

Providence Federation of Musicians
SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Local Headquarters
Cranston, RI
Tuesday, April 29, 2014

MINUTES OF MEETING

Call to Order: 7:07 P.M.

Roll-Call of Officers

- **Present**
 - President **Artie Cabral**
 - Vice-President **Al DeAndrade**
 - Secretary-Treasurer **Ed Plunkett**
 - Executive Board Member **Carl Hosbond**
 - Executive Board Member **John Worsley**

Attendance

- Thirty-nine (39) members present, constituting a quorum.

In Memoriam

- Daniel Branca
- Norman Lacaille
- Chester Losiewicz
- Edward Nicolace
- Philip Pascucci
- Charles Sherba, Jr.
- Philip Tandy

Announcements

- **RI Heritage Hall of Fame** – VP DeAndrade announces that Local 198-457 President **Artie Cabral** was inducted into the **Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame** this past weekend. Members present give President Cabral an ovation.

Introduction

- **AFM International Field Representative** -- S/T Plunkett introduces the Local's new International Field Representative (IR) from the AFM, **Barbara Owens**, who is a former President of Local 9-535 in Boston and a native of Providence. At the request of President Cabral, IR Owens will serve as parliamentarian for the evening

Meeting rules

- **Order of Business** - S/T explains that this "Special" meeting was called in response to a petition filed under Article V, Section 6 of the PFM by-laws. In consequence of

this, the normal order of business is suspended, and the Officers and Executive Board will respond to questions from the floor.

- **Spokesperson** – RI Philharmonic Orchestra (RIPO) Committee Chairman **Ian Greitzer** states that he will act as an informal spokesperson for the members present from the Orchestra, but that members are free to ask their own questions as well.

Business of the Body

Brother Greitzer states that the members of the RI Philharmonic Orchestra filed the petition for this meeting because they had concerns about the dues increase which was enacted at the annual budget meeting on December 3, 2013.

He adds that the two main concerns were a) that the percentage increase was too steep, and b) that the orchestra members were not consulted in advance about the increase. Brother **Gabe Langfur** concurs and asks why such a large increase was proposed in a single step.

Finance Committee Chairman **Jason Bianco** explains that the Finance Committee looked at the fact that the Local had incurred substantial deficits for the last two years and would have gone into bankruptcy within another two years unless the financial crisis was addressed. He continues that the Finance Committee looked at every option it could find, but the size of the deficits was so large that small, incremental steps would not have solved the problem.

- “Rescue Package”

S/T Plunkett explains the details of the financial “rescue” package, which was based on losses of \$22,000.00 - \$23,000.00 annually.

First, the three officers – President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer – each took a \$3,000.00 pay cut. Additionally, for the first time in the Local’s history, all the officers and board member will be required to pay membership dues.

Not included in the formal package is the fact that the Local renegotiated its lease with the landlord, resulting in a further saving of \$3,000.00. Also, a long-time employee of the Local retired in December, for a further saving of \$2,500.00.

These cuts in total are expected to generate approximately \$11,000.00--\$13,000.00 in savings – about half the amount of the annual loss.

Despite these savings, there would still be a gap of \$10,000.00 - \$11,000.00. S/T Plunkett explains that the only other option to make up the difference is through a dues increase. He notes that the original proposal published in *Fanfare* called for an initial increase to \$200.00, with \$10.00 annual increases thereafter. The Finance Committee, in determining a final proposal, reduced the initial increase to \$192.00, with later increases spaced out over two year intervals.

- Other Income Sources.

There are questions from the floor regarding the Local’s fund-raising activities. VP DeAndrade responds that the Local sponsors three *Cavalcade of Bands* dances during the year, as well as a golf tournament, to raise money for the Local. S/T Plunkett adds that VP DeAndrade and Board Member Worsley produced a jazz concert in February for

the benefit of the Local. The entire profit of over \$2,000.00 was deposited directly into the Local's treasury.

- Work Dues

There is a question about what percentage of the Local's total work dues collections are from member of the Philharmonic. S/T Plunkett states that the percentage is about 50% of total work dues collected. In response to further questions, he explains that casual work dues amount to about \$3,000.00¹. Other sources of work dues are:

- Providence Performing Arts Center
- RI Civic Chorale & Orchestra
- Newport Music Festival
- Music on the Hill
- Kingston Chamber Music Festival
- Newport Folk Festival
- Newport Jazz Festival
- Miscellaneous Travelling Acts

There is a question about whether other adjustments are possible, such as increasing the amount of the annual \$30.00 cap for casual work dues. S/T responds that any new proposals could be considered by the Finance Committee. The work dues cap was not included in the December package, he says, because it did not have the potential to generate sufficient revenue to help the immediate financial crisis. However, it could be considered as part of a future financial package.

- Prior Dues Increases

President Cabral comments that since 1998 there has not been a single dues increase for the benefit of the Local. Every dues increase during those sixteen years was to pay for increases in the AFM's per capita tax. Thus, in 2013 the Local was operating with the same amount of income, per member, as it did in 1998. During that same time period, the membership of the Local decreased by approximately 40%, putting a severe financial strain on the Local.

- Time Frame for Financial Analysis

A question arises about how far into the future the Finance Committee projected the Local's finances. Chairman Bianco states that the Finance Committee used a five year time projection in its financial analysis.

- Regionalization

A question arises about mergers with other Locals. President Cabral and S/T Plunkett explain that this is difficult because of resistance from the officers of other Locals. Also, there are potential legal complications for Locals whose jurisdictions cross state lines.

¹ In 2013, Casual Work Dues actually totaled \$4,625.00.

- Notice to members and absentee voting

There is a question about how notice of resolutions is provided to members. S/T Plunkett explains that notice of all resolutions is published in the Local's newsletter *Fanfare*, which is mailed to all members. Plunkett displays copies of the August and November 2013 *Fanfare*, in which both stories about the financial problems, as well as the complete resolutions, were published. Brother Greitzer states that he and the other orchestra members were remiss in not paying more attention to the information published in *Fanfare*.

One member asks why voting on resolutions cannot be done by absentee ballot. Plunkett explains that resolutions are presented at a business meeting and are subject to amendment or change during the course of the meeting. Business must be conducted from the floor and in person. Absentee balloting would make it virtually impossible to conduct business in a practical fashion.

- Scheduling of membership meetings

A question from the floor asks if membership meetings can be scheduled on a day that is more convenient for members to attend. President Cabral asks what would be a good day. The response is Monday evenings, as opposed to Tuesday evenings, since many members are working on Tuesday nights.

S/T Plunkett explains that membership meetings have been held on Tuesdays because, for years, Mondays were the night when many big bands played in town and the players in those bands were not able to attend meetings. Since there are virtually no more big bands, however, moving the day of the meeting should not be an issue. President Cabral says he will consider scheduling meeting on Mondays in the future

- Dissolution of Locals

A question is posed to IR Owens about what happens when a Local is dissolved or goes out of business. Owens responds that most Locals which close do so because of financial problems. In some cases the Local may plan for a closure by resolving all obligations and relinquishing its charter to the AFM. In other cases, when no planning takes place, a Local may operate until all its funds are depleted and then close suddenly, leaving its members in the lurch.

When the AFM revokes the charter of the affected Local, it assigns the territory and members to another Local or Locals. She emphasizes that, after consulting with the affected Local and surrounding Locals, the final determination on jurisdiction is made by the International Executive Board (IEB) and not by the defunct Local or other active Locals.

- Benefits of union membership

President Cabral comments that RIPO members should be aware of the positive benefits provided by the union. These include:

- Contract protection
- Employer-paid pension
- Negotiated salary increases
- Adoption of the Integrated Media Agreement for recordings

- Seniority rules and workplace protection
 - Representation by the union in all disciplinary matters
-
- Union Loyalty
Brother **Sandy Gorodetsky**, who is not a member of the Philharmonic, rises to speak about the need for loyalty to the organization. He speaks to the fact that many members of the Local, who have not played or worked on engagements for years, continue to pay their membership dues to support the Local. He urges those present to consider that everyone must support the union and that the burden borne by some is in fact borne by all.
-
- Organizing success
Executive Board Member Worsley addresses the membership to say that he is extremely impressed with the way the orchestra members organized themselves and presented themselves at the meeting. He commends the orchestra members for their courage and determination and says he wishes the same courage had been in place some years earlier when he helped to negotiate contracts for the orchestra.
Worsley reminds the members that it is important to look at the positive side of things, not just the negative. He believes that the union will have a strong future once all the financial issues are resolved.


Adjournment

Brother Greitzer moves to adjourn. Sister **Susan Culpo** seconds the motion. The motion carries. The meeting is adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Edward J. Plunkett
Secretary-Treasurer

Approved: 10 / 27 / 2014

Attested: 
(Secretary-Treasurer)