/rainy weather. Mike Dohogne and Chuck Cook agreed to help Don (when needed) to get this event off the ground.

Don also mentioned several prospective members in his area. Some discussion ensued about the prospects from Triad High School. Don indicated that he had not heard from them in a while.

Don also brought up the possibility of having another membership night, possibly in Mascoutah, IL. The event would be a "come and go" type event and held on a Saturday.

Steve Martin mentioned that Ryan Latinette has a friend who would be interested in joining the chapter, but is financially unable to do so. A discussion was held about whether individual members would be willing to help this member out with dues. However, it was noted that the chapter should meet this gentleman and sing with him for a while before making any further determinations.

B. Program -- Steve Martin. The Music Team has decided to postpone the "Fun Night for Quartets" until March, April or May 2026. This is to allow the chorus to focus on quartet development for Singing Valentines. We want to put out the best product we can for our loved ones, and this is the best way to do that.

Steve has already received the list from Mike Dohogne of the quartets and the judging panel for "Fun Night".

Steve would also like to bring more fun to the Program (e.g. tags) after the break, as well as the quartet tag out exercise. He wants to keep the fun and our singing quality at their very best. He also believes in having every chorus member involved with the Chapter at all levels.

The Pole Cat program will resume at a later date.

Mike Dohogne submitted a bill for \$57 to the Chapter for 12 medals for the Quartet Fun Night. Motion was made by Steve Martin and seconded by Chuck Cook. Passed.

C. Marketing and PR -- Chuck Cook. Chuck wanted to confirm that the Board was still committed to a Singing Valentines program for 2026. He suggested singing on both Friday & Saturday, February 13 & 14. The Board agreed.

Chuck distributed the order form and said that he would be contacting creative people in the chapter by email for suggestions. He suggested that we charge \$65 this year (up from \$60 last year). A motion was made by Steve Martin and seconded by Mike Dohogne to raise the price of Singing Valentines from \$60 to \$65. Passed.

A motion was made by Jim Morgan, seconded by Chuck Cook, to purchase boxes of chocolate truffles (four per box) at \$4/box from Chocolate Affair. Passed. Don Koch reminded the Board that Chocolate Affair would need at least a one-week notice to get our order ready.

Steve Martin noted that we may want to have quartets take a picture of the event and get contact information so we can send the picture to them electronically.

The Board agreed that we should keep online ordering as an option for our customers.

Chuck stated that the first payment for ads for Singing Valentines would need to be in by January 15. The Board expressed hope to have the ads for the website and Facebook page completed by then as well.

Chuck offered a reminder that anyone participating in Singing Valentines should get their tux cleaned as soon as soon as possible.

Bill Rathmann suggested that we track Singing Valentines sales so can plan better for next year

A motion was made by Chuck Cook, seconded by Paul Schulte, to spend up to \$750 on ads for Singing Valentines. This amount allowed Chuck to move forward with advertisements.

D. Music and Performance — Paul Schulte. The Music Team met last week and reviewed our current repertoire. They decided to replace several songs while keeping several others. One new song is Happy Together. The sheet music and learning tracks are already loaded on the Members web page.

Paul asked for a sign-up sheet to be available tomorrow night at rehearsal for Singing Valentines quartets. Chuck Cook agreed to have the sign-up sheet ready to go by tomorrow night.

The Coles County chapter has approached Belleville about possibly do a joint show in 2027. Paul stated that we may do the same show in both the Belleville and Coles County areas. We hope to do some joint numbers with the Coles County Chorus during this performance.

Paul is looking at several possible venues for the spring show and will let the Board know soon. He's hoping to go back to a more traditional show in a theater. No date has been set yet. Theater comes first, then the date depending on feature quartet availability. Ballpark timeframe is late June.

VI. Committee Reports

A. **Sunshine** -- President Rathmann reminded everyone to call Jim Bostick with timely notifications for members' illnesses or hospitalizations.

Paul received a phone call from Pat Flynn prior to the Board meeting this evening. Paul gave a brief update on Pat Flynn's health. Bill will contact Jim Bostick about sending Pat a get-well card on behalf of the Chorus.

B. **YIH** – President Rathman. Bill sent an email on January 2 to Evan Patrick (Illinois District YIH chairman). Evan is willing to assist us in developing our YIH Program.

C. **Parades** – Steve Hand. No report at this time.

D. **Fundraising** – See above for details on Singing Valentine program under Marketing & PR report.

E. **Uniforms** – Uniforms are still being stored at Don Koch's residence in Beckemeyer, IL. Construction of the new shed at the Koch Farm is being completed. We should be able to move the uniforms to the farm in late January or early February.

F. **Communications** – None.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. **Contest Photo**. With the help of Steve Martin, Jim Morgan reached out to Jill Wakefield Portraits in Peoria, IL. Ms. Wakefield took over for Bob Summit of Summit Photography, who passed away on 11/3/25. Jim will get a new list together of members who wanted a contest photo and will place a new order as soon as possible.

VIII. New Business

A. **Installation Banquet** is set for Saturday, January 31, 2026. The banquet will be held at Michael's Restaurant in Highland. Bill Rathmann stated that the original quoted price was \$40 per person (includes no tax - we are tax exempt - or tip). This price includes coffee and iced tea. Other beverages are paid for by the member as a cash bar. Mike Dohogne offered to check with the St. Louis Area Council members to see if they wanted to have their officers installed at the same time. Happy hour at 5 pm, Buffet style dinner served at 6 pm. Program and Installation of officers starting at 7 pm. Don Koch, Bill Rathmann and Chuck Cook will meet with Gay Michael to finalize dinner arrangements. Steve Hand created an agenda/program outline for the event, which Paul Schulte will finalize and Steve will print. BHS International President Kevin Keller has agreed to be our installing officer for the evening.

There was a brief discussion regarding which funds and how much can be used (possibly help with some of the banquet cost) for chapter member benefit. Treasurer Cunningham agreed to look into this and report back to the board.

B. **Chorus Manager**. President Rathmann questioned why we still had a Chorus Manager position in the chapter. After some discussion, Jim Morgan agreed to check into possibly removing himself from this position.

C. **HOD Meeting.** Bill Rathmann and Jim Morgan plan on attending the Spring Illinois District House of Delegates meeting on Friday, March 20, in Bloomington, IL.

D. **Insurance.** A brief discussion was held about whether we had insurance coverage on our property in the new storage shed at Koch Farms. Treasurer Tom Cunningham agreed to look into this for the Board.

E. **Rehearsal Hall.** Steve Martin reported that the Music Team had discussed looking into another rehearsal facility where we could use our risers on a weekly basis. President Rathmann agreed to call Gerry Bach and the manager of Union United Methodist Church to find out about space availability.

F. **Social Gathering.** Don Koch suggested having a social get-together for chapter members after Valentine's Day, possibly at Diamond Mineral Springs Family Style Restaurant in Grantfork, IL. More discussion to follow at our next board meeting.

IX. Next Meeting Date: Monday, February 9, 2026, 7 PM at Union United Methodist Church in Belleville.

Motion to adjourn by Steve Hand, seconded by Steve Martin at 9:00 PM. Passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Morgan
Secretary, Belleville Chapter
Sounds of Harmony Chorus