

COMHALTAS CEOLTOIRI EIREANN (CCE) Winnipeg Branch / Comhaltas Winnipeg Inc.

Minutes for AGM held 2nd October 2022 1pm to 4pm

Location: Stone Angel Brewing Co. Unit 9, 1875 Pembina Hwy, Winnipeg MB R3T 2G7

Meeting followed by Session

In Attendance: Susan Hammer (Chair), Paul Hammer (Secretary), Randy Mavins (Treasurer), Eric Borley (Webmaster & Archivist), Maureen Taggart (Irish Language Officer), David Strang (Past Chair), Virginia Lockett, Lynn McLean, Wayne Drury, Linda Little, Cathy Rayner, Barbara Goodwyn (Auditor)

While awaiting late-comers, members shared some of their CCE/ Irish Music activities during the pandemic. Activities included The Flatland Ceili Band (organized by Dave), Slow Session Group (organized by Lynn) small ensembles, Paul's monthly newsletter, Susan's monthly Online Tune Learning Project, online instruction, occasional public sessions or performances following health guidelines when restrictions were lifted.

Some members are currently hosting an everyone-welcome session at Shannon's Irish Pub.

Meeting Officially Started at 1:30pm

1. Financial Report – Randy Mavins

\$74,000 in investments \$6,700 in cash

Caisse Financial Group Bank holds our account and arranges for our investments.

2. Discussion regarding the purpose and future of our Branch

As several newer members were in attendance, Susan explained the purpose of C.C.E. as laid out in the CCE Constitution (see attached excerpt) as well as clarification of the two different names for our one organization: CCE Winnipeg Branch and Comhaltas Winnipeg Inc.

CCE Winnipeg is the name of our local Branch of the international Irish Traditional Music organization Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, based in Dublin, Ireland. The membership fees you pay are sent to Dublin for your membership in Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann (International).

Comhaltas Winnipeg Inc. is the name we chose for the purpose of acquiring Non-Profit status for our Branch with the province of Manitoba. Local branches of international organizations are not given Non-Profit status in law unless the International Organization itself has that status, and in Manitoba CCE (International) does not.

DISCUSSION OF IDEAS FROM MEMBERS:

Question: Is there enough interest in Winnipeg to sustain a local branch of CCE?

Response: The attendance at the meeting and enthusiasm of the participants indicates enthusiasm for continuing with the organization

Question: Can we find ways to attract children.

Response: Susan explained the many years she and Paul Hammer toured schools introducing Irish Traditional Music on tin whistle, bodhran, mandolin and guitar as part of their MB Arts Council Artists in the Schools program. Susan also explained that to establish a good connection with the Irish Assoc of MB, and to attract children to Irish music and CCE Winnipeg, she arranged with the IAM to offer, under the umbrella of Comhaltas, free music lessons for children of the IAM and CCE Winnipeg. Several IAM families enrolled their children in these free classes and indicated their children would continue the following year when a small fee was charged for lessons. When the \$5 fee per class came into effect that following year none of the children returned for lessons. Also instructors found that the Irish Club facilities were not appropriate for music lessons as the noise from socializing/drinking parents and rambunctious younger siblings playing floor hockey during lessons

was a distraction for students and teachers. On other occasions, classes were disrupted by IAM members the setting up the rooms for an IAM event that evening. Dave explained that the low percentage of Irish born or Irish heritage families in Winnipeg could also explain the lack of children interested in Irish music.

Question: Can we approach the three Winnipeg Irish Dance Schools to encourage their students to sign up for music lessons?

Response: Susan explained that she and Paul had tried this over many years, even giving free instruction on bodhran as related to dance rhythms to students at one of the dance schools. Cathy (whose daughter is an Irish dance student) explained that dance students pay for and attend 2-3 dance classes a week, plus attend performance rehearsals. They also have related expenses for elaborate costumes, shoes, transportation to competitions etc. Consequently, families were unwilling to add music lessons to their already busy dance school schedules and expenses. See Item 5 below for suggestions on future activities.

3 & 4. Nomination & Election of Board Members

Chair: Susan Hammer

Vice Chair: Valerie Kitcher

Treasurer: Dave Strang

Interim Secretary and Public Relations Officer: Susan Hammer

Irish Language Officer: Maureen Taggart

Youth Officer N/A (we have no youth members)

Auditors: Barbara Goodwyn and Virginia Lockett

NOTE: CCE Winnipeg Branch/Comhaltas Winnipeg Inc would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to outgoing dedicated Board members for volunteering their time and expertise over the last several years: Randy Mavins, Paul Hammer, Traicy Robertson, Ethan Redecopp.

5. Discussion and Suggestions for Future Activities:

- Offer workshops for Slow Session Group participants with local advanced level ITM musicians
- Rather than a big annual Irishfest, have several smaller more intimate concerts/workshops throughout the year. Form connections/partner with Home Routes, the Centre for Irish Music in St Paul MN, ITM musicians in Toronto for guest artists to perform and teach workshops.
- Ensure a booth is set up in a prominent place at relevant Folklorama Pavilions promoting our organization and it's activities. Have handbills, membership forms plus musicians playing. (NOTE: Prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic, every year we provided musicians and handbills in the Cultural Areas of the Irish Ireland Pavilion and the UK Pavilion.) The decision was made that we need a representative on the IAM Folklorama Organizing Committee.

NOTE: Linda Little volunteered to be our representative.

- Have an active and regularly updated Facebook Page. It was noted that we do have one but it is not actively updated and was set up to promote Irishfest only with a link to our main website.

NOTE: Maureen Taggart volunteered to look into this and possibly take on this project.

- Keep membership forms at the Irish Club and have somebody collect memberships from people at Irish Club events to give to the Treasurer or Secretary

NOTE: Lynn McLean volunteered to take on this task.

Motion to meet 3-4 times a year rather than monthly (Susan/Dave) – Carried

2:30pm Motion to adjourn (Cathy/Virginia) Carried. Irish Music Session until 4:30 outside on the deck.