

Bread and Roses Board Notes, 4/2/2026

Agenda Item 1: Budget

Linda M. presented the budget to the board. Starting balance was \$11,847, balance to date is \$11,221.45. Major expenses were salaries for our Director and Accompanist plus music. There were 7 people who requested support for members to attend the SSN. 6 requested directly to the treasurer (Linda M), 2 said they might need assistance, but then declined. Linda Tillis and her two friends offered support, and each will donate \$365 to support members' We requests for help. Linda M requested formal approval to cut checks for those requesting help. Approved.

Update on SSN

21 people are committed to attending the festival, including Sherri. The program Bread and Roses will sing was due Wednesday, April 1. We will sing Caffeine Polka, Stand up, Wade in the Water, Still I Rise, and God Says Yes.

We are still looking for a pianist to accompany us at the festival. Sherri is exploring 2 friends of hers to see if they might be willing. Sherri is looking at friends in the city. At minimum, we need the accompanist to play for us for one rehearsal and our performance. These are usually not on the same day, so lodging may be an additional expense. The board expects that we will pay registration fee and costs incurred for the pianist. We should also pay that person a couple of hundred dollars for their time and expertise. The board has formally okayed this expenditure.

SSN is sending us music, which we should practice before the festival and memorize one piece. We hope to have attendees attend 3 or 4 rehearsals to prepare for the festival. Tentative dates are June 14th, 21 and 28 plus July 5th. These are all Sundays, presuming that keeping our regular schedule of rehearsals would be the easiest for members.

Give Dekalb

Julie has officially registered and is updating our profile picture for Give DeKalb. Sherri will provide input to Julie for these updates. We need to publicize this as much as possible. 2 yard signs, which Julie collected, are given to participants. We need a highly visible spot to place these signs for maximum impact: looking for a member whose home meets those expectations and is willing to display a sign. Sharon attended a panel on the 31st of non profits from Give DeKalb. Hints include: encourage 100% participation (of donations) of the board (and I think close to that for members) at whatever level is comfortable. This can be interpreted as an indicator of strength of our Chorus; jump on donating as soon as that is opened up by give DeKalb (another show of support), use the donate button on the website, and saturate local media. Sherri suggested we post a flyer about our membership in Give DeKalb everywhere we can. Sharon continued that including members making brief statements or testimony, "what the chorus means to me" for a personal touch. Sherri also suggested stating X amount of money buys music for a singer, and that we have over 300 followers. Testimonials from singers can be used on social media advertising Give DeKalb and the opportunity to help Bread and Roses via

Give DeKalb. Give DeKalb also has an award for the most new donors. Number of donors, not monies raised, is the criteria for the award. Encourage family, friends, coworkers, colleagues, etc. to give to Bread and Roses via Give DeKalb.

May 7th is the day Give DeKalb begins. Sharon will continue to help with generating interest in B & R for Give Dekalb. In addition the presentation for 100 women is coming up. Rita Yorks shared with Sharon that human stories and how the organization impacts the community are strong arguments to convince donors. Monies cannot be used for administrative expenses.

Sherri suggested that we be sure to include alumni when we email people advertising our membership in Give DeKalb. This is a big part of our budget. We should send out email blasts. Julie said Susan O'Neil sent out two blasts last year. We should use the list of last year's donors. Julie will look for this list. Julie will write an email for the blast email, but first will set up the website.

New Venue

Julie shared that Kish College is not an option, as they are not renting spaces this year. Julie Jenks said she would be willing to help. Sharon was recognized for the amount of legwork she did in this search. Laura said she had an idea/thought for the future, maybe not in 2026, consider moving out of DeKalb to a bigger pool of singers, supporters, and pianists. She pointed out that people have been commuting to DeKalb for several years, so people appear to be willing to drive. She felt that there is not a lot of room for growth in DeKalb, and we shouldn't be afraid to do things differently. Sherri said that the Aurora/Batavia area is a good area to consider. We should see what's available. We might be able to find a new venue, which should be close to 88. She said it is a big ask, and we can survey the singers and see what they think. Laura said she did not think we were sustainable, and that Bread and Roses would die if we kept on as we have.

It was acknowledged that the grants we have are contingent on being in DeKalb county. We currently use Julie's home for our address. P.O. boxes are not recognized by Give DeKalb. Sherri said we needed to recognize that Bread and Roses has a 30 year reputation, not entirely positive, regarding the quality of past concerts and that looking at our audience seniors are our base. Moving is a way to start over and develop a new reputation. Question raised about the competition in the Fox Valley area. Sherri said there are no women's chorus' in the Chicago Area (Artimus is lesbian chorus). Fox Valley does have an established choral culture, so we should be able to draw new singers and audience members, we could benefit to being in a bigger choral scene.

Caitlin said that she was open to the idea of moving, but also liked being in a small city, with a smaller community and providing protest songs to people who wouldn't ordinarily hear those messages.

Sherri brought up the possibility of having two performances in two locations, perhaps over 2 days (Sat., then Sunday) Another idea that might help to grow our numbers.

Sharon brought up the Egyptian, which had been mentioned other times. It seats 850 and has a flat rate of \$1,000.00 for non-profits. A good place to start, because people already know where it is and there is plenty of parking. Sherri loves the idea of looking at the December concert at the Egyptian, but we need a date. Sharon said we usually set dates for concerts at our membership meeting, but large venues like the Egyptian fill up quickly. Julie said perhaps we should set dates 2 years out. Sherri said let's look into 12/5 for a date, Sharon added that we could inform the larger group that in an effort to nab the Egyptian for our December concert, we had to act fast. We should solidify our concert dates for the first weekend in December and June, and then folks would always know the dates. Julie said let's go with the Egyptian if it's available. Sharon agreed to reach out to the Egyptian ASAP to see if it was available. Linda Tillis voiced concern about doubling our attendees. Sharon reminded us that Westminster was at capacity, so we do need a larger space, with far better acoustics. And our Social Media presence was last minute. Also having the Egyptian on the program is a draw. Janet Burns said we couldn't have food at the reception, Julie reminded us that there is a large number of restaurants nearby. Caitlin stated that Burger Naan has always been supportive. Sherri said that revenue can come from selling advertising space in our program for businesses to purchase, and that we could even set up tables for supportive groups. And post flyers around to encourage attendance at our concert. This will strengthen our ties with other groups.

Julie offered that paid performances are few and far between for B and R. We never had an established cost, more what people who were paying us to sing could give, and the number of singers we had present.

Sherri said she is working toward developing a repertoire of songs in our pockets we can sing, and a group of 40 to 45 people willing to do paid performances.

Julie said we had discussed Farmers Markets, but Laura said these had already been planned for the summer of 2026. Sharon shared that when performances are out of doors, what works best for the audience is to have a small group (4 or so) all miked, so they can be heard.

Concert:

Black Pants, top and purple scarf. Soliciting a board member to purchase the scarves for all. Tech rehearsal is May 31, the dress rehearsal is June 5th Julie will contact St Paul, Jan Westminster.

OK from board for Sherri to make 200 color copies advertising our concert. We should start soon to post dates, etc. on our own social media now, and add to Bread and Roses social media sights.

Sister Singers Network

Julie will check that all is set for our participation in the festival, and arrange with St. Pauls to add additional rehearsals for the songs we will be singing with our other sisters in song, Sherri said she will be getting music to attendees soon so they can start practicing.

Next Board meeting is May 4th at 6:30. We will meet on Wednesday, June 10th at 6:30 to plan our annual meeting.