

Chicago Barn Dance Co Board Meeting

Minutes

August 18, 2009, 7pm

Livingroom Realty, 1530 W Superior, Chicago, IL

Attending: Meg Dedolph, Lezlee Crawford, Ruth Runeborg, Rachel Shapiro, Aviva Taumann, Elizabeth Albert, Abraham McClurg, Paul Watkins, Edward Wallace, Jonathan Whitall & Jamie.

Update on last week's projects:

1. Meg asked how PW was doing with the new printable calendar. He's gotten the harder part, the calendar done, but hasn't done the text yet. He has not sent us the by-laws yet.
2. RR got coupons for 3c copies at Mailbox etc; LC checked Staples: 8c self-serve, 9c they do for you; 250 or more, 8c they do for you; special 5c copies til 9/29?
3. RS looking for postcard picture; LC will do bulk mail of postcards notifying no more printed calendars. Board agreed we should use bulk postage price, not stamps, to save money.
4. MD will talk to Jerry about calendar decision.

I. On to most important issue: How to stop losing money?

MD suggested and Board agreed we should focus on how to make the dance better, rather than looking only at cutting costs on the balance sheet.

Board agreed we need to cast a wider net in our **hall search**—be willing to change night, time, location. Most important needs: wood floor, good acoustics, decent bathrooms, public transportation and parking. LC got hall search list from 2005, went through it to find any still viable sites and added several current possibilities to it, and will set up new hall list spread sheet. Report follows.

LC suggested trying to improve Bethany's drawbacks: too hot, bad sound quality. General feeling was that wouldn't be worth the money even if the church would split the costs with us, because the floor would still be in poor condition.

EA proposed an exciting possible opportunity in Skokie which she and AT will look into. Board agreed that at this point, anything that looks interesting should be investigated.

We might be in consideration to use ballroom in new OTS annex but have gotten mixed messages. It won't even be built for quite a while anyway.

II. RS identified issues besides the hall that need improvement:

Sound, booking, first impressions, outreach, fundraising, community building, targeted marketing/publicity, retention of new dancers, use of surveys, development of new callers and musicians.

First items discussed: **marketing, publicity, outreach**

Ideas suggested: ads in Reader, craigslist, Time-out, meet-up.com, facebook; more flyers/posters at different venues; try doing "guerilla" contradance at farmers' mkts, street fairs or other public events; get musicians and callers to promote more to their students and in their other activities; more presence in events like summerdance, set up our own event i.e. something like "CBDC winterdance", or CBDC family dance series; do promotion to groups like homeschoolers, colleges, singles groups, knitters, Waldorf/Montessori schools, IMSA; do programs in schools.

AM and MD offered to post craigslist, facebook, meetup.com.

Next we discussed **first impressions of new dancers:**

Should be a **welcoming** atmosphere for all—new and old dancers, guest callers and musicians. We agreed we should all take on the welcoming role when we see newcomers, but maybe we should consider designating someone. We feel we should revive the buttons at the door so everyone will have a **name tag** they can pick up each time they come. RR will get the button machine. We need to clarify who's in charge of the **beginner workshops**. It would be fun and draw people in if there were **pre-dance jams** going on. It was also pointed out that many people don't volunteer to sit at the desk because they get stuck there beyond the time they signed up for. We should figure out what to do about that.

III. Booking policy:

After discussion it was agreed that the board should choose the person who books bands and callers, and therefore should come up with set booking policies and guidelines, including budget, for this person to follow. If they came upon an exceptional situation, they could come to the board for approval. We discussed qualifications we will be looking for, and whether the booker should have a one or two year term. We would like to begin this process soon so that the booker can do the Dec/Jan schedule. Since Bill Sudkamp has been working hard on this job for some time, Meg and Paul W want to have a meeting with him.

IV. Miscellaneous:

Edward pointed out that having a new board gives an exciting chance for new decisions to be made on what's important. Our goal is to have the dances thrive and grow by being welcoming and having high quality facility, callers and musicians.

Board agreed we should think about policies in terms of long-term effectiveness that future boards can continue to use and rely on.

Next meeting set for Sept 15, 2009, 7:30pm, 1530 W Superior, Chicago, IL

Will continue issues identified already; update the hall search; may discuss possible board retreat as some other organizations have done; MD wants to post picture of board with email addresses. AM will set up a document-sharing file for CBDC info.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20pm

Minutes submitted by Lezlee Crawford, Secretary