



Northern Virginia Firefighters' Emerald Society Pipe Band

Special Membership Meeting

June 26, 2019

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm
- II. Members in Attendance: President Mike Lacey, Vice President Matt Lopez, Secretary/Webmaster Jim Kraftchak, Board Member at Large/Pipe Instructor Jim Ryan, Drum Major Bill Bryce, Pipe Major Steve Boulton, Quartermaster Jason Allen, Pipe Major Emeritus Steve Cochran, Gary Winemiller, Peter O'Brien, Kevin Byrne, Brian Dunn, James Martin, John Bideganeta and, Matthew Bickert.
- III. Reports
 - a. Treasurer, Tom Clappi
 - i. Tom Clappi had to work at the last minute so report being provided by Mike Lacey based on email from Tom.
 - ii. Current balance stands at \$15,501.45
 - b. Secretary, Jim Kraftchak
 - i. Matt Lopez motioned that we suspend the reading of the previous meeting minutes, seconded by Brian Dunn.
 - ii. Motion passed
- IV. Time Off
 - a. There will be a rehearsal on July 3 and the Fairfax Parade on July 4 then we will take 4 weeks off.
 - b. July 10 through July 31 we will have no rehearsal.
 - c. Next rehearsal will be August 7.
 - d. Lessons will still continue during this rehearsal time off.
 - e. Next events after the break are going to be the 9-11 Stair Climb and the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Retirement Association Picnic.
- V. 35th Anniversary
 - a. Everyone should have gotten a copy of the survey by now.
 - b. We want to invite past and present members to the event.
 - c. The Board was hoping to get legacy members to provide direction on what we want to do for the celebration but as of now have not gotten a commitment from any of them.

- d. Gary Winemiller mentioned that many of the older members probably won't come to the event.
- e. We need to extend the invitation to whatever extent possible to anyone who was ever in the band.
- f. A 35th Anniversary Committee does not yet exist and in order for this even to be a success, we MUST have a committee. Please consider signing up for this committee.

VI. By Laws Committee – Matt Lopez, Chair

- a. By Laws have been mailed out to all band members with a note to respond by the end of June.
- b. By Laws haven't been updated in years and it's time to update them.
- c. The By Laws Committee will meet in July to compile the recommended changes received from the membership and create the proposed By Laws updates.
- d. There is a 90 requirement to present proposed changes to the By Laws to the membership prior to voting on changes.
- e. The committee will present their recommendations for changes to the Board of Directors at the August BOD meeting for the board to determine what changes should go forward.
- f. Mike Lacey gave an example of one of the items that is being looked at for change. The By Laws state that someone must be 19 years old to be a member of the band. That age seems strange and various reasons for why that was used were stated such as 19 was the legal drinking age at the time and 19 was the age to join the fire department at the time. Regardless we should consider changing this age requirement to something more standard like 18 or 21.
- g. Jim Ryan suggested that all details be provided to the board and general membership so that everyone can see what suggested changes were provided prior to the committee making a decision as to what changes to move forward.
- h. Publishing of the proposed changes will be September 1 or as close as possible to that date. Look for an email from Jim Kraftchak, Secretary around that time.
- i. All comments MUST be provided by the end of June.
- j. Committee members are:
 - i. Chair – Matt Lopez
 - ii. Tom Clappi
 - iii. Steve Boulton
 - iv. Jim Martin

VII. Committee Workshops

- a. Committees can meet during our 4 week break from rehearsal at the academy. Simply make sure to coordinate your meeting with Steve Boulton so that you can have access to the academy.
- b. Committee chairs are responsible for moving the action items for the committee forward.
- c. Membership – Louis Santano, Chair

- i. Mike Lacey spoke about some of the issues with getting new members such as, firefighters are busy trying to get promoted, working long shift, etc...
 - ii. Having a recruitment video made professionally might be the best way to go. Having 3 or 4 one minute long videos might be helpful in recruiting.
 - iii. John Bideganeta suggested that we contact the National Fallen Fighter Foundation for help since they produce the videos yearly of the memorial service.
 - iv. Bill Bryce stated that Dorothy Farley is a professional videographer and she might be willing to help out at little to no costs.
 - v. Mike Lacey believes that we need to have a video created to show before we start trying to go to other departments to recruit members.
 - vi. Jason Allen stated that he had created a recruitment poster and had it put up in many of the fire stations in Faquier County and he only received two responses. Neither of which chose to join the band.
 - vii. Jason Allen also stated that he currently has a tentative invite from the Faquier County union to do a presentation at their next meeting.
 - viii. Jim Ryan suggested that maybe the Membership Committee work with the Music Committee and the By Laws Committee to create a piping and/or drumming "class". It would start at a given time and keep a group of pipers or drummers together thus making it more likely that they would all continue due to peer support.
 - ix. Brian Dunn stated that age might be an issue to recruiting as there are a lot of high school kids that are playing drums right and in some cases bagpipes and we might be able to increase our ranks if we could use them.
 - x. The pros to doing "classes" is that they tend to stick to it because of peer support. The cons to doing "classes" is they have to wait until the next one starts so we might lose people while they wait.
 - xi. Potentially new recruits could be assigned a sponsor/mentor to make sure they are coming to rehearsal and answer questions/help out as needed.
 - xii. Big thing is we need to spread the word better and the membership committee needs to form a plan of attack that hopefully works.
- d. Committees that exist
- i. By Laws – Matt Lopez, Chair
 - ii. Membership – Louis Santano, Chair
 - iii. Fundraising – Bill Bryce, Chair

