

## SHARON BANDS NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2020

September is here and COVID is still with us. Since spring Massachusetts and its residents have made many efforts so life and business could get back to normal by now. While Massachusetts has done far better than most states, state reopening plans are still holding at Stage III. (See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>)

Through this difficult time your board is working to bring you some musical enjoyment, manage our funds, and be ready and well positioned to start back to more normal operations when possible.

Although we did not have any summer performances, the silver lining for our band is that many members of the Concert Band and RSBB have taken part in small, voluntary, socially distanced weekend outdoor sight reading sessions, three for the SCB and one for the RSBB. Steve Bell has done a good job rotating the invite lists to cover most everyone who had an interest. The reports back from attendees have been very positive. While the warm weather lasts these can continue, and help keep us musically motivated and connected.

At our Sept 14<sup>th</sup> meeting the board discussed future plans for this season at length. As we cannot play instruments while wearing a mask, the state restrictions in phase III do not permit us to have indoor rehearsals at this time. We received an input from a band member that we should have a complete hiatus and drive our budget to \$0. The board thoroughly discussed our options and unanimously decided that we do not want a full shutdown or hiatus. We would rather keep the option of small outdoor rehearsals going, and continue to seek opportunities for band members to pick up their instruments and collaborate. The actions we have recommended are:

- Continue the voluntary outdoor sessions while possible - and pick them up again in the spring if an indoor option does not exist.
- Continue keeping our website active. Glenn is working on a change to a new technology which will result in a better site for all of us.
- Work on strategies to keep us playing and enjoying our instruments. We discussed getting parts for at least one music selection to all members, likely a piece planned from the 2020 Hindsight repertoire. A suggestion was made that some members might enjoy recording videos while practicing pieces, and posting and sharing them. Angela Woodward and Karen Hays will see if they can find a method for music distribution that is workable.
- Glenn McGibbon will contact Jason to see if he can switch administrator privileges of our Facebook Group to Glenn. We will experiment if this can become a vehicle for increased sharing of our musical efforts.
- The Bands are financially healthy for the long term, and the Board is working diligently to manage operations for the coming months. Our \$30,000 CD is earning 3% interest until it matures in September 2021. We do not want to sacrifice all the interest it has already earned by having to withdraw money, and think that is possible with close expense management and member support. Tom sent a notice on Sep 14<sup>th</sup> encouraging voluntary advanced dues payments, and many members have already responded – thank you! Steve Bell has previously agreed to a reduced stipend consistent with the small outdoor sight reading sessions and other initiatives to keep members engaged musically. Tom has developed a working bare bones budget of under \$5,000; nearly 90% of that is Steve's stipend and our insurance package, which we don't think we can prudently suspend at this time. We are examining our cash flow situation

closely. If we can raise \$2,500 in advance dues, we should be in good shape to make it to next September. Again, the link to make that donation is on the Members page.

Make sure you visit the members website. There is a list of all pieces we have performed since 2007. Take a moment to vote for your favorites to help us determine the 2020 Hindsight repertoire. There is a button that makes it easy if you wish to send in some advanced dues so we don't have to sacrifice CD interest. And Steve Bell has created a listening list of potential new music to evaluate under the heading Quarantine Project.

Finally, as always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Charlie Piper and Angela Woodward – Co-Presidents