



Minutes from the North American Brass Band Association
Board of Directors Meeting
September 19 and 20, 2008
Hilton Garden Inn, Raleigh, NC

Members present: Steve Allen, Rico Belotti, Donald Bookout, Barb Burtch, Jim Grate (treasurer), Lee Harrelson, Arthur Henry (Saturday only), Diana Herak, Pat Herak, Susan Henthorn (secretary), Joe Johnson, Don Kneeburg, Theresa MacDonald, Rusty Morris (president), Thomas Stein, Helen Tyler, Frank Washburn, Douglas Yeo (vice president –Saturday only), and Linda Yeo.

Member absent: Anita Cocker Hunt

Friday evening, September 19, 2008

- I. President Rusty Morris called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m., at the Hilton Garden Inn, Morrisville, NC.
 - A. Following a welcome and introductions of board members, President Morris noted reasons for the absence of three board members: Doug Yeo's playing commitments permit him to attend only Saturday; Art Henry will arrive for tomorrow, following today's funeral of a close friend; the health of Anita Cocker Hunt's mother requires her presence in Florida this weekend. A brief outline of the goals for the weekend's meeting followed, including a brief report of the afternoon's visit to some local potential venues for rehearsal space – NCSU and Broughton H.S., should we choose to hold the 2010 contest in Raleigh. However, as the Contest Committee has a lot of business to cover, we must focus on and prioritize the needs for the 2009 contest. Any items that remain following the meeting must be accomplished via nabbaboard.com.
 - B. President Morris noted and confirmed that the minutes from the April 2008 Board Meeting had been approved via nabbaboard.org in May.
 - C. Jim Grate presented the treasurer's report for 2008, distributed to board members prior to the meeting via nabbaboard.org. NABBA's total net worth (as of 8/31/08) was \$38,117.00. He also presented a budget for 2009. The membership report revealed a decrease in the number of family, individual, senior, and student memberships from 2007 to 2008. The number of band memberships increased and life memberships remained the same. Sometimes bands join, but if the band doesn't come to the competition, individual members don't join. Jim Grate responded to inquiries from Don Kneeburg regarding several items:
 - line 25 – \$ 10.00 relates to the one CD sold.
 - line 51 – \$ 480.61 in addition to domain registration was for software related to the website.
 - line 59 – \$1,116.00 was for Controlled Storage and insurance for file cabinets, recorders for judges, banners, folders, microphone stands, mailing tubes, i.e., materials left from one competition to the next, as well as all of the NABBA archives.Responding to a question from Don Kneeburg, Jim Grate indicated that a change in competition venue would require a decision regarding the storage space: keep the current space or consider space in the new location. If relocated, it would be most convenient to pack things up after 2009 championships and move then. We also have old recording equipment we need to dispose of; he suggested selling it at next year's championship. **Don Kneeburg moved to bring the old equipment to next year's championship to sell (seconded – Steve Allen). Motion carried.**

- D. On behalf of *Bridge* editor, Doug Yeo, Jim Grate presented the *Brass Band Bridge* report, distributed to board members prior to the meeting via nabbaboard.org. In addition to information about the issues published since the Interim Board meeting in March, the report included notice of Doug Yeo's retirement as *Bridge* editor, effective immediately following Issue 114 (May 15, 2009, the post-contest issue). The task is somewhat easier than previously, if the new editor would chose to use the template that Doug Yeo has put in place.

Various board members expressed appreciation for the tremendous amount of work and splendid online publication that Doug Yeo has produced during his tenure as *Bridge* editor. Jim Grate noted that various issues associated with producing a print publication made it difficult to get an editor some years; some years, no issues were produced. The editor doesn't have to be a board member, but could be anyone in a band. The treasurer also suggested we could offer someone a little monetary compensation. Rusty Morris believes that it is vital that NABBA continue publishing *The Bridge*. With Doug Yeo's advanced notice, we have a little lead time, so that the new editor can work with Doug for a smooth transition. He reiterated that the editor does not have to be a NABBA board member, although that would help keep the editor in the information loop. He encouraged board members to canvas their bands to identify persons with the skills and ability to take up this important responsibility. March, then May will quickly be upon us.

- E. On behalf of the Festival Support Committee Rusty Morris reported that NABBA awarded support to two festivals in 2008 – The Hannaford Festival of Brass (\$600) and Ohio Brass Arts Festival (\$200). Two requests have been submitted for 2009 (Northwest International Brass Band Festival and OBAF), but no action has been taken on either request. Looking through the materials (Minutes from Sept. 2007), the committee was unable to locate in writing any rules for groups that receive NABBA's support (announcement from the stage, in the program, etc.). The Committee would like to add the following guidelines to the application for support:
1. Recipients must notify the Committee of any change in dates, location, or time prior to the event.
 2. Recipients must submit a report to the Festival Committee no later than 8 weeks following the event. The report must include:
 - a. Confirmation that the event was held
 - b. Confirmation that conditions were met (announcement from stage, program display of NABBA support)
 - c. A list of the participating groups
 - d. Confirmed attendance figures, final budget numbers, listing of other support and/or sponsorship received.

Don Kneeburg spoke in support of continued funding for the Northwest International Brass Band Festival to help maintain NABBA's contact with bands in that region. Rusty Morris agreed. Linda Yeo and Barb Burtch both spoke in favor of adding the report requirement to the application process, creating both a sense of accountability and a record to consult if/when the band submits a new request. Rusty Morris suggested that if a group fails to submit a report, their next request would be rejected. All groups have followed through in their accountability to date; this would reinforce that practice and keep all groups accountable.

Although we might modify the amount of detail included, Theresa MacDonald has provided a detailed sample report from another arts group. Replying to a question from Don Kneeburg, Rusty Morris noted that although NABBA currently asks for no detail regarding how the money will be used, the application does include a budget section (venue, cost, guest adjudicators, etc.). When Frank Washburn asked if we could narrow our support to specific areas, say adjudicators, it was noted that not all events have adjudicators. Barb Burtch suggested adding a section for projected revenue. Noting that this was the first draft of the application, Rusty Morris agreed that the addition of an entire page for budget projections would make the accountability piece more useful for us, and that this probably would fall to the Development Committee.

Acknowledging that NABBA knows that the money is going toward the support of Brass Bands

everywhere, Theresa MacDonald, chairperson of the Development Committee, pointed out that if NABBA solicits donations and applies for grants, it is important for us to document in much the same way we are asking our awardees, where **our** money goes, what **we** support, how **we** are making a difference, etc. She also replied to a question from Helen Tyler, confirming that these are independent festivals, unrelated to regional festivals. Rusty Morris suggested that Theresa MacDonald and the Development Committee might work with the Festival Committee on this.

- F. The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying persons who would be willing and able to fill vacancies on the Executive Board (all four offices). Last year's committee was Anita Cocker Hunt, Don Kneeburg and Susan Reigler. (Correction following the meeting: according to nabbaboard.org, John DeSalme was the third person, **not** Susan Reigler.) Don Kneeburg and Frank Washburn volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee; Rusty Morris will ask Anita Cocker Hunt to be the third member of the committee.
- G. President Rusty Morris distributed and introduced the Board Duty Handbook. This would be a way to familiarize everyone with the various duties whether performing them or not, providing consistency from one venue and year to another. He received emails from people as soon as last year's competition weekend was over, complaining about and raising various issues. The Handbook will not eliminate such complaints, but we will be consistent. He doesn't intend to work on this now, but rather have members take it home and work on the various parts via nabbaboard.org. We will have a document in hand in the spring to run an efficient contest.

President Morris then provided a quick overview and led a short discussion of various positions. Members should look through to the document to see if there is anything the board needs to discuss face-to-face, or that may have been inadvertently left out.

Back Stage position – This position becomes two: Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager for each venue.

Timer – It is vital to know when to start and stop, and how to stop people in a polite, tasteful but firm manner. Barb Burtch timed a contestant last year who did not pay attention to Barb's signals. Running over put the schedule behind, plus the judge still had to write comments. She is definitely in favor of coming up with a way to do this more visibly. Rusty Morris pointed out a couple of ways this has been or could be done: timers are not in the audience anymore, but are on stage; timers could start clapping. Donald Bookout and Linda Yeo related an unfortunate incident last year. A contestant, one of Don's own band members, was unaware of the time limit (although Linda Yeo pointed out that the form includes mention of the time limit). Don Bookout called time, and was tactful, but it did work. Don was grateful for had conversations at the meeting the night before that helped prepare him for that situation. Rusty Morris pointed out that such situations are exactly why we need this in writing – to be consistent from year to year, regardless of who is on the board. The document will continually be tweaked. Barb Burtch also added that the judge was not aware of the time limit and didn't know if there would be a penalty for going over. Despite such incidents, Don Bookout described the NABBA event as well run and on the right track.

Announcer/reviewer – Venue information is not yet listed. We did receive a complaint last year about announcing page numbers. Pat Herak solved the issue by announcing page number ranges. Rusty Morris noted that one less than satisfactory solution would be to put the bands in random order; keeping the bands in alphabetical order is helpful for the audience. Barb Burtch reminded the group about the discussion regarding blind judging. Tom Stein agreed that we should keep the band listing the same, that we can't please everyone.

Runners – With judges holding sheets until completion of the section, runners no longer collect sheets after each band as in the past, leaving one less thing to do on a regular basis. Diana Herak suggested that we call the position by another name – Judges' Assistant. She also mentioned that packets were different, and not labeled well, leading to confusion for 'The War Room' staff. Rusty Morris suggested that the assistant could put a sticker or indication on the CD so the staff would not have to listen to each to determine which band was which.

Adjudicating Equipment Manager – Early on Saturday Jim Buckner suggested that we appoint someone to be in charge of all adjudicating equipment set-up and tear down, Thursday through Sunday. It would also be good to check everything before the competition begins. Steve Allen observed that some adjudicators do not like making an audio recording of their comments and asked if it would be possible to scrap the recording in favor of written comments only. Discussion followed covering many points: this might not be related solely to use of the CD recorders, as some judges did not say much when cassette tapes were used either. Some written comments have been unreadable; also, with people writing less these days, most handwriting degrades very quickly. Steve Allen proposed using word processing. Pat Herak suggested asking the judges which is easier. Helen Tyler thought that only British judges would see this as more difficult. Some need to be prompted to speak up, and otherwise coached in their use of CD recorders. Susan asked if we could let each judge use whichever medium they prefer. Informed by her assistance to Bram Gregson and Brian Bowen, neither of whom liked using the CD equipment, Theresa MacDonald proposed a compromise position: have someone stay with the judges and press the ‘record’ button, and handle the equipment in general. Maybe assigning more people to help would alleviate the issue. Helen Tyler reported that she liked the recording, but the technical issues were cause for anxiety. Lee Harrelson thinks it is great for a band to have recorded comment, to have them in real time, with sound. Joe Johnson pointed out that if a judge stops to write s/he is not listening at that point. Lee Harrelson confirmed that he had to spend time deciphering handwriting. Tom Stein agreed that fewer problems exist with being able to hear the audio than with reading written comments. Joe Johnson noted that he had problems hearing the audio, too, and asked if we could get head-set microphones. Jim Grate suggested that using a court stenographer’s microphone might be possible. Having done some adjudicating lately, Rico Belotti much prefers recording, as a judge can call attention to both good and bad, even comment on things coming up. He observed that in the United States almost everything is recorded. Written comments more commonly take the form of a template. As it is clear that North American bands are used to audio, Theresa MacDonald suggested that we just need to supply more help for the judges.

NABBA info table – the position and work seem self-explanatory.

Board members should let contact President Morris if they notice any omissions, or items he needs to delete. He urged members to look over everything and please comment. He will be happy to make any necessary changes.

- H. Diana Herak summarized her NABBA archives online report. Her major effort this year was to get all issues of *The Bridge* online. All have now been scanned and are in the process of being added to the website. NABBA soon will have its complete history available. After discussion about how to procure a print copy of the sole missing Championship Program, Diana suggested she would simply scan a copy for the files. The board members joined President Morris in congratulating Diana Herak on a job well done.

- II. Jim Grate presented a brief overview of bids received for NABBA’s 2010 competition, reviewing the process that led to receipt of the four bids. He began by noting that it quickly became clear following the 2008 Championships that NABBA would not be returning to Louisville. He listened to and compiled everyone’s comments about what NABBA would like in a venue, then began calling different venues. Doug Yeo had appeared as a guest artist at Raleigh and said Raleigh would like to have us there, asking, “What does NABBA want in a venue?” This led to Jim Grate putting together a Request for Proposal (RFP). The initial deadline was extended due to the small number of proposals received by that date. We now have four proposals: Charlestown, Grand Rapids, Greenbrier, and Raleigh. Another option the board might consider would be to deal with location selection each year. The Louisville date for 2010 is already gone, so we can’t return there even if we so desired. We can walk into any town we want to and say we want to have our competition there. He tried to be fair and equal with all venues regarding their questions, etc. He presented two options he believes we can deal with fairly quickly.

1. Louisville kept calling about 2009, to which he replied, “We’re set for 2009. You need to send us a proposal for 2010.” They missed the deadline, sending only a visitor’s guide for Louisville.
2. While Greenbrier is a good destination for a special excursion, the consensus was that it is too expensive to consider. Following discussion about the facilities, **Don Kneeburg moved that to save time, we not consider Greenbrier (seconded – Joe Johnson). Motion carried.**

As part of the general discussion, Donald Bookout asked about the importance of having one large hotel. Tom Stein observed the greater importance of securing the best performance hall possible; most American competitions have yet to accomplish that. Upon being asked by Jim Grate, Tom Stein mentioned a couple halls in Kansas City as among the best. Lee Harrelson agreed that the quality of the halls have often been detrimental to the hard work of the bands; the last two competitions have been the best by far. While in agreement about the importance of a good performance hall, Rusty Morris also noted the prohibitive cost for some halls. We also need to be certain all the ancillary pieces are there as well (lodging, rehearsal space, etc.).

3. The Raleigh site visit is scheduled for tomorrow morning. Jim Grate suggested this might be the most confusing proposal, because of the number of remaining questions, especially about dates and venues. Because of the personal interaction of the visit, members might find it difficult to reject Raleigh; he asked board members to maintain an open mind toward **all** proposals.
4. The Grand Rapids convention center contains a nice performance venue, connected with skyways to an older, but renovated hotel. The original response was that they could not book us into the DeVos Performance Hall because the Grand Rapids Symphony had first selection. Jim suggested a compromise: the Grand Rapids Symphony gets first selection, NABBA gets second. Then actual dates were submitted. Rusty Morris suggested that it would be a real bonus if it would be possible for BBBC to come and play, and thus, draw a paying public outside of the NABBA membership. He also observed that the facilities look first class, and closer to the Little Rock set-up than anywhere else the competition has been held. This makes it convenient and easy to deal with everything and removes the weather factor.
5. The representative for Charleston will make a presentation and answer questions tomorrow. Jim Grate reviewed the basics of the site, telling the board that the proposal resembles the 2004 Championships, including the same fabulous performance hall. NABBA would get first selection of dates, regardless of the symphony, however it is no longer under one roof. When Jim Grate mentioned that Charleston would like a three year commitment, Linda Yeo suggested that a longer commitment would be good.

When Jim Grate expressed his uncertainty that Raleigh understands we prefer a three-year commitment, Rusty Morris suggested that would be one of the questions asked tomorrow morning. He noted it was unfortunate that no one from Grand Rapids would be here on Saturday. Donald Bookout asked if we have dropped the issue about locations being a gateway airport. Lee Harrelson noted that the airport is a huge issue for his group – that any of the sites under consideration will present difficulties for them. Responding to Donald Bookout’s observation that Grand Rapids is not far from Chicago or Detroit, Lee Harrelson noted the group would still need to rent bus for ground transportation. When Donald Bookout inquired whether they would need a bus anyway, Lee Harrelson reported that last year was the first year the band traveled together. Jim Grate noted that he had always heard about airports being an issue, however, only three bands flew last year – Atlantic, Sunshine and New England. NABBA offered them the opportunity to use charter buses for their group transportation, but none of the bands used that option. Shuttles cost \$6,000 in 2008. Lee Harrelson reported that traveling by bus to Louisville was not so bad for his group, but other sites would require much more time.

- III. At 8:30 p.m. the board moved into committee sessions, with the Development Committee remaining in the meeting room and the Contest Committee moving to Room 223.
- IV. Following the board’s reassembly at 11:00p.m., Rusty Morris thanked Theresa MacDonald and Lee Harrelson for serving as Committee chairpersons. The board will reconvene at 8:30 a.m. Saturday.

He reminded everyone of Saturday's time line of events and the fullness of the morning schedule. Jim Grate asked all to return lunch request forms in the morning.

The board stood in recess until Saturday morning.

Saturday, September 20, 2008

- V. The board reassembled, completed lunch orders, and departed by bus for the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC), the Progress Energy Center (PEC) and the Raleigh Marriott City Center (potential vendor area), returning to the Hilton Garden Inn before noon.
- VI. Following lunch, the board reassembled for site presentations/considerations. (12:45 p.m.)

A. Grand Rapids – review of print materials

Jim Grate summarized the details of the Grand Rapids bid:

- Convention Center and recital hall are in one building;
- Older hotel with a new addition and with Marriott hotel amenities;
- Located between Chicago and Detroit, and close to Battle Creek;
- It was a challenge to get dates for all facilities for NABBA, because the symphony has first dibs on the hall. Finally, they gave us three dates, but there is a possibility that the symphony might move us out, albeit with a year's notice;
- Bottom line cost-wise for all three cities are about the same, however, hotel shuttles will cost more in Raleigh, and hotel parking rates vary;
- There is a NABBA band in Grand Rapids (competed in Open class);
- There is a college nearby, as well large churches we could use;
- Grand Rapids staff wanted to come to Raleigh to present, but something came up.

When Doug Yeo asked if a second venue exists in addition to DeVos concert hall, Jim Grate mentioned using the ballroom in the convention center or hotel, or another theatre located down the block and across the street. Doug Yeo then noted the potential for sound bleed if we use of the exhibit hall for vendors because of its close proximity to the performance hall, but this is very difficult to evaluate without seeing the venues. He then suggested it might be beneficial to have a couple of people do a site visit to Grand Rapids and report to the board, providing further clarity for our 2011 or 2012 consideration. He will be there February 12-15, 2009 [Thursday – Sunday], so we could plan a site visit on Thursday 12 or *perhaps* Sunday. Jim Grate added that the site bid came through contact with Wayne Wilcox, NABBA program printer, who lives in Grand Rapids. **Don Kneeburg moved to accept Doug's offer to visit/explore Grand Rapids for future NABBA championships (seconded – Frank Washburn). Motion carried.** Jim Grate will provide Doug with the necessary contact information. The group will report at the April Board meeting. Don Bookout volunteered to be part of the site visit group. Jim Grate mentioned that our contact there seemed willing to 'host' any/all board members at any time. Doug Yeo suggested that, should we go back to the gala format, BBBC is nearby and could perhaps be used in that way. Lee Harrelson added that BBBC is a continuing pick up band with members coming from all over to play. Doug added that BBBC had been the gala band in Cincinnati, as part of a deal, so the fee might be considerably more now.

B. Charleston, WV presentation – Jennifer Brown, Convention Sales Manager

Ms. Brown began her presentation with information about the city itself:

- Large number of restaurants in the immediate area, including some nice bars;
- Only a five minute ride from the airport, which has five major carriers: U.S. NWA, Delta, continental, and United;
- The city is committed to work on promoting our event;
- The location of the Charleston Town Center Mall across from the Marriott (one possible host hotel) and Capitol Market, with indoor retail shops and restaurants. Stores in the area also work with the convention folks to arrange special events, coupons, etc.
- Capability to arrange motor coach and shuttles through the Services department;

- Various nearby entertainment venues: Baseball farm team, golf courses, race track and gaming center, Clay Center for Arts and Sciences with Walker Theatre and other entertainment options, and the Avampato Discovery Museum;
- One of 13 cities that have three major interstates intersecting in city (I-64, I-77, I- 79). Sixty percent of the U.S. population is within a day's drive of Charleston.

Ms. Brown concluded by telling the board that the city wanted our business so much, it was willing to give NABBA \$5,000.00 for meeting space in 2010, \$7,500 for meeting space, shuttles, etc., in 2011, and \$10,000 toward meeting costs in 2012. The convention staff calculates the economic impact for each group; NABBA's would be \$513,000 each year. She also added that the Kanawha Schools are open our use of their facilities.

Following the presentation, Ms. Brown entertained questions. In response to Pat Herak, she indicated that the March dates were based on the availability of Clay Center; however she could put out feelers to hotels and check on the availability of April dates. Doug Yeo asked about other venues in addition to Clay Center, particularly the Civic Center Little Theatre, both of which NABBA used in 2004. He specifically asked if the Little Theatre would be available. Jim Grate noted other venues located nearby. Jennifer reminded the board that she needs a decision fairly quickly to hold the proposed dates. When Jim Grate indicated that there is an additional room in the Clay Center we could use, Doug Yeo observed that we could either go back to Baptist church where 2004's Friday events were held and use only that, or we could use only Clay Center, or both, or any combination. Jennifer Brown suggested the possibility of doing a site tour on Charleston's tab so that all the logistics could be worked out.

In response to Art Henry's question about accommodations, especially their proximity to the Clay Center, Ms. Brown replied that it is a three "typical city block" walk from the Marriott to Clay Center. The money incentive was offered because they thought we might need shuttle service. Looking at the map, Doug Yeo noted the distance between venues; from the hotel to the church is the longest walk. Ms. Brown assured the board that she would work on getting a shuttle service bid for us, if we give her enough advanced notice. The discussion/presentation finished with other details: most hotels offer shuttle service to and from the airport, usually at no charge; she can provide a list of restaurants that stay open past 11:00 p.m., and suggested contacting restaurants if we would like them to consider staying open longer; distribution of the Charleston Official Area Visitors Guide and a walking guide to downtown Charleston.

VII. Following the Charleston presentation, the board moved to Site discussions and vote. (1:45 p.m.)

Doug moved that the board have a general open discussion to discuss all venues. Once that is concluded, a motion in support of one site would be in order (Seconded – Don Kneeburg). Motion carried.

The discussion began with consideration of the positives and negatives of Charleston since the presentation was fresh in our minds.

Negatives for Charleston included date related issues:

- The dates are a little early, but dates for the last few years have been all over the place.
- Suggested dates for 2010 could be problematic (Palm Sunday weekend) (Art Henry)
- In the beginning NABBA was in mid-April; with board meetings in September rather than August and contest in March rather than April, bands have less time to prepare (Doug Yeo)
- Strong preference exists for April dates because more bands attend in April than March (Pat Herak) and that the March dates may coincide with spring break dates (Don Bookout)

Negatives for Charleston also included venue related issues:

- The venues are a long distance apart, necessitating shuttle bus (Rico Belotti, Art Henry) and a little less convenient with the stretched out venues (Rusty Morris), but also a long distance from the entrance of the center to the performance venue (Rico Belotti).

- The spread out layout of the venues is a distinct drawback. Our more successful NABBA events have been when venues were in one basic area, where people can see everything at once, similar to Raleigh. People have suggested we return to such venues; however it is unclear that Charleston is that attractive as we need more than one venue, especially if the other venue is the Civic Center. (Doug Yeo)
- Current format allows for 8 Championship bands and 13 'other' bands. More than that would require two venues. (Lee Harrelson) If we need two reasonably good venues, Charleston is not possible. (Doug Yeo) We had 24 bands in Charleston (one of the last contests sponsored by a band, not NABBA – Doug Yeo) and 21 in 2008. (Jim Grate) Regardless of the format of the contest, i.e., inclusion of the Solo and Ensemble Contest, we MUST plan for two good venues. (Rusty Morris)

Positives for Charleston included performance hall issues:

- The Clay Center is marvelous and the Little Theatre is okay. (Rusty Morris)
- Having a quality performance hall is critical, which is a plus for Charleston. (British bands usually prefer competition venues with the best hall.) It might make it worth working out the other details. (Tom Stein)
- The Shrine Rite Auditorium is only a block and a half from the Clay Center. Its rehearsal facilities are okay. (Rico Belotti and Jim Grate)
- If we do away with the Solo and Ensemble contest and begin the band competition during the day on Friday and run through Saturday, we would only need one venue. Charleston would be the best venue we could pick (Frank Washburn), although that is a separate decision. (Rusty Morris)
- We held the solo and ensemble competition in two churches in 2004. We have the Clay Center all day Friday and Saturday, so we could hold concurrent small Solo and Ensemble contest there on Friday. (Jim Grate)

Positives for Charleston also included other more general issues:

- The monetary support is very nice, in addition to the definite support we would get from the convention/city folks. (Doug Yeo)
- The large room behind and across the hallway could be used for warm-up without any issue of sound bleed, as the hall was built taking into account a nearby emergency room. (Frank Washburn and Jim Grate)

Other general questions/observations:

- Are we looking for the two best auditoriums WHEN we want them, or are we willing to give up one for the other, i.e., good venues when we can use them or compromise on venues because of date related issues? (Rico Belotti) The quality of venues we select will be the overall deciding factor in the end. To compromise on the venue in light of our identity as a performance oriented organization would be inadvisable. (Steve Allen)
- We need to plan for a three-year commitment, to plan for growth. We need to select a venue that can handle that growth. (Helen Tyler)
- Vendor location in the hallway (2004) was not ideal, so we might need to use the hotel across the street for vendors. (Art Henry) We could use a separate black box theatre (150 to 200 seat) for vendors. (Jim Grate) We did not have that many instrumental vendors in 2004. If we have an increased number like 2008, the sound issue would be magnified (Doug Yeo)
- We need to deal with restaurants if we want them to be open after 11:00 p.m. (Art Henry)
- Availability of April dates remains in question. Ms. Brown offered the March dates as the ones available and may not have the full calendar available at this point. (Doug Yeo) Perhaps we could ask her to return with available April dates, giving us a chance to find a second venue. (Helen Tyler) We could do that, in order to keep Charleston in the mix, but we DO need to make the decision very quickly, whomever we choose. (Rusty Morris)

Don Kneeburg observed that we seem to be in agreement on the Clay Center but are still looking at issues related to a second venue, and shuttle service, and asked if Charleston would be acceptable if

any of those deal breaker(s) could be resolved. When the consensus seemed that dates remain an issue, he suggested we move on to discussion about Raleigh.

It was noted that we have ruled out Grand Rapids for 2010, leaving only Raleigh and Charleston under consideration for 2010.

The discussion moved to consideration of Raleigh discussion, focusing primarily upon availability of dates, performance venues and traffic patterns between various sites. [The minutes reflect the difference between the formats of the previous discussion (positive vs. negative) and this one (more free-flowing conversation).]

President Morris reiterated that the mid-April dates allow us to use both halls in PEC, while only one hall is available for the earlier date. Several different options are possible through various combinations of available dates and halls. Art Henry spoke in favor of the second weekend, swayed by the logistics. Theresa MacDonald asked if we should discount the earlier April dates if it would mean using Fletcher and the Convention Center Ballroom as performance venues.

Doug Yeo supported talking about the April 9-10 dates. We definitely have two decent concert halls in Fletcher and Meymandi; however he is uncertain that the ballroom would not be a decent venue, based on its construction. The variety and number of options available with the Raleigh package provide much for thought. If we use Meymandi and Fletcher (PEC), the vendors would need to be located in the hotel or Convention Center; we would have to really push people in their direction. Having a playing venue in the Convention Center would help drive folks to the vendor area. This remains a very critical issue, since without vendors we have no contest.

In response to a question from Steve Allen, Doug Yeo said it would not be advisable to have vendors in the lobbies of PEC. He reminded the group that we seemed to think vendors in lobby in Clay Center in Charleston would not be viable either, so that would also be another piece of the Charleston puzzle. Pat Herak noted the presence of a lobby in each center. Since they do pipe music from the PEC auditorium to the outside, those outside would be able to hear the performance from the lobby. Doug Yeo reiterated his objection to locating the vendors in performance hall lobbies: 1 – noise bleed issue; 2 – too small for all vendors to fit; 3 – uncertain could we could secure the area after hours. While confirming that security might be an issue, Theresa MacDonald observed that Toronto has the same issue, but resolves it somewhat by asking people to sign instruments out and play elsewhere. Helen noted the proximity of the hotel ballroom to the hotel bar and restaurant; members agreed that we could save money by using the hotel ballroom for the vendors. She also pointed out the need to reassess everything again if Raleigh is unable to guarantee the same two venues for three years. In reply, Doug Yeo said the Raleigh situation is like Grand Rapids, in that the symphony has first selection of dates, so we would have wait for them to select their dates first.

Steve Allen added that it would be no further to get to the vendors, and easily found by those who want to visit the booths. Doug Yeo reminded the group that even this year we have kicked around a scheme to push people into the vendor area, including the idea that attendees be given a card with 15 boxes, getting one box signed/stamped/punched at each vendor, making them eligible for a prize drawing. Locating food near the vendors also helps. Attendees must pass the hotel when walking from the PEC to area restaurants. Frank Washburn supported the card idea, reporting that vendors really like the card idea at photographers meetings, as it keeps good traffic flowing by the booths.

Art Henry observed that the money NABBA would receive from Charleston would need to be used, in part, for shuttle service if the venues were more distant, then suggested the possibility of using the money for other things if we selected closer venues in Charleston. With the total three-year incentive package of \$22,500 Jim Grate calculated that NABBA would be \$10,000 to the good, even if we spent \$4,000/year on shuttle. Art Henry asked if it would help our position to let Raleigh know about the incentives Charleston has offered, but Doug Yeo pointed out that the fee quoted for the Convention Center is already deeply discounted. He went on to compare the two overall venues: city

vs. big town, up-and-coming city vs. older, more tired one. He also compared each city's overall perception and interest level for bands and guests. He is not intoxicated by Charleston's monetary incentive, but he is not the treasurer.

Don Kneeburg asked if the Performance venues in particular might be the deal-breakers for Raleigh. Tom Stein expressed concern about playing in the Convention Center and would instead support using the two playing venues in PEC.

In response a question from Steve Allen, Rusty Morris reported that vendors were in the hotel in Little Rock, but attendees had to walk through the vendors to get to the performance hall. This was successful, but optimally, the vendor area must be visible from the elevators. He believes the vendors understand that we are trying to explore all avenues, and that we would have no problem working with the situation, providing incentives, etc. Vendors must not feel like an afterthought. Joe Johnson reminded the group of the hotel's possibilities as a venue for the Solo and Ensemble contest, agreeing with Tom Stein: our primary consideration should be the performance venue. He would like to cut out use of the Convention Center entirely, and generate interest for visiting the vendors at hotel instead. He was very impressed with the area in general.

Responding to the issue of identifying deal breakers for Raleigh, Doug Yeo agreed that the two concert halls would be a step up, a positive. However, one drawback of PEC is the challenging traffic pattern from the rehearsal rooms to the halls. Although things will look less labyrinthine, especially with the Convention Center offices being moved, the walk to Meymandi will probably mean walking outside. He spoke of the British example of standing outside in the rain waiting to play. This might be more of a drawback for our players, maybe not a deal breaker, but it would require some work, perhaps asking PEC to provide a covered walkway or some other solution.

Although Doug Yeo mentioned that the unknown difference in rental cost for Meymandi versus the Convention Center might be a consideration, Don Kneeburg wondered if the board might be able to reach consensus. If we like the performance halls and can use the hotel for the vendors, he would like the board to tentatively accept Raleigh as the site for 2010. When Art Henry reintroduced the thought of using the Charleston offer to explore cost negotiation with Raleigh, Doug Yeo said he did not believe the two issues would balance, as much of the Charleston money would be designated for the shuttles. When Rico Belotti pointed out that the front page of the Raleigh handout included the base price for Meymandi, Doug Yeo said he was uncertain whether that price was firm or negotiable.

Linda Yeo reminded members of the information we lack regarding the Charleston proposal, especially concerning a second performance hall, and remarked that we would be rushing the decision if we tried to come to an absolute consensus at this point. Although agreeing that it was difficult to overlook Charleston's monetary incentives, given the shortcomings of Charleston, NABBA treasurer Jim Grate said he would probably vote for Grand Rapids. He noted how our decision was influenced and suffered by not hearing from Grand Rapids in person. Tom Stein observed that this is crux of it; we have seen Raleigh, so we are going to be biased. He spoke in support of appointing a committee to visit Grand Rapids and trust their decision.

Helen Tyler mentioned the possibility of obtaining grants in North Carolina as another financial possibility. Theresa MacDonald asked if the incentive from Charleston would it be cash, and/or if it would be balanced by adjusting the bill.

Referencing Tom Stein's suggestion of sending a committee to Grand Rapids, Art Henry voiced concern that the process would not provide enough time for proper planning; he believes a decision must be made very soon. Rusty Morris agreed, saying that we would soon begin to lose dates. Helen Tyler suggested that even if we can't get dates guaranteed for three years, it still provides us with some breathing space to explore other venues.

Providing a brief overview of the selection process leading to the selection of Pheasant Run (individual group sponsored, last minute decision) and Louisville/IUS (NABBA sponsored, deal too good to refuse, and many board members in the area), Doug Yeo observed that this process is completely different. Because we will begin to lose dates if we delay, Grand Rapids is out of consideration for 2010. We don't know quite a few things about the Charleston venues, nor whether that unknown information is enough to warrant a delay in our decision. Most board members seem to see Raleigh as doable with two venues in PEC, and vendors located in the hotel, etc. We could still have a discussion with Raleigh about our 'other offer' in a low key way, to see if Raleigh could offer anything else, something along the lines of, 'Raleigh looks attractive. We have a few questions; here's what we would like.' He is uncertain whether any further benefits would be forthcoming. Because all our Raleigh contacts were from Convention Center, there may be some incentive on their part to use the Convention Center, affording NABBA no further breaks.

Jim Grate reminded the board of the storage building issue. He spoke in support of moving it once every three years and that having the contest in a location for only one year would not be his choice. While Tom Stein agreed with Jim Grate, he thought it best to choose a location for only one year and get a good venue, and then take the necessary time to select the best venue for the next three years.

After confirming that the two Raleigh venues would be better than the second possible venue in Charleston, Jim Grate pointed out that Raleigh would love to have NABBA in their city. The pricing can be worked out and three years might be possible in Raleigh. He does not think that could ever work out in Charleston. Speaking as someone who has helped move the archives, Pat Herak observed that we cannot move things until after April, leaving us time to look at Grand Rapids before moving the archives. Jim Grate reminded the members that the storage unit holds two types of materials: contest related items/equipment and the archives.

Although he likes the idea of staying in one spot for at least two years, Pat Herak believes three years may be too long. However we don't need to commit to Raleigh for two years yet, so perhaps we could bargain with Raleigh – that we are certain about one year, but don't know about two. Jim Grate counseled that locations don't like being played one against the other. Joe Johnson added that until we've been through the competition once in a location, we don't know how it will work. He suggested committing to Raleigh for one year, then perhaps meet in Grand Rapids for next September's board meeting to explore venues ahead of time. Theresa MacDonald would like to consider Raleigh for at least one year, especially in light of various North Carolina grants for which we would be eligible to apply.

Because he doesn't think we can wait until after 2010 to make decision about 2011. Doug Yeo suggested we say 'Yes' to Raleigh for one year, ask for dates for next two years, then get more information from Charleston, and get further details from Grand Rapids. All the Raleigh details could probably be worked out. A decision today would not mean signing the contract today.

Doug Yeo moved that NABBA come to Raleigh, April 16, 17, 2010 (seconded – Don Kneeburg). Vice President Yeo suggested that the board might be able to decide on locations for 2011 and 2012 by the April board meeting, but certainly by the fall 2009 meeting. In response to a question from Joe Johnson, Jim Grate agreed that we should continue to actively solicit venues, but would need to reset dates. **Motion carried, but not unanimously.** Jim Grate reminded the board that we owe responses to all sites regarding their bids.

A question of privilege was raised. After a ten-minute break the board reassembled to consider the remaining agenda items. (2:15 p.m.)

- VIII. On behalf of the Music Committee, Doug Yeo presented the committee's report, distributed to board members prior to the meeting via nabbaboard.org. The committee presented recommendations for six sections. He has scores for all the pieces with him if anyone would like to see them. The committee was disappointed in the lack of recommendations of test pieces from other board

members. All suggested pieces were considered, as were other pieces suggested by committee members and publishers (over 100). The committee was particularly taken with the fact that the Challenge and Honors sections bands have been raising the bar by their selection of choice pieces. He alluded to the discussion yet to come about whether to add a new section or not. Difficulty arises in choosing a piece approachable by all bands in a given section. The committee erred on the side of challenge, but also selected pieces that were good solid pieces at their heart. **Doug moved that the board accept as test pieces as named (seconded – Joe Johnson).**

Pat thanked the Music Committee for their work, and the transparency of the process. He expressed concern about one issue however. The bylaws stipulate that people are not supposed to serve on the Music Committee if they have a conflict of interest. Noting that this would mean Joe Johnson, Steve Allen, and Helen Tyler, he asked if can somehow protect ourselves against that charge if it arises. Doug Yeo responded that he didn't know if we could totally get away from that. Multiple times he told the Music Committee, and then the entire board, that discussions were confidential. He himself is currently the only person on the committee without a competing band interest. Tom Stein thought it unnecessary that we have to protect ourselves, but the fact that the board has to vote on the pieces is one safety net of sorts. It also helps that the process is transparent.

Speaking about the number and variety of the pieces on the initial list, Joe Johnson acknowledged that he listened to a lot of music new to him. One always uses one's own frame of reference when listening to material, so it is difficult not to think about whether any given band in any given section can play a piece successfully. But given the quality of the pieces discussed, he found the discussions devoid of favoritism and maintained with a very high level of objectivity. Last year, before serving on the Music Committee, he had some questions about the process; however, going through the process this year he saw how thorough and systematic the process was and that each section received extensive scrutiny. He is very confident that the committee members displayed a broad knowledge of the repertoire as well as an understanding of the expectations of the NABBA contest.

Frank Washburn agreed with Tom, adding that he would rather have people from contesting bands who know what NABBA bands are doing select test pieces than outside folks who don't know the bands as well. When Helen Tyler asked if the board members should look at the scores before voting, the consensus was that we should not, but for the future, she suggested that the committee should at least be able to see the scores before the board vote. Doug Yeo noted that as the great difficulty, in part because of time required to obtain scores. He also mentioned, in response to a question from Pat Herak, that the scores just came in last week.

In response to a question from Tom Stein, the Music Committee members confirmed that they were convinced that the pieces were a good match for the NABBA bands. President Rusty Morris also noted that some pieces had been vetted by their selection as test pieces for previous competitions.

Motion carried, but not unanimously.

Doug Yeo gave the scores to Rusty Morris to send to the Controllers, and will send email messages to NABBA band contacts with the pertinent information. Additional information will appear on nabba.org as soon as minutes are approved. The committee also had far-reaching discussions about the process, using thematic pieces (i.e., selecting all North American composers one year). The committee would like to find a way to decrease the number of pieces considered. Tom Stein suggested putting a thread on nabbaboard.org, which Doug Yeo agreed to do. Steve Allen said he would like to find a way to disseminate new repertoire out to everyone, seeing this also as a way to get young composers' work out to everyone.

- IX. On behalf of the Development Committee, Chairperson Theresa MacDonald presented the committee report (3:15 p.m.). Their focus has been on achievable goals, both short and long term, on what NABBA can afford to do and what can we not avoid not to do: increasing funds, increasing membership and increasing NABBA's profile and outreach.

Increasing Funds

The committee is working to develop a sponsorship level package to solicit more funds from instrumental manufacturers. The list would present tiered levels of sponsorship of fixed amounts with an agreement of what NABBA would provide in return. She then passed around an example showing the types of levels used by the U.S. Open. For example, the Championship Section trophy might be The 'Besson' Trophy. Although they have already developed a target list of companies for 2008/09, the committee would also appreciate knowing of board member connections with company contacts. The committee would like to roll this out for Louisville 2009 and plan to take a more aggressive approach to include local Louisville businesses. They have also thought about having a masseuse on site. The committee will work more closely with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Arts grants are usually done on a state level, and they haven't come across any applicable grants from NEA. Coming to Raleigh next year may help, as NABBA is chartered in North Carolina. The committee is also checking on transportation grants to help offset some travel expenses. She would also like to solicit the membership for some grant expertise. The committee plans to take out a small form in *The Bridge* for bands to submit their successful grant stories. She has had some contact/interest from companies that like to do gifts in kind and feels that there is potential for more in this area, perhaps in the form of a voucher for the winning band to purchase music, etc.

Helen Tyler suggested putting the company's logo on the banner instead of the trophy. Doug Yeo questioned the idea of putting a company's name on either the banner or trophy, as it infuses commercial sponsorship into NABBA.

Theresa MacDonald moved that, through monetary donations, sponsors be associated with sections by placement of name/logo on banners and/or trophies at the Championships (seconded – Pat Herak). Discussion followed on the meaning of sponsorship.

Tom Stein suggested it simply means a company's name is associated with and mentioned as part of one of the section prize announcements. Jim Grate remembered some confusion in the past – that vendors felt they were sponsoring NABBA if they bought a table, etc. Although details are yet to be decided upon (what we would offer for what dollar amounts, etc.), the Committee has ruled out things like a large banner hung across the entire stage. Instead, they looked at easy, attractive ways to accomplish sponsorship.

Doug Yeo expressed concern about the wording and asked what would appear on the banners – if, for example, 'Sponsored by Yamaha' would appear at the bottom. Theresa responded that for what a trophy would cost, we could do a trophy instead, announcing it as the 'Whomever' trophy during the presentation. Pat Herak also suggested that when telling the audience who is on stage competing, the announcers could say something like, "Next to perform in the Championship Section sponsored by ABC is Band E found between pages 12-18 in your program." Some vendors would prefer to be associated with particular sections, i.e., beginners section.

Doug Yeo asked if the motion on the floor included approval of dollar amounts also. Theresa MacDonald said that issue would be determined later. The motion is to approve, in principle, the association of companies, through monetary donations, with trophy, banner and section sponsorship.

Jim Grate expressed his dislike of the trophy idea, as it is a NABBA trophy. Observing that putting a vendor name on it cheapens the trophy, he suggested that there are other avenues for sponsorship. Lee Harrelson expressed the exact opposite view. We still have NABBA on the trophy, but now we have a company that thinks enough of the competition to put their name on it. Jim Grate observed that the Olympics don't 'sell' their medals by adding corporate sponsorships on the medals. Helen Tyler commented that companies want something to put their name on for their contribution. Doug Yeo said that he somewhat agreed with Jim, but remains a bit ambivalent. However NABBA clearly has not given Besson much for their money.

When Joe Johnson asked what would happen if no one goes for the big prize, Theresa MacDonald replied that we simply wouldn't put a name on it. Joe Johnson responded that it seemed a little risky if someone doesn't take the bait, then wondered if there would be any harm in that. Tom Stein remarked that the Development Committee had been charged with coming up with money. Since grant seeking has pretty much gone away, companies are probably the best choice. One thing companies want is name recognition. Joe Johnson noted that competition between sponsors could be very exciting. Theresa MacDonald reminded the group that NABBA can be flexible about amounts and levels of sponsorship. Joe Johnson observed that corporate sponsorship is now a way of life.

Motion carried, but not unanimously. Materials and specific details will be put on nabbaboard.org for the board to decide. Doug Yeo reminded everyone that he would need program information and materials by Feb. 1, 2009. Theresa MacDonald mentioned that the committee is also pursuing potential private foundations for donations.

Increasing membership

Development Committee Chairperson, Theresa MacDonald, continued the committee's report, moving to the issue of membership, specifically how to increase membership among non-contesting bands. Twenty percent of North American bands are now NABBA members. The committee would like that to increase to 40% by 2009. They would also like to increase the number of contesting bands. The committee plans to distribute a survey via the regional contacts: what are each band's challenges, successes, how do they find support, how do they get members, instruments, etc. The survey results will be examined by the committee, looking for ways that NABBA can say, "This is how we can help you." They will be looking at using both electronic and hard copy surveys. Whatever the contacts would like to use we will pursue. As a result of the survey responses and study, the committee will develop low cost resource materials to make available to bands. Another task is to work at retention of non-contesting band members as NABBA members.

Increasing profile and outreach of NABBA

The committee would like to revamp the NABBA.org website, changing the overall look, but not necessarily the content. Wayne Wilcox, program graphic designer, has some hours left in his 40-hour NABBA contract. He would build graphics, logos, etc., for use on the website. Tom Stein mentioned another goal: to design the website so that we can easily update the content. Theresa MacDonald reiterated the goal of a low maintenance web site. The committee would like to see a content enhancement of the membership section in 1½ year to have password protected information of how-to's for member bands. All sorts of information could appear here. That may require some funds next year. Doug Yeo noted that Wayne he has done some things for us already, but we haven't used him for anything since last year's contest. This type of work is exactly what he envisioned when he asked Wayne to build some extra time into the contract. Because it is already covered in the existing contract, a motion to have Wayne do this work is unnecessary. Doug Yeo will give Wayne's contact information to Theresa MacDonald.

Helen Tyler distributed a handout regarding a Regional Festival pilot for the end of October 2009. (See handout – page one for the Regional Festival overview, page two for EXPO details.) This would raise the profile of both the host band and brass bands in general in the area. It is also more 'doable' financially for some band members. Besson is interested in participating in partnership with their distributors and NABBA. Festivals would not be held in every region every year, instead, perhaps two regions each year.

Theresa MacDonald listed one of the benefits of the festivals: we aren't committing a lot of NABBA money, but asking the local band to finance the festival. NABBA acts more as a facilitator. Helen Tyler went on to describe how the pilot worked with the Fountain City Brass Band. Doug Yeo noted that when we are ready to commit to specific funding, the board will need to see a budget. This will probably need to be decided at our next board meeting in April.

- X. Contest Committee Chairperson presented a report on behalf of his committee. (4:00 p.m.)

The Committee discussed five topics: contest format, adjudicators, section names (reorganizing), section assignments, and the required use of Eb and Bb basses.

Regarding the contest format, the committee discussed one way NABBA could improve registration – by changing the application to include a \$1,200 flat fee, covering everything the band would need for competition. This is basically the same amount as most bands pay now. Rosters would not be due until bands arrive at the competition, when they would settle up with the treasurer. The consensus was agreement.

Jim Grate explained that the fee would cover the regular application fee, the band membership fee, and all individual fees. When Doug Yeo asked why not just charge one fee of \$1,200, Jim Grate replied that competing members are on stage only; the group would pay an additional amount for any non-playing members. In response to a question from Doug Yeo about why this process would be easier, Jim Grate explained that bands would not have to worry about getting the roster correct until just before the competition. In the past, fluctuating rosters have been problematic.

Lee Harrelson moved that bands be required to pay a deposit of \$1,200 for adult, \$900 for youth, by close of business day, the second Friday of January (seconded – Frank Washburn).

Responding to a question from Tom Stein, Jim Grate affirmed that bands could pay more than the deposit and that applications would provide cost information for each membership category. Lee Harrelson suggested the deposit should take into account the maximum number of players on stage. When Pat Herak asked if it wouldn't be easier to get the list a week earlier rather than deal with it at registration, Jim Grate said it would be simple to work with the representatives at the registration desk, that bands have that sheet and can do their figuring ahead of time. He also confirmed that the application form would have all the necessary details. NABBA membership cards would continue as they are now, with no names on them. Rico Belotti observed that someone in each band would have to have responsibility to be the first one there, and that we would not necessarily know who would be volunteering from the group. Linda Yeo noted that she would still need the names of five volunteers. Jim Grate indicated that he would be accessible at the registration desk to work with representatives.

Motion carried.

Discussion moved to the competition format. Chairperson Harrelson reported that the Contest Committee saw last year's format as a success. They tried to look having all bands compete in the Brown. They also discussed capping the Solo & Ensemble competition at 110 solos and 15 ensembles. Assuming we have nine judges, that Championship Section bands would play their test pieces on Friday evening and choice pieces on Saturday evening, then mathematically, only 13 non-championship bands could compete during the day on Saturday. This necessitates a second venue. Jim Grate reported that our only option for a second band performance venue is still under renovation and may not be finished in time for the competition. When Doug Yeo talked about the need for three Solo and Ensemble venues, Jim Grate mentioned an upstairs room in the Brown that could be used for ensemble competition. Lee Harrelson noted that the committee could not anticipate exact numbers for each category. He also reported that the committee did discuss how to prioritize ten applications coming in for consideration at the same time but did not come up with a firm solution. Doug Yeo said he would feel more comfortable with language that would stipulate the number of soloists and ensembles that could apply from each band. Lee Harrelson noted the importance of having any solution in place in time for the competition. Doug Yeo agrees with implementing a cap, but wants to avoid the appearance of being arbitrary in selection of entrants.

Lee Harrelson moved that the solos be capped at 110 and ensembles at 15 (seconded by Doug Yeo). The contest committee will submit language specifying the manner of implementation of capping to the board for its approval by October 1.

Pat Herak spoke in support of Solo & Ensemble entrants from non-competing bands; he would not like to exclude anyone from the competition. When Lee Harrelson agreed that such participants could turn their applications in separately, Pat Herak again supported selection of such entrants rather than additional soloists from competing bands. Joe Johnson reminded the group that anyone wanting to compete with in the solo or ensemble portion of the competition simply needs to submit their application early to guarantee acceptance.

While Diana Herak supported the idea of trying to accommodate all entrants, Joe Johnson reminded the group that the issue eventually turns to the number of available judges and venues. Lee Harrelson suggested that one discussion the committee and board might benefit from is the idea of doing away with the Solo & Ensemble competition; there are many pros and cons to the issue. Eliminating that portion of the competition would free up much more time in schedule so that we could more easily handle a greater number of competing bands. However, it also seems to be a good event, since a good number of members like to participate. Lee Harrelson believes we will probably be able to include everyone, but this is the outside number we can accommodate with nine judges.

Pat Herak observed that eventually regional competitions could serve as the qualification process for the spring competition. Tom Stein pointed out that we could not use regional competitions in this way if we are holding only two per year. Doug Yeo expressