

Minutes of the 2023-12-17 Thanksgiving Science Fiction Society Business Meeting

By: Marilyn Mix, Vice-President

Date: December 17, 2023, 2pm

Location: TSFS Discord channel #december-2023-business-meeting

Attendees:

Michael Houghton (Herveus), President
Marilyn Mix, Vice-President, Chessiecon Webmaster and Marketing
Sam Hogan (Poryshkin), Treasurer, Chessiecon 2022 chair
Dave Montouri (Evan), Secretary, Chessiecon Registration
Eric Fleischer (DrG)
Keith Lynch
Patty Daukantas

Agenda:

1. Next Meeting
2. Review action items from minutes
3. Officer reports - treasurer, membership, website, etc
4. Officer nominations
5. How to rebuild the organization

Next Meeting: January 7, 2:00pm, Sunday. Discord #january-2024-business-meeting

Agenda: Officer elections; Organizational meeting.

Called to order: 14:00 EST

Reviewed Action Items:

- COMPLETED: Poryshkin: Work with Jo Hogan to acquire and setup up new DreamHost account for Chessiecon
- COMPLETED: Marilyn: Due: no later than Sept 17; Set up new Chessiecon website on new Dreamhost account.
- COMPLETED: Marilyn: create new website instance for 2023, due: mid-summer
- COMPLETED: Marilyn: Post about dues on social media
- OPEN : Dave/Poryshkin: Update MailChimp email membership list and send a message about Dues.
- OPEN: All: Need to find someone who has an interest in leading the crowdfunding effort.

- **OPEN:** Poryshkin will call Lee. - Yakira: Call on Monday to find out if TSFS has any other obligations to the Lord Baltimore hotel. Report findings to the meeting Discord channel.

Treasurer Report:

We have a total of \$2,351.07 in the various accounts. This includes all the recent supporting memberships, accounts for payment of the PO Box. Discussion of ASCAP licensing fee of about \$168. We won't need to pay it unless we hold a convention.

Website Report:

I set up a generic website for 2024. The past chessiecon.org websites are still accessible. We can use that website to post whatever news we have.

Registration Report:

As of December 1st we had 9 supporting memberships for 2023-24: Herveus, Marilyn, Poryshkin, myself, Dr G, Eva Whitley, Emil Volcheck, Brent Warner, and Cris Doria-Warner. There's been no action on Paypal nor Square since then; I cannot speak to any checks that were mailed in and received after 1 December. I am not against extending the deadline for 2023-24 memberships if folks want to do that.

I've also been contemplating whether lowering the cost of a supporting membership might bring in more people, enough to offset the lowered fee... e.g. if supporting memberships were \$11 (instead of \$21) would we get 20 or more people?

Also, with the numbers as low as they are I have not yet tried to stand up a new membership database. That's a project for 2024 when maybe I'll have more spoons (and other resources).

General Discussion:

1. Encouraging more supporting memberships:

We had a free-wheeling discussion of the purpose of the organization and why people should join.

Q: What is the incentive for people to get supporting memberships other than nostalgia?

A: Technically, the chief benefit is being able to vote at meetings.

A: Maintenance of the organization to the point where we could start holding some form of Convention again.

If we can't convince enough people to support TSFS, then it could also be a sign that it's time to lay it down.

I have been thinking that TSFS has outlived its purpose. It is just nostalgia now. We don't have a core of people to run any event.

2. Future of Chessiecon

Q: How many supporting memberships would we need to even think about holding a convention? I would think we need a \$5k - \$10k nest egg to get a hotel. Even at \$21 each, that's 250+ supporters

A: An in-person convention would cost considerably more than \$21 per capita. We'd still need 200+ people though, by my guess.

A: I'm not comfortable holding an in-person without about \$20K, actually. But trying for an online convention again is still an outside possibility. I think Herveus is right, though, that's pretty much a matter of trying to get more support from the wider s/ff fan base.

A: An online convention could be run at considerably less cost, but we'd need people. Discussion of whether virtual cons continue to have an audience. Larger conventions are not including a virtual part any longer. Smaller cons are either going all-online or just shutting down.

- Some people were friendly to the idea of holding a one day in person event with writing workshops, etc ,to encourage women writers. Even that still boils down to attracting more people to help putting it on.
- Discussion of getting a venue at a library or college. Example: Gaithersburg library a month ago. Lead time was 4-6 months, cost was \$400-\$500.

Q: What exactly would we do during a one-day, one-room event?

A: Well, we officially bill ourselves as an educational literary organization: we could do writing workshops, poetry readings, story/book/music showcases, that sort of thing.

A: Two rooms: Dealer; music. Panels/workshops

If we want to sponsor/hold anything in person I suspect we have to think small and cheap, things that don't require a lot of monetary layout but can be done mostly by use of people's time -- and market it to folks (preferably younger ones) with more time than money.

Maybe a better idea is to sponsor some events at another con, like some women's literary events or other writing things at Balticon or Philcon. Several people concurred with this idea.

We could use our financial resources to sponsor activities, Such as:

- Paying for a featured artist/writer/musician membership, transportation, or meals at a local convention,
- Bring the Turkey Award to another Con where it could be appreciated
- Supplying a music track to a con that doesn't have one

3. No in-person Chessiecon 2024

- Decided not to pay for an ASCAP license because we are not holding an in-person event with music.

Officer Nominations:

President: Michael Houghton (Herveus)

Vice President: TBD

Secretary: Dave Montuori (Evan)

Treasurer: Sam Hogan (Poryshkin)

Trustee term ending in 2027: Joanna Dionne

Meeting adjourned: 15:58 EST

Motions:

1. Adjourn: Carried

New Action Items:

1. Poryshkin: Cancel ASCAP for 2024

Action Items From August meeting:

1. COMPLETED: Poryshkin: Work with Jo Hogan to acquire and setup up new DreamHost account for Chessiecon
2. COMPLETED: Marilyn: Due: no later than Sept 17; Set up new Chessiecon

website on new Dreamhost account.

Action Items from April meeting:

1. COMPLETED Marilyn: create new website instance for 2023, due: mid-summer
2. COMPLETED Marilyn: Post about dues on social media
3. Dave/Poryshkin: Update MailChimp email membership list and send a message about Dues.

Action Items from February meeting.

1. All: Need to find someone who has an interest in leading the crowdfunding effort.

Action Items from January Meeting

1. REASSIGNED to Poryshkin from Yakira: Call on Monday to find out if TSFS has any other obligations to the Lord Baltimore hotel. Report findings to the meeting Discord channel.