

# Sons of Norway District 5 Board Meeting Minutes- April 7-8, 2017

## Stoughton, Wisconsin

Approved October 20, 2017

President Andrew Johnsen opened the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was given and silence observed for departed members.

### **Roll Call:**

Friday: Ron Iverson, Andrew Johnsen, Joy Bashara, Cheryl Wille-Schlesser, David Hermundson, Darlene Arneson, Kathy Secora, Lucy Ghastin,, Michaela Decker, Mike Palecek, and Geoff Wodell.  
Absent: Esther Charlton Guests: International International Director Jon Grinde

Friday: Ron Iverson, Andrew Johnsen, Joy Bashara, Alternate Zone 3 Carol Culbertson (for Cheryl Wille-Schlesser), David Hermundson, Darlene Arneson, Kathy Secora, Lucy Ghastin,, Michaela Decker, Mike Palecek, and Geoff Wodell. Absent: Esther Charlton Guests: International International Director Jon Grinde

### **Heritage and Grants**

Cheryl Wille-Schlesser, Chr., Michaela Decker, David Hermundson, Mike Palecek, Kathy Secora Youth Director Cheryl Schlesser gave the Heritage and Grants Report.

There was a motion to approve the agenda. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

There was discussion about the Heritage and Grants Report. Discussion of the benefit member requirement for scholarships was discussed. President Johnsen recommended a list of membership benefits, especially highlighting scholarships and grants, be listed on the District website and other places.

The committee recommendations are to leave the 2018 Masse Moro registration at \$800. Motion passed. The committee recommends approving Jonathon Grinde for the \$300 Olav Eide Scholarship. Motion passed. The committee recommends approving Jonathon Grinde for the \$1000 International Summer School. The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Fall Board Meeting**

The Fall Board meeting will be September 29-30. There was discussion about possibly attending Cleng Peerson's anniversary event. Christina will check with the lodge tonight about details and if needed, the board can reconsider the date at the Saturday meeting.

There was a motion to recess the meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

### **Saturday, April 8, 2017- 8:09 am**

#### **The meeting was called back to order by President Andrew Johnsen**

Secretary's report: Darlene Arneson reported that she has the possessions that were at Ray Knutson's home and is going through the binders, boxes and totes. There are stamps to go to Mary Bennett and Darlene gave Michaela two banners for Barnebirkie. There will be 3 ring binders and other items that Darlene will bring to the fall board meeting that Sally didn't want back.

There was a motion to approve the September 24, 2016 minutes. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Alternate Carol Culbertson was in attendance for Zone 3 Director Cheryl Schlessler.

There were no communications.

### **Fifth District Presidents' Report**

Items of importance for the current biennium:

1. Membership drive
  - a. 3500 new members
  - b. 350 new insurance members
  - c. More involvement of FBCs in membership recruitment.
  - d. Inform all District lodges of the new membership drive.
  
2. Local lodge Presidents' Conference
  - a. Mike Palecek applied for and received a \$1500.00 grant from the Sons of Norway Foundation for the District to sponsor a Local Lodge Presidents' Conference.
  
3. Lodge Wellness report
  - a. Tracking of financial status.
  - b. Tracking Lodge Achievement points.
  - c. Tracking of membership gain or loss.
  - d. Calculating of a lodge wellness score on a zero to ten scale
  
4. Be all you can be as a lodge
  - a. Get the message out to the lodges
  - b. Possible theme for 2018 District Convention

### **Alternate**

Darlene Arneson introduced Carol Culbertson, Alternate for Cheryl Schlessler (Zone 3), and Board members introduced themselves.

**Statement of allowable expenses** for District Lodge Meeting: Travel \$.41/mile, meals \$30/day, lodging is \$113.05 for Friday night and Thursday night \$87.30.

### **Treasurer's Report**

SON D5 finances can be best analyzed on a two year basis, because there is a build up of member dues in odd years and large convention expenses in even years.

For the two year 2015-2016 period, D5 had \$3,091 more income than expenses, vs 2014-2015 which had a loss of \$20,686.

There were some extraordinary events which contributed to this improved financial condition, looking at 2016 vs 2014:

1.) D5 hosting the D5 convention (\$9100) 2.) Fund raising to support Masse Moro, including 2016 convention, Hidden Heroes book sales, (\$7800) 3.) Less expensive convention venue for district lodge meeting (\$3700) 4.) More Masse Moro camper income (\$2700) 5.) Masse Moro cost containment, such as lower background checks costs, misc expenses, food costs (\$1800) 6.)

Reduction in officer compensation (\$1800) 7.) Increase in fundraising (\$1700+)

Income and Expense concerns 1.) Less member income (dues down \$3500) 2.) Greater international convention costs (up \$3100) 3.) Increased web costs, one time? (up \$1325) 4.) District Board increased lodging costs (\$1200) - even with 2013 & 2015 5.) Zone events (down \$500) - low levels of zone event activity, should be higher 6.) Interest income (down \$400) 7.) Future fundraising (?) 8.) Masse Moro marketing (down, only 1/2 of 1% of camp budget) 9.) What is the "right level" of Masse Moro staffing, how is it determined? 10.) Some Masse Moro staff are being paid \$600. Is there a 1099 tax benefit for them to be paid \$595 instead?

Promising/uncertain future: 1.) Effect of raising Masse Moro tuition in 2017 (\$100\*50= 5000) 2.) "Nordic Legacy Foundation" 501 ( c ) 3 fundraising possibilities, sales tax savings 3.) Campaign 2020 push for more membership, effect on district membership 4.) How new dues might affect D5 membership income 5.) Closer international convention in 2018, lower travel costs

### **Finance/Budgeting Committee**

Mike Palecek, Chr., Joy Bashara, David Hermundson, and Kathy Secora

The finance committee was satisfied with progress made to date to improve District 5 financial sustainability. All members were committed to monthly audioconference meetings to discuss district financial business.

There was "elephant in the room" discussion regarding 2018 dues structure and its uncertain impact on membership numbers and ongoing district funding. There is the potential of increased funds coming into the district, because the district's share of dues almost doubles under the new plan.

"What District 5 does for you" was discussed as a message that needs to be positively conveyed to all District 5 members, from a financial perspective, so they know we are spending their money wisely. This might help in membership retention related to the dues change.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

**Bills against the District-** There are none

### **Executive Committee**

Chairmen Andrew Johnsen, Mike Palecek, Kathy Secora and Darlene Arneson

Andrew discussed the difference between long range planning and strategic planning. He feels that we should look at a 2-4 year strategic plan for the District that would follow a biennium time period. After discussion, the committee recommends that each committee identify one item or goal for our strategic plan from their area of responsibility.

The new membership drive and incentive from the International was briefly discussed.

Mike Palecek gave an update on the edits to the 501(c)(3) papers that will be discussed and acted on. The committee recommended a number of changes and Mike will complete the edits for the board's review.

There is \$4500 in the District Fraternal Program Fund for District 5. Darlene signed the paper and the audit committee will review and sign next. This is an annual report for the International in which we

identify how we spend the fraternal funds.

Ray Knutson had been the contact for receiving the annual renewal notice from the State of Illinois for the Articles of Incorporation. Since having a contact in Illinois is of preference to Illinois and the renewal rate is much less than out-of-state, Kathy Secora has volunteered to be the contact and will, like Ray, give the renewal notice and any correspondence to the District Treasurer.

Andrew reported that he contacted many lodge presidents and had a very favorable reception of the Local Lodge President's Conference. He is considering an October date and had asked Mike Palecek to check on a venue.

Andrew has started a Lodge Wellness Report spreadsheet with the first two items being a ranking of the D17 financial status. The second is a ranking based on their Lodge Achievement Form score. He will be adding a percentage of membership category.

Lodge visits and zone meetings were discussed. Zone 3 has been the only consistent and annual meeting with 1-2 others each year but not consistently. The number of lodge visit report forms and expense submission is much less than the number of zone directors and possible lodge visit opportunities.

The committee will recommend the Local Lodge President's Conference be the weekend of October 20. Darlene will make something for board members to identify the best weekends to meet for the Board meeting.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Audit Committee**

Tom Boudreau, Chr., Christina Fairchild, Joy Bashara, and Ron Iverson

The audit committee met on April 7, 2017. We examined the books and found them to be in excellent shape. All our questions we had were answered by Mike in a satisfactory way. Mike is doing a great job.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Fund raising Committee**

Mike Palecek, Chr., Joy Bashara, Lucy Ghastin and Cheryl Wille-Schlesser

Mike thanked Duane Kittleson for all of his efforts to organize the District financial records, organization of all related items, and suggestions for set up of accounts and checking.

Committee members came prepared with many good ideas for district fundraisers. Ideas included hosting a winter Caribbean or Mexican cruise where some on-ship events might have a Nordic theme, and making this event open to other Districts and even non-members, and the district would earn \$100 per guest; decks of Norwegian playing cards with a contest among members to submit their best pictures of Norway; an all-around-printed Norwegian themed t-shirt and tote bags; a logo embroidered apron; two Norwegian themed calendar ideas; and the Viking ship popup card.

The committee liked the idea that Cheryl Wille-Schlesser move forward with the cruise; her lodge is

already doing a similar trip for Norway this week; that Mike purchase 100 Paulsen Classic Calendars for resale to our members in the fall, that Andy researches the possibility of a custom SON calendar for 2019; that Cheryl Schlessler talks with a member of her lodge who is a graphic artist about doing a t-shirt design for \$50, with a possible roll out for the 2018 convention. The committee expressed concern about issues of competing with convention vendors.

The playing card idea was not decided upon fully. One suggestion is to have an audio call with the committee, and if approved, bring it to the executive committee for a final approval. This would allow us to then publicize the contest before the summer, which would encourage summer vacationers to Norway to take and submit pictures.

Regarding the Hidden Heroes book, profit to date is about \$4960. Several other districts will probably be using the book as a shared fundraiser. In the past two weeks, District 2 has placed their first order and there was an order from a lodge in District 4. The Norwegian American newspaper did a review in February, that has boosted online sales through our publisher.

There are discussions with Mary Bennett, who collected a second book of World War II Norwegian reminiscences to create a sequel with a Fall 2018 date.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **New Lodge Starts Committee**

Committee: Darlene Arneson, Chair, Lucy Ghastin, and Geoff Wodell

1. Update- Darlene- Norse Valley meeting and their issues
2. Lost lodges- Tre Elver and Leif Erikson
3. How to help struggling lodges and move forward
4. How to help those with an interest but lots of distance from an active lodge
5. Accessing the New Lodge Start funds from International- Jon Grinde

Report from Esther: Esther had talked to a lady in Lexington, Kentucky that had been interested in forming a lodge. Sherry found her contact info and I have called and left a message and emailed her to find out if there is still interest. Sherry did note that she was no longer a member of Sons of Norway.

Report from Darlene:

- Southern Illinois. Wendy Winkelman is a former District 6 Secretary who now lives part of the year in Carbondale, IL (very south). She has asked about contacting Central and Spirit of the New Century members and trying to start a new lodge. She has been asking about interested people and is visiting the Nashville lodge but that is 3 hours away. Darlene has sent Wendy and Greg Ragan a list of the Illinois members on both lists. The committee recommends we work with Wendy, identify who from the Board can be the key contact, and involve the FBC's.
- Darlene had a call and email correspondence with Robert Schuck, former member of Birkebeiner Lodge, who wanted to start the lodge up again. An email was sent to the New Lodge Starts Committee and Zone 1 Directors explaining that along with the problems that Norrona is having. Darlene and Robert had discussed various options and the suggestion as to how to help Norrona and use the renewed interest in that area from Robert Schuck. Robert has indicated he'd be willing to join Norrona.

- Darlene had met with Norse Valley leaders last Saturday. They have voted to look at disbanding. Darlene and Joy Bashara attended the meeting and Darlene led a discussion in how to rejuvenate the lodge, looking at meeting times and locations, how to reach out to the community and other ways to assist.
- No update on DeKalb, IL- tried to contact but no response

The committee recommends:

- Supporting Wendy Winkelman's efforts to start a new lodge in southern Illinois by using FBC's, identify Board members who can assist, and involve Jon Grinde if he is able and willing to assist.
- Support the efforts in Zone 1 to have a meeting of those involved with Norrona and others who might want to start Birkebeiner Lodge again. First meeting with brainstorm all the options and determine how to proceed. Geoff and David will be the two key contacts for that effort.
- Darlene will continue to support Norse Valley along with their zone directors.
- There is a great resource in the FBC's to access them for support and help in starting new lodges and rejuvenating them. A more concentrated effort in involving FBC's needs to be done by the Board.
- Lodges need to look at their activities and be willing to adjust and change to meet the needs of their members and those they want to attract. Some examples are more social activities, summer fun activities, reaching out to other groups and just having fun! A reference was made to the photos in the Viking District pages and how District 8 is always having fun at a social event and many other District photos are presentations, meetings and other more less social photos.

Jon Grinde shared that his discussion with his daughter generated an idea to offer activities for millennial age members. He also shared an Adopt a Grandparent program for Sons of Norway that would develop relationships between the age groups. This could involve giving rides to older members to meetings, entertainment of young kids by the older ones during a meeting or lodge event, or other activities.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Cultural and Viking Chest**

Tom Boudreau (acting chair), Lucy Ghastin and Geoff Wodell

#### ***Notes for the Cultural Committee from Esther Charlton (absent from meeting due to recent surgery) - April 7, 2017***

*At the 2016 convention there were very few items brought for the Exhibit/Competition. There were so few that I discussed with Owen about not even doing any judging. He suggested just to judge, the hardanger and rosemaling. Nancy Odalen in her letter said she her husband's, wood carving was not judged as there was only two items in that category. Yes we did have some ribbons but as there was a tie for Best of Show, we only had one ribbon for that. I will make sure we have more ribbons for that in the future. Who would have thought we would have a tie.*

*I did find some certificates in the supplies but then found they had Mary Bennett signature as president. We will make sure all people that submit an item receive a certificate. I had thought some sort of prizes would be nice, but since Nancy Odalen thought it was cheap, we will stay with the certificates.*

*In my opinion, I do not think there should be any judging and it should be just an Folk Art Exhibit. I observed that it was very difficult for people to judge the delicate handanger items. And it is hard to find judges willing to take the time to do the judging.*

*Owen had suggested some sort of cultural medal for those in the Exhibit, which is something to think about for the future. Mike Palecek had also suggested a medal.*

*Carol Stekel has contacted me regarding the next convention as she is on that committee for their convention. I let her know that whether an Exhibit or Competition would be discussed at this board meeting. Maybe a couple of reasons people do not want to put out the effort to make something for the Exhibit is a lack of time or interest.*

*In reading over the surveys that Darlene sent today, I found a lot of helpful info for future conventions. One for the cultural skills area is to have a workshop on them or more emphasis. So at the next convention we will sure to have a large cultural skills display with the folk art exhibit.*

*One item I had a lodge cultural chair email be about, was how long it was taking to submit their cultural skills info before they got their pin. This needs to be checked as to a better timing on this. You all can ask around the board members and see what they think should be a time for it to be processed.*

*Esther Charlton  
District Cultural Chair*

The committee talked about the Folk Art exhibit for the 2018

- District Convention.  
Have it as a folk art / culture exhibit; not a competition  
All would receive a certificate. Make sure we have enough of them  
Hard to find good judges  
Cultural Medal for participant???
- Room for display as close to business room as possible. Signs  
"Cultural Corner" inside business meeting room
- Cultural Skills workshop so people know what is out there. Demo of some of the skills
- Talked about the feed back from the 2016 convention to see if we can improve for the 2018 convention
- Cultural Skills pins. Time it takes to receive them. Is it taking too long to get them
- Talked about cultural skills reward program
- Viking Chest Zone 2 has it
- Don't try to cram too much in a time spot. Quitting time is Quitting time

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Publicity Committee**

Attending members: Christina Fairchild (chair), Rich Fairchild, Cheryl Willie-Schlessler, Darlene Arneson.

The publicity committee met and began their conversation by reviewing the September Publicity goals. Most of these goals involved the new district 5 website. Since our last meeting, we have:

- 1) Maintained the active website by adding and removing content.
- 2) Made enhancements to the website program.

- 3) Added a quarterly newsletter in Ole's Corner.
- 4) Added an area where we feature members, lodges, memorials and special projects like Troll Mountain.
- 5) Added a speakers "Program" list.
- 6) Added a youth tab and one successful lodge program.

Many of these additions still need refinement, but they are active and will only improve with time. Since the website went live, we have received numerous compliments on the website's ease of use. Keeping it simple and user friendly is one of the cornerstones of the new website's design. Looking several years into the future, our goal is to maintain that ease of use while reducing our maintenance time and increasing the amount of useful information stored on the site.

We still have a number of goals on our active list. The website needs a work instruction so we will be updating the District Policies and Practices document with this information by writing two new procedures. One will be on how to submit items for website publication and the other on how to operate the website. Our goal is to drive members and the public to the website and other social media sites.

**Additional goals:**

Add a template to the website submission process which will categorize our incoming messages and make them easier to recognize. This is a first step to a larger automation project. The goal is to eliminate excessive manual labor.

We're going to add updated content to the website and template listing the rules for website and photo submissions.

We will create a contest similar to a scavenger hunt. The goal of this is to teach the members how to use the website and where the information is stored.

Encourage the lodges to add the District 5 website link to their newsletters, webpages, etc. to help promote the use of the site,

Forward the odd Contact submissions to the board members to make them aware of the questions and possibly help in answering them correctly.

Add website automation to drop off old documents on a routine basis. (Such as older Newsletters, etc.) This will eliminate excessive steps and the need for compressing files before uploading them to the website.

Learn how to use the recently activated Google analytics for analyzing usage information.

Encourage lodges to display banners for publicity purposes. – Lodge events, Conventions, Booths, etc. We will provide the members with the dimensions and implementation method to maintain a standard.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

**Sports and Recreation Report**

Michaela Decker, Chr, Tom Boudreau, David Hermundson, Ron Iverson and Cheryl Wille-Schlesser

The 2017 Barnebirke report is attached. As an addendum to the Barnebirke report: Jane Mandli, our



Birkebeiner contact, emailed and stated that “she hopes to nominate Sons of Norway for a volunteer award associated with the Birke” and “our continual involvement to the Birke is wonderful”.

2017 Chili cook-off: This year we introduced a new recreational activity to the lodges, a chili cook-off. Fourteen lodges took part in the activity and all reported positive results. A few questioned if this was a “Norwegian” activity and although it technically is not, it did offer an opportunity for the lodges to come together to judge and enjoy a meal created by their friends. The committee has decided to continue this event.

In the coming months the committee will be working on promoting the sports medal program, especially to youth.

## **2017 Barnebirke Report**

The 2017 Barnebirke was definitely unique. It was held on February 23 and with no snow on the ground, the Barnebirke was changed to a running race. It was an amazing endeavor! The District lodges put forth great effort and over 1,000 dozen cookies were sent to Hayward. The cookies were enjoyed by many children. \$250 in contributions were also sent to the District by several lodges. Coffee sales at the Sons of Norway District 5 information booth at the Ski Expo were \$428.44. A luncheon was provided by the District at the Veteran’s Community Center. Thanks to the 14 volunteers who were able to make it to Hayward! A special thanks to the group leaders: Mary Bennet, information booth at the Ski Expo; Judy and Lucy Ghastin, volunteer luncheon; Diane and Don Overby, cookie tent; Cheryl Wille-Schlesser, registration.

Tusen Takk to all of the Fifth District lodges that provided volunteers, cookies and cash donations that helped make the 2017 Barnebirke a wonderful success!

Michaela Decker  
D5 Sports and Recreation Director

The committee report was accepted as presented.

## **Membership Committee**

Kathy Secora, Chr., Darlene Arneson, Michaela Decker, Christina Fairchild, Ron Iverson, Geoff Wodell, and Jon Grinde (ex officio).

## **Background**

We all know that Sons of Norway is facing some membership challenges. As an example, Jan 1, 2016 -Nov. 1, 2016 SON down by 1691 members (adult and juvenile)

Retention: In 2013 2,934 joined, but 41% did not renew by 3<sup>rd</sup> year  
In 2014 2,834 joined but again 41% did not renew by 3<sup>rd</sup> year

Recruitment: In 2015, 38 new member dinners, 1142 prospective attendees, 223 new members, 208 other interested (D5 had 4 dinners)

In 2016 (10 months) 22 dinners, 463 attendees, 109 new members, 98 other interested (D5 2 dinners)

Lodge closings: D5 lost 2 lodges (Leif Erikson and Tre Elver) at the beginning of 2017 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> seems close to closing unless something happens.

Positive: Elvesund won small lodge and Vennelag large lodge recruitment awards for D5 (Prizes)

## Goals

International has a 2020 program with goals and awards. The goals they have set for 2017 are 375 new insurance members, 3,500 new members. They have set 10% goals for individual lodges. Lodges who meet these goals will receive prizes including money, a banner, etc.

### D5 Recruitment Goals:

1. Hold at least one FBC sponsored recruitment meal per zone per year.
2. Get 47 new insurance members, and 437 new lodge members.

### D5 Retention Goals:

District 5 started 2016 with 4, 546 adult members and ended with 4, 356 adult members: a loss of 190 adult members or -4.2% Goal to reduce it by 25% : lose NO MORE than 130 members including by death. This effort should be led by the financial secretary and the vice president of each lodge; but, it is every member's job. I was unable to find the one and two year attrition numbers for D5 or D5 lodges, but will continue to look for them.

### Recruitment & Retention How to: What can we, as leaders, do?

\*1. \$1000 lodge revitalization money is available to each district. The district has to write a request to International office for this money. What lodge(s) should we use it for? Who is in charge of organizing and writing this up?

2. We regularly get a list of new members who signed up on-line. Follow-up by lodge is essential. By board members would also be nice. I am sending lists of people who signed up without choosing a lodge (999) to VP's suggesting contact with newsletters and invitations.

3. December could be a good month: invite guests to your Juletefest/Christmas Party. Encourage your members to give memberships as Christmas or Hannukah gifts.

4. Get out in the community in person and with your money. Participating in Syttende Mai or other Nordic events is good. It is also important to be seen at some non-Nordic events. What new and meaningful activities are needed to support causes within your community?

5. Push Fraternal benefits. SON has good product. The Financial Products fund some of the benefits and costs for Sons of Norway and the lodges. Some benefits, e.g. scholarships, are only available to people with or related to people with financial product.

6. Advertise discounts (PerkSpot, Best Western & Carlson hotels, Avis & Budget rental cars, Icelandair & Borton Overseas) Some people have joined just for these benefits.

7. Lodges can make their own discounts for members on trips/activities.

8. Hold new member luncheons or breakfasts. FBC will pay up to \$400 for a membership meal. If you can, advertise in the newspaper (emphasize families) and by word of mouth. Ask recently joined members to be speakers. (They're usually very enthusiastic). Free to members if you bring a friend (and friend free), otherwise charge.

### Other info:

Clarification of 999 and 000 lodges. 999 are people who signed up online and did not choose a lodge. 000 is for members who have financial products and do not want to join a lodge. 999 members will be transferred to 000 after a year. International would like to see these people join lodges. I am sending

names and contact info, especially of 999 members to VP's. We should, at the least, keep them informed and feeling welcome.

Surveys?? How are responses coming in? It is important to act on the results of your surveys.

Keep your meetings interesting and your members involved. What about Skyping during meetings so distant members can be involved. Pay money (\$1) to tell good news or tell a joke or ask for prayers or other ideas.

Refer dues questions to Sherry Gorse, copy Jon Grinde (are local lodge bylaw changes necessary) (answers in May?)

Kathy Secora will call Nick Baldukas as we heard he had a good program on retention set up when he was District VP.

The committee report was accepted as presented.

### **Zone Alignment Committee**

**Committee:** Darlene Arneson, Chair, Lucy Ghastin and Geoff Wodell. Jon Grinde also attended.

Darlene had sent out the Lodge Assignment list and asked the two Zone 6 Directors if there is a need to move some lodges to make their load more balanced. No response was given but when Andrew stopped in at the meeting, he indicated that all was fine.

Darlene expressed her concern with the discussion at the Executive Committee about the low number of Zone meetings and lodge visits by the zone directors. The committee discussed at length the zones, how the zones were set up by membership numbers, and then how the zones now have a newer role of support, visits and assistance.

The efforts in the last biennium to make a radical change in the zones and board make up went with very little interest, response or comments by the Board or lodge leadership. Vikings of the Smokies was really the only lodge that had any response or desire to see changes.

Our discussion really focused on why and how the zones are set up. Geoff explained the primary focus historically was equal representation at the International and District conventions. Over time, that emphasis has changed to more geographic and balanced number of lodges for zone directors to visit and assist. That is how the current zones have evolved in District 5 – based on location and not on membership totals.

The committee asks the Board to consider if this is the time to make a radical change with the zones and board make up. The committee recommends if a change is to be made that we consider:

- A 13 person board
- 4 executive members who are elected at large
- 9 zones with one director elected from each
- After the election of the executive committee and 9 zone directors, a reorganization meeting would take place in which the 9 zone directors would be placed into the other officer positions (i.e. cultural, sports, publicity, youth).

There was concern from some about getting the right person in the various officer spots. There is also concern about too many changes during this biennium with the new dues structure. If a change is to

be made, it will need to be introduced in the fall as the District Nominating Committee would need to be working on the current structure (if it failed) or the new structure (if it passes).

The committee report was accepted as presented.

## **Updates**

### **2018 District Convention- report emailed from convention committee**

In order to get a report to you in time for your upcoming Board meeting, we are presenting the following highlights report of our Lodge's 2018 Convention preparations and progress. We can provide more detail to you on any item and answer any questions you may have. Given more time, we could have prepared a more comprehensive report.

The Convention planning is being carried out by Wergeland Lodge's Convention Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by Ann Kathan, Ramona Johnson, and Adrian Johnson. David Glomstad, due to scheduling constraints is not an acting co-chair, but will assist the Steering Committee in various projects.

The points of contact for the Steering Committee are: Ann Kathan: kathanville@gmail.com 202-365-0199 (mobile); Ramona Johnson: ajrjathome@msn.com 608-788-7507 (home); Adrian Johnson: ajrjathome@msn.com 608-788-7507 (home).

The Steering Committee has several sub-committees. Each sub-committee is staffed and operational.

The Steering Committee has an operating account that is wholly separate from the Lodge's financial accounts. Adrian Johnson is the Treasurer.

The full Steering Committee meets on a regular monthly basis. Additional full Steering Committee meetings are held when necessary. Each sub-committee holds meetings with its respective members outside of the regular monthly meeting.

As discussed with the Fifth District Board at its LaCrosse meeting, Wergeland Lodge negotiated, finalized, and executed an Agreement with the Radisson that governs the Lodge's and the Radisson's rights and responsibilities regarding the Convention. This Agreement is a legally binding contract signed by Wergeland Lodge. Thus, all risks and responsibilities for the Convention are being carried by Wergeland Lodge. Copies of the Agreement were distributed at the LaCrosse Fifth District Board meeting. If you need additional copies of the executed Agreement, please let us know.

Have been spending significant amounts of time identifying and calculating any and all costs that are or could be associated with the Convention and for which the Lodge may have liability. This due diligence will allow us to carefully and accurately set an appropriate registration fee. We have carefully reviewed the Marshfield Convention information. While we have not yet calculated an appropriate registration fee, we want the Board to know that the registration fee will not match the Marshfield registration fee of \$65.00 and will be some greater amount.

We understand that unique circumstances allowed the Board to set a historically low registration amount. A comparison of the Marshfield Convention to the LaCrosse convention is not "apples to apples." There are significant different economic differences between the two events. The Marshfield

Hotel is a privately owned family hotel in a mid-sized town. The Radisson is an international chain hotel located in an economically vibrant high-traffic tourist destination area. Additionally, the LaCrosse Convention is scheduled for one of the highest tourist times in LaCrosse and hotel space is at a premium.

We strongly encourage the Fifth District to create a convention manual that can serve as a resource for the planners of future conventions. The manual would be a valuable guide for the planners and avoid anyone from having "to recreate the wheel." The manual should contain essential information such as attendance/ registration numbers for previous conventions; financial statements including income and expense statements, profit or loss statements; hotel/ convention space agreements; guidelines for negotiating hotel/convention space agreements; committee structuring; "to do" list timelines; and any other information that would be helpful in creating a successful convention.

Question: In identifying and calculating our Convention costs, we need to pinpoint audio visual equipment. The Radisson charges for audio visual equipment and its set-up. The Radisson will provide the Lodge a 50% discounted rate for A/V equipment pursuant to our Agreement. What audio visual equipment will the Board need for each business event? Do you supply any of your own A/V equipment? Please itemize your specific needs and whether you will provide such items and the expertise to set them up and run them.

Question: Are you intending to provide to us the voting paddles and ballot sheets? If so, when will you supply them?

We are very much looking forward to hosting the 2018 Convention in beautiful LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Please let us know if you need additional information or have any questions at this point.

Mange tusen takk,

*Ann Kathan, Co-Chair, on behalf of the Convention Steering Committee*

### **Local Lodge President's Conference**

D5 is planning a Lodge Presidents Leadership Seminar on October 20-22, 2017 at Camp Wonderland in Kenosha County WI. SON Foundation has awarded us \$1500 in general assistance for this event. D5 has designed this activity to reach out to all lodge presidents with "best practices" from successful lodges in D5 and to encourage a greater exchange of ideas and networking in order to strength local lodges. D5 has committed spending \$3000 on this event.

We could use the \$1000 revitalization grant to fund scholarships to this leadership seminar for lodges which: A) Are underperforming lodges according to D5 president Andy Johnsen's analysis of D17 and Lodge of the Year reports or B) Are "remote" lodges in TN, OH or UP-MI as a grant to encourage their attendance.

### **Policy and Practices Document**

Darlene Arneson updated the Board on a few changes since the final document was sent out. This is an internal board document and changes can be made by the board. She is starting a box at the end for bylaw changes needed for the 2018 District Lodge meeting.

### **District Activity Reporting**

Darlene reported that the District Secretaries have held several conference calls. On the last one there was a great deal of discussion about what to report for District activities and a list of

questions was sent to Sherry Gorse and Linda Pederson. Answers were received and Darlene distributed a handout with what counts and how it should be counted that the board can use in tabulating hours and events. She would like a report from each board member at the end of each quarter and provided the form for them to use.

**Zone Activities**

- Zone 1- written report by David and Geoff. The zone meeting in September 2016 was well attended. The zone deals with aging and membership. Norrona Lodge is considering disbanding.
- Zone 2- there are several lodges that need assistance and Wergeland is the shining star. The zone meeting will likely be in September after there is more information on the new dues structure.
- Zone 3- 37 at the Zone 3 meeting in March hosted by Vakkertland. The Zone 3 picnic is on Sunday, August 13, at Arneson’s.
- Zone 4- The zone directors are working to help Norse Valley. There may be a zone meeting in September. Fosselyngen has their building for their sale. Nordlyset is celebrating their 100th anniversary in July.
- Zone 5- Cleng Peerson is celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary this fall. Some lodges are doing very, very well and some are struggling. There may be a zone meeting in August. Kathy had been to several lodges when taking the Viking Chest along.
- Zone 6- Andy has been visiting lodges and Esther has been good

**Viking Chest Rotation**

- The rotation will begin again with this rotation.
- The zone directors are responsible for keeping track of the whereabouts and letting their lodges know that the chest is in their zone for that time period.
- The chest should be brought back to the District Board Meeting to be given to the next zone.

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Zone with chest</b>
October 2016-April 2017	5
April 2017- October 2017	2
October 2017-April 2018	4
April 2018-October 2018	6
October 2018-April 2019	1
April 2019-October 2019	3

**2018 District Nominating Committee appointments**

Jon Grinde gave some background information on the process and that in 2016, the committee was initially appointed, but then they were elected at a later meeting.

Prospective nominating committee members include: Shirley Schoenfeld, Sue Berg Roedel, Vicki Rudh-Jones, Ray or Arlene Pederson, James Ellickson, Duane or Nancy Kittleson, Charleen Seville, Diane Overby, Thomas Maxson, Clark Brekke, Jerome Rud, Peggy Schroeder.

Michaela Decker might be interested if aren’t able to secure others. Jon Grinde is willing to serve again.

President Johnsen will contact the prospective names and contact information and ask them to serve.

There was a motion to allow President Johnsen to secure five people for the District Nominating Committee. Once done, he will send out an email to the board with the names and ask them to respond via email their vote (yes or no) to the five. The decision will be ratified at the fall board meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

### **501c3 Foundation Proposal**

Mike Palecek led the discussion about the 501(C)(3).

There was a motion to establish a 501 (c)(3) corporation named the Sons of Norway Fifth District Nordic Legacy Foundation, Inc. and to accept the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, and Gift Acceptance Policy as presented at this meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed. Mike Palecek will submit the changes made at this meeting with Sons of Norway legal counsel for a double-check. When we get notification that we are official, we will begin publicity and develop promotional materials.

### **International Lodge Director Report**

Jon Grinde discussed the new dues structure, the background of the change and his role on the committee that worked on it, and what he knows about the implementation plan. There is information on the International website and the International Board & District Presidents got an update after the Fall Board meeting. There was discussion about how to address and handle member and lodge's concerns, what resources we are asking for to help educate them on the new structure, and timely information that will allow lodges to make local lodge bylaws.

Jon reported that the International Office has been listed for sale. Their main tenant may be leaving and it's an older building that is in need of repair. They may consider a lease situation.

The International Sons of Norway is in good financial shape and the insurance portion is doing well.

The International Convention dates are posted on the website as August 20-25, 2018.

### **Other items of business**

The Fall Board meeting will be September 29-30, 2017 with the location to be determined.

Jon Grinde played kubb for the first time at the Arneson home with the help of Mandt Lodge Sports Director Jens Arneson and reported on his win/loss status.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meeting was adjourned.