- iv. Uniform – Garry Winemiller, Chair
 - v. 35th Anniversary – Steve Cochran, Chair
 - e. Jim Kraftchak was asked to resend an email to all members asking them to join a committee.
- VIII. Music Committee – Steve Boulton, Chair
 - a. Jim Ryan has created 36 videos on YouTube of him playing all our music at tempo on a practice chanter.
 - b. He believes these videos are 95% faithful to the music as it is written. Any that are not, he will redo.
 - c. Jim Kraftchak is to look into figuring out how to make these videos easier to access than they currently are.
 - d. All music needs to be rewritten so that everyone is working literally off the same sheet of music even if it's only changing the date to 2019. Too many people have too many different versions and it's not producing a good sound as a result.
 - e. We need to address how to present our music. We would play far better if we only had a few core tunes and knew those core tunes very well rather than having 36 tunes and knowing them only so so.
 - f. Maybe we need to delete some tunes and add some other tunes to create a good set of music.
 - g. Emmitsburg music is set as it is and we have to play it as written since bands from all over the US come to play that music.
 - h. Do the drummers also want to use the YouTube channel that Jim Ryan created?
 - i. Matt Bickert stated that they already have most of their stuff on a specific Facebook group.
 - ii. Maybe we need to consider consolidating them so that everything is in one location.
- IX. Uniform Committee – Gary Winemiller, Chair
 - a. Uniform Manual has been updated and pictures were provided to Jim Kraftchak so that he can assemble it into the full manual.
 - b. Mike Lacey was concerned that the band membership wasn't consulted in the changes that went into the updated manual.
 - c. Gary Winemiller stated that the only real change was from the green shirt to the white shirt and that the membership was consulted on the decision of going to the white shirt or staying with the green shirt.
 - d. Gary Winemiller also stated that there will be changes added into the By Laws on how uniform changes can be introduced by the membership.
- X. Service Band Competition
 - a. The Eastern United States Pipe Band Association (EUSPBA) now has a service band category for their competitions.
 - b. Tom Clappi during a board meeting suggested that since Baltimore Fire is always going and winning and due to the excellent training we have gotten from Jim Ryan, we now are probably able to compete and

probably win against Baltimore Fire, which is why this is being brought up.

- c. Matt Lopez stated that Baltimore Fire, the Naval Academy and a band from Philadelphia are the only ones that are currently competing in our area in that category.
 - d. The service band category is fairly new to EUSPBA as 2 years ago it was a trial and last year they officially added it to their bylaws.
 - e. Competition is based on music, sound and department (marching).
 - f. Service band competitions are available in May, June, September and October in our general area.
 - g. Jim Ryan wanted to know should the band consider doing this that:
 - i. The instructor cannot count towards the minimum requirements.
 - ii. Not everyone would be able to play in the competition band thus making it possibly exclusionary.
 - iii. Structuring the practice would be interesting. Do you do regular practice from 7-8 and then competition from 8-9 or what?
 - iv. How do we choose who will be in the competition band and who won't?
 - v. All of this needs to be figured out before we do it.
 - h. Does doing this support our mission?
 - i. We should make this decision with caution.
 - j. Potentially we should put out an interest query to determine what the overall interest in the band would be.
 - k. Kevin Byrne believes that this would be a good idea to pursue.
 - l. Potentially we could coordinate with other service bands to do Fair Hill Highland Games so there is the brotherhood aspect of it before and after.
 - m. If we decide to do this, do we play tunes we already know or add new ones?
 - n. Need to find the rules for service bands so we know what we need to work toward should we decide to pursue competing.
 - o. Need to continue this conversation so that we can do this right if we decide to go forward.
 - p. Jason Allen will reach out to Mark Richie to see what Baltimore Fire experienced and how they approached doing these competitions.
- XI. National Fallen Fire Fighters Foundation (NFFF) Golf Tourney
- a. Will be held at South Riding Golf Club on July 25 starting at 9AM.
 - b. Mike Lacey sent an email to NFFF to see if they wanted us to play at this to try and cut off the last minute request.
 - c. Steve Boulton will contact Ivan to see if the NFFF Pipe Band would like to support this.
 - d. Bill Bryce stated that they still don't know what they want for this even yet.

- e. Mike Lacey stated that as of June 25 that had requested that they have pipe band support.

XII. Band Photograph

- a. We need an official band photo since the last one is very old.
- b. Gary Ives will be doing the photo and will determine when and where.
- c. Bill Bryce will contact Gary to get this process moving.

XIII. July 4 Fairfax Parade

- a. WE NEED DRUMMERS!!!!!!
- b. Uniform is Green Polos.
- c. After parade party has been moved from the Aulde Shabean to the The Old Fire Station #3 restaurant.

XIV. Line of Duty Death in Montgomery County

- a. Event is June 27
- b. Report time is 9AM
- c. Death was in Libertytown VFD

XV. Good of the Order

- a. Mike Lacey asked where do want to see the band in 5 year?
 - i. Do we change music?
 - ii. Do we change the events we do?
- b. Was stated that we get paid for the Fairfax July 4 parade so we don't want to get rid of that.
- c. Mike Lacey is just asking folks to think about where we want to the band to be in 5 years.
- d. Gary Winemiller stated that a while ago the NFFFM Pipe Band got together and went down to the Savannah St. Patrick's Day Parade and had 180 people turn out.
- e. We need to get word out now so people can start to figure it out.

XVI. Meeting Adjournment

- a. Mat Lopez motioned that we adjourn
- b. Jason Allen seconded it
- c. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm