

The South Florida Emerald Society, Inc.
Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
Miami Yacht Club
Thursday, October 2, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Members Present: Don Harrington, Jr., John Doherty, Kassie Doyle, Dan Fitzgerald, Hugh Ryan, Judi Tierney Sherry, Johnette Hardiman, Noel McManus Stillings, Sean Ferrell, Bill O'Brien, Chris Kelley

Excused Absences: Joe McManus, Sean Glynn, Ann Eustace, Richard Welch

Unexcused Absences: John "Jack" Thompson, Blair Brogan

Guests: Rich Al-Iman, Woody Woodside, Ed Cooke

Proxies: Joe McManus's proxy vote given to Noel McManus Stillings; Ann Eustace's proxy vote to Judi Tierney Sherry; Richard Welch's proxy vote to Hugh Ryan; Sean Glynn's proxy vote to John Doherty

Order of Business:

President's Report: (Don Harrington, Jr.) For the Good of the Order

- Board vacancies
 - o Jack Thomson resigned then seemed to have changed his mind. This meeting is his third unexcused absence. However, he was removed from the Board following his resignation and is not receiving emails.
 - o Meghan Knol has resigned as she moved to Michigan to attend medical school.
- July meeting minutes amended to reflect discussion about merger. Motion to accept the July board minutes by S. Ferrel. Second by D. Harrington. Motion carries.

Secretary's Report: (Kassie Doyle)

- Thank you to Judi Tierney Sherry for taking minutes in September.
- Motion to approve September minutes by Johnette Hardiman. Second by Dan Fitzgerald. Motion passes.

Treasurer's Report: (John Doherty)

- Combined account balance is \$36,739.84
- Budget deficit over \$10,000 at this point. Christmas in Ireland still coming up.
- See Treasurer's report for additional details.
- Motion to approve Treasurer's Report as amended to correct through date to September 29, 2014 by Johnette Hardiman. Second by H. Ryan. Motion carries.

Committee Reports:

- Membership (Sean Glynn) – Presented by Noel McManus Stillings
 - o In the Works:

- Saturday, October 25 – Storytelling at Coral Gables Library. Rachel is leading this
 - Money available in membership budget for this.
 - Need to finalize date and confirm
- Irish Samhain – Celtic Halloween – postponed due to close proximity to story-telling. April 30 or May 1 of Celtic new year has similar event, so may be rescheduled then.
- January 24 – Irish Stew Cook-off
 - Hoping to hold it at Miami Yacht Club
 - Cook-off, food, drinks, games, family oriented event
- King Mango Strut Parade
 - December 28 – Sunday after Christmas
 - No entrance fee and there is tons of publicity
 - Mark Donnelly has a flatbed for parade.
 - Good exposure and way to reach new members.
 - No budget for this yet
 - Sean Ferrell – remember that King Mango Strut is a spoof parade. We need to make it humorous.
- Idea that new members get a foster parent/foster member to look out for them.
 - Idea to make a welcome letter and membership card. Someone on the membership can foster the new members and invite them to extracurricular events
- We have multiple directories from past years. Idea to look back through old directories to try to get old members who has left back into the fold
- New Membership Applications
 - Charlie Davis – St. Patrick’s day committee. He ran the festival for the past seven years. Took over festival on short notice after prior president resigned three weeks before festival. Was a member, but left in 2010. He is coming back. Sponsored by Judi Tierney Sherry.
 - Elizabeth Crouse – Head nurse at Baptist. Three kids. Interested in working with St. Patrick’s Day Committee, Christmas in Ireland, and 4th of July parade. Mark Donnelly is her sponsor. Mark vouches for her that she is Irish.
 - Motion to accept both membership applications by Judi Tierney Sherry. Second by Dan Fitzgerald. Motion carries.
- Socials (Hugh Ryan)
 - September Social was at Miami Yacht Club. Good turnout. Thank you, Sean Ferrell, for helping work it out.
 - Average of 30-40 people at each social this year. This is a marked improvement from socials in years’ past.
 - October Social – Wednesday, October 29, 2014 beginning at 6:30
 - Duffy’s Tavern (on Red Road). We went in February and had a good time. Wayne may become a new corporate sponsor of the Emeralds.

Duffy's is working on a beer garden on the side which may be ready by the time of the social. Cash only. Appetizers and drink specials may be put out.

- November Social – maybe speak with Joel Healy in Miami Springs
 - December Social – Christmas in Ireland - December 5, 2014
 - Marlins sent an email about an Irish Heritage Night. Social committee will look into it and revert.
 - Miami Heat – want to look into a group rate for a Heat game as a possible future social.
- Celtic Cultural Series (Joe McManus) presented by Noel McManus Stillings
- Thinking of showing Irish film in mid-November, but no details yet
- Website and Big Mouth (John Doherty)
- Don relays sentiments that many members were annoyed about the ongoing, long email battles. Several people asked to be removed from list. Emails should be concise. Perhaps all email should be sent through John Doherty. Don wants to be sensitive to email blast.
 - Ed Cooke – can meeting website have board meeting minutes?
 - The Board meeting minutes are on the website.
 - Woody – Question about cost of Big Mouth (around \$77 per month?) Unlimited long distance for people living in other states.
 - John advises we are using phone tree (based out of NC). There is an annual maintenance fee (that is split between St. Patrick's and Emerald Society). The cost also includes two phone lines – one is basically a voicemail box and the other is exclusively for phone tree.
 - Ed Cooke – only three or four people wanted to be removed from email list
 - Noel McManus Stillings – Maybe there's a way to formulate thoughts into an attachment. This might avoid long scrolling down to read emails
 - Don Harrington – doesn't think anyone should be able to email the entire Board
 - John Doherty apologizes because once he CC'd the email addresses instead of BCC'ing and this released all of the emails to the group
 - Judi Tierney Sherry – I think all of the many emails were a result of the merger issue.
 - Hugh Ryan – Thought there was an agreement to meet in person to discuss the socials.
 - Chris Kelley – One source should disseminate the emails.
 - Chris Kelley moves that email general distribution should be sent through the webmaster.
 - Amendment by Kassie Doyle – Only emails sent through the webmaster should be considered official Emerald Society emails.

- Second amendment by Hugh Ryan – there should be an email initially to advise the email recipients that only those emails from the Webmaster are official Emerald Society Business
 - With amendments, the motion voted upon is as follows: The Emerald Society general distribution email list shall only be used for official Emerald Society business correspondence. It shall not be used for non-official purposes. An initial email will be sent via the Webmaster to the general membership advising them that only emails from the Webmaster shall be considered official Emerald Society Emails
 - Motion carries unopposed.
 - Ed Cooke – why should we restrict people from sending out notices or personal advertising.
 - The person in question is not an Emerald member anymore. Don suggests perhaps he can buy space in the newsletter.
 - Ed Cooke – Emails a lot of people who may not be members but were once members.
 - Don recommends Ed stick to emailing the Past Presidents only
 - Woody Woodside – is there a level of censorship if the person with the request for the email has a different opinion than the webmaster?
 - Don – No. The webmaster sent out an email that was contrary to the webmaster’s personal opinions
- Shamrock News (Joe and Barbara McManus) – nothing to report
- Health and Welfare
- Mary Ann Kerr’s cancer is back and she needs to go back to chemo. She will begin again on Monday.
 - Joe McManus’s cousin passed away.
- Public Relations (Noel McManus)
- Noel can’t really do any PR if there are no events to publicize.
 - Once we have events to publicize Noel will make flyers, etc.
 - Kassie Doyle advises that there is a new radio station in town – Shake 108 (107.9 FM) that has very reasonable rates for advertising. It is a 501(c)(3). Full disclosure – the radio is run by Kassie’s cousins.
- Christmas in Ireland (Hugh Ryan)
- Tentatively scheduled for December 5, 2014
 - Hugh cannot chair CII himself. He needs help. He is willing to help in any way he can, but he just can’t do it.
 - We are waiting for contract before we will pay the deposit. There is a verbal agreement to save the date
 - John Doherty – we should add to Big Mouth and Newsletter – we have this event but we need help.

- Judi will contact band from last year to see if they are available.
- Reach out to new members who are interested in Christmas in Ireland
- Christmas in Ireland is looking at a deficit, even with a revenue of \$11,000

Old Business – Merger of Emerald Society and St. Patrick’s Day Committee

- Judi Tierney Sherry – Whichever way it goes, this has been an excellent effort by John Doherty which brought a lot of interest back to the Emerald Society. Whatever happens, we should continue the discussion. There is an urgency to address, whether the merger would help it or not.
- Dan Fitzgerald – Agrees with Judi and salutes John for bringing this issue to the forefront. Overall, believes President Harrington has the best idea that the focus should be to increase membership. Dan feels bad that he cannot contribute more to membership just because his work colleagues are not Irish.
- Woody Woodside – Has been a member for a long time. Reminds boards that our mission as the Emerald Society is as a social organization. If we move to a 501(c)(3) we cannot subsidize socials. Merging will not help to recruit members. There is nothing in the way of either organization recruiting members. So long as someone has a “needlepoint of Irish blood” in them it’s good enough. The Emerald Society has a lot more latitude than what we can do if we need the money. If the Emerald Society wants to subsidize and maintain a festival then we will have more latitude to do that. Anyone should understand that if the Orange Bowl Committee gave up the biggest tradition in South Florida because they couldn’t find the funding, then what are we going to do differently? Woody’s understanding is that we should have a bigger group who can fund the festival. The bottom line is the Emerald Society is a social organization. We should be able to socialize with one another.
 - John Doherty disagrees with statement that 501(c)(3) cannot fund socials.
- Noel McManus Stillings – 2010 shows census South Florida at over two million, but of that less than 2% is Irish. It’s unfair to compare this with where we were 30 years ago. We are not just a social organization anymore. We are trying to do community and social events. But we should be honest with ourselves about the demographics of South Florida.
 - Sean Ferrell – from Noel’s statistic, we have 40,000 people to draw from
- Judi Tierney Sherry – there is a Friends of the Emeralds option to bring in members. Perhaps in the future we can reduce the cost for the Friends of the Emeralds
- Ed Cooke – attendance at our events may be restricted by our email list with only 100 people. We need to better advertise membership opportunities
- Judi Tierney Sherry – Christmas in Ireland is not just for Irish people
- Ed Cooke – membership committee wants to make a list of people that ES can reach out to in order to invite them to join us
- Hugh Ryan – Club has been together since the early 1950s. Parade started in 1979/1980. But the Emeralds do a lot of things outside of the socials. In other words, there is a lot more to this Club than just St. Patrick’s Day.
- Kassie Doyle – questions
 - How will changing Emeralds to 501(c)(3) affect ability to pay for socials and for the Emeralds ability to pay for whatever we want?
 - John Doherty - Emerald socials would be fundraisers to keep the St.

- Patrick's organization going. We can continue to have socials with the idea that they are invitational fundraising.
- How are the funds of the two organizations going to be transferred/combined?
 - John Doherty – Any merger that takes effect, the two organizations become one. Assets are combined and so are liabilities. A management structure would have to be created to identify the Presidency and officers. Within that structure the financial are combined but so too are the budgets going forward. This means we have to define what activities will continue and what not. This issue would be submitted to the memberships to vote. In theory, we could keep all Emerald activities and all St. Patrick's committees. We would have to budget for them accordingly. The assets initially would be combined (\$36K emerald plus \$30K St. Pats approx.). One would assume that, in effect, the same basic items would exist, but against that we have the flexibility to grow membership from the 501(c)(3) which allows tax benefits for both organizations.
 - If this Board says yes, there will be a committee to decide how the merger proceeds. A committee will have to be put together to steer the process moving forward
 - Judi Tierney Sherry advises that the St. Patrick's Committee has not voted on whether they approve the merger.
 - Woody Woodeside – How much would this cost?
 - John Doherty – we do not have an estimate yet from an attorney to oversee this.
 - Rich Al-Iman – Why did we join this Emerald Society? I joined because of my pride in my Irish heritage and also because of socials. Membership is key. We need to make a new commitment to bring in members.
 - Chris Kelley – What's more important? Irish camaraderie or the St. Patrick's day festival? Our festival is nice but I'd rather enjoy the socials and the friends of the socials. Chris did not join to pick up garbage after the festival
 - John Doherty restates the previously tabled motion: The motion is whether to merge the South Florida Emerald Society into the St. Patrick's Day Committee with the organizations becoming a single 501(c)(3) organization with a corresponding name change. Second by Noel McManus Stillings.
 - Yes votes (in favor of a merger) – Five votes in favor
 - John Doherty, Noel McManus Stillings, Joe McManus, Sean Glynn, Kassie Doyle
 - No votes (against the merger) - 9 votes against
 - Judi Tierney Sherry, Anne Eustace, Johnette Hardiman, Chris Kelley, Hugh Ryan, Richard Welch, Jr., Sean Ferrell, Bill O'Brien, Dan Fitzgerald
 - Motion does not pass.

New Business

- Don Harrington appoints Sean Ferrell to be By-Law Committee Chairman

- Woody Woodside volunteers to help John Doherty with Big Mouth/Phone Tree to see if a lower cost option is available
- Don Harrington appoints Richard Al-Iman to be Sergeant at Arms
- Don would like to appoint an individual to be a liaison between the St. Patrick's Day Committee and the Emerald Society Board in order to keep the two organizations advised of the on-goings of the other
- Jack Thompson has missed three consecutive board meetings with unexcused absences. He wanted to relinquish his position, then said he would reconsider and get back to Don. He did not get back to Don. Don vacated his position. Meghan Knol moved out of state. We have two board positions to fulfill. Don will consider potential individuals to fill vacancies. He is also open to suggestions. Issue tabled to next month's meeting.
- St. Patrick's Day Festival is March 7, 2015
 - o Multiple grant applications have been made.
 - o The Festival planning is coming along
 - o The next St. Patrick's Festival Committee meeting is Tuesday at the Sports Grill (on 97th Avenue and Kendall Drive).

Adjournment

- Chris Kelley moves to adjourn. At 8:39. Second by S. Ferrel. Motion carries.

Next meeting: November 6 at 6:30