

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Cincinnati Contra Dance Board
05-24-21, 7:35 PM, via Zoom**

Attendance: Board members - Debra Barrett, John McCain, Larry Lankford, Bonnie Carpenter, Mary Rekers, Patricia Gorman, and Frank Buschermann. Reentry committee member- Bret Augsburg

Note: Votes taken are listed as Yes/No/Abstain, e.g. 7/1/1.

Report from reentry committee-

Comment: Answers to some of the questions on the survey depend on knowing the vaccination status of other people.

Suggestion: Question #1 should specify regular contra dancing in Cincinnati instead of contra dancing in general. Question #7 should say "main concern" instead of "main concerns" to limit responses to one concern. Question #8 should include the sound team.

Jeneene [a member of the reentry committee] emailed the Hamilton County Health Department asking if it was safe to contra dance (being similar to square dancing) if everyone was vaccinated. The email response from the Health Department was that it should be safe if everyone is vaccinated.

Motion: To allow the reentry committee to decide the best way forward for the survey (in light of the new information from the health department and a survey done in Columbus [Ohio], and the three suggestions listed above). **Vote 7/0/0.**

Motion: When the survey is ready, that it be sent only to the voting members.

Question: Should the survey be sent to the local dancers, whether or not they are voting members if that is feasible?

Question: Will people have the opportunity to become voting members and participate in the survey?

Answer: The invitation to become a voting member has been posted several times [on Facebook]. The responses to the survey will not be deciding when we restart dancing, the responses will give the board information about the likelihood of having enough dancers to restart. The board will decide when to restart.

Comment: I would like to see survey responses from more than just the voting members since we only have 40 or so voting members [the number is 55 at the time of the meeting]. Maybe we could post the link to the survey on Facebook and ask that they only respond if they are a regular Monday night Cincinnati contra dancer. I want more data than just the voting members.

Question: Would it be difficult for the reentry committee if there were several hundred responses from the survey?

Answer: It does not matter whether we get 2 responses or 500.

Question: Who do we have that would make a summary of the open field question on the survey [what is your main concern?]?

Answer: We will charge the committee to produce a summary of the data.

Vote: There was only one vote for the motion.

Motion: We send the survey to not only the voting members, but via Facebook to the general members who dance regularly on Monday night.

Question: Will the software be able to determine if someone responds to the survey more than once?

Answer: It can be set to only accept one response per email [address].

Question: How do we know if a response is from a local dancer instead of someone from far away?

Answer: Ask that only people who dance in Cincinnati on Monday nights respond, and go on the honor system. It is not likely to get many responses from people far away.

Vote: 6/1/0

ALICE training (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) for response to active shooter training-

The WFAC wants at least one person from each participating organization at the center to undergo ALICE training. This will be done by the Wyoming Police Department.

Comment: Ideally, each of the callers and sound techs could participate in the training. That way anytime we are using the center, there would be someone who has been trained.

Comment: Quite often one person will attend the training and then train others in their group.

Question: At the training is there a handout that could be shared with others later?

Answer: There is usually a PowerPoint or something that is given to you.

Question: When will the training be?

Answer: There will be two dates in July. They will be determined by the end of the week.

How to handle gendered vs gender free dance language when we restart dancing-

Comment: We need to have a plan about the language when we restart. We did not complete our intended trial period due to Covid, but we did pass the date at which the trial period was to end.

Comment: The intent was 6 months of dancing. We did not finish that yet. The trial period should be through 6 months of dancing, not 6 calendar months.

Comment: We should ask the voting members about extending the trial period so we do not just jump back into the controversy when we restart.

Comment: Having had a lot of time to think and read during the pandemic, the we vs they is not a win-win situation. The two sides need to get together and find a solution that will satisfy everyone. I think there is a way to come up with a third alternative, something that no-one has thought of before. So we can be one community and not two.

Comment: The we-they will not work, it is not healthy.

Comment: From the Zoom contras I have been attending, I have a feeling that this has bypassed us and it is going to be gender free going forward in the rest of the nation.

Question: Has there been any consensus on the gender free terminology?

Answer: Mostly Larks and Robins, but I have heard a few Larks and Ravens.

Comment: We have to be inclusive, whether we do it fast or slow, it should not be too slow.

The process we started was a we-them kind of thing. We can't just say this side won with 52%. We need to let it evolve. It will destroy the community if we don't find a solution.

Comment: An idea could be caller's choice with a notification ahead of time. That would not leave people out, they can choose which dance they want to participate in.

Comment: The WFAC is highly involved in a project called Loving Wyoming. There was an incident in Wyoming where a rainbow flag was destroyed at someone's home. After that, there was a lot of community support for Loving Wyoming. The WFAC now has a rainbow as you come into the hall with words of inclusivity, and saying that this is a safe place no matter who you are. We can't stop this. The WFAC may not be able to support us if we become divisive on this issue.

Question: Should we give the callers that much authority? We need standard language instead of the callers choosing what terminology to use each week.

Comment: There are multiple reasons that some of the dancers don't want to switch languages. For some, it is "I have to do another translation in my head to remember which role I was dancing, and I screw up more often, and I come to contra to relax – not to have to solve a puzzle every moment". There are people who have a resentment of what they perceive as a loss of tradition. There are those who see non-traditional roles as wicked. Some people who favor non-traditional language say "if you do not agree with us, you are mean and not welcoming". Some traditionalists feel insulted because of the way their position is interpreted.

We are not going to have in-person membership meetings until after we reopen and have had some Monday night dances. Somebody has to decide what the language will be when we resume dancing.

Comment: You have to be concerned about the continued success of this group, which relies on recruiting new members. The new dancers are not going to care what the terms were in the past. It will offend people who were dancing before I was born, but ultimately those people may not be the future of the group. It is important to keep sight of that in the big picture, and to not be too mean about it. If there is a national consensus about the terminologies, this seems like the perfect time to reset, once we are restarting dancing, rather than getting into the fight all over again. It could end the civil war [about gendered and non gendered language].

Question: Should we have a callers' terms committee or a dancers' role committee, and make sure that the leading voices from both sides are there? Bring those people who are really passionate about this issue together to see what they can hash out.

Comment: We can still continue the trial period. If we are going with a smaller committee that is working out the kinks, getting information from the trial period could help work out the kinks in a win-win situation. We can try to work it out together.

Comment: The survey itself and the outcome of the meeting that ended with a survey, was very flawed. The way the vote happened was also extremely flawed. It makes me sad every time I think about it. The final vote, and what we ended up with was not a very good representation of what the membership wanted. Maybe a reset is needed at this point to say "We have the data from the surveys, but we are in a completely different place now". There

was the pandemic, we are trying to restart, we need to build membership back up again. Are we concerned about future of contra dancing or are we going to look back and be traditionalist? If we decide for keeping the traditions, then we have a very limited life span. We will not bring in the young people [needed to keep the group going].

Comment: There is a movement afoot on Wednesday nights that has a traditional view of contra. I think it is not a rival group, but instead, more contra dancing.

Question: Does this group have a startup date?

Answer: I don't have enough information. I have heard it will happen. It is near Lunken Airport.

Comment: Columbus has three contra dances. Having two dances is not a problem unless they are on the same night.

Question: Do we want to have a proposal on terminologies to be voted on at the June voting membership meeting?

Comment: I think at the voting membership meeting, instead of coming up with a proposal, we should ask the voting membership to form a committee to discuss terms. The people with passionate views [on all sides] should take the lead on the discussion to figure out what is going on, well before we restart dancing. The committee should present their proposal to the board, and the board will present it to the membership.

Question: Will the committee be formed by any dancers, just voting members, or just Cincinnati area dancers?

Answer: we should focus mostly on the voting members.

Motion: That Frank comes up with a way to present this at the June voting membership meeting, and help the committee that forms and jump-start the discussion, let them know what their mission is, that Frank be the liaison between the committee and the board, and have some callers on the committee. **Vote: 7/0/0**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM. A short executive meeting followed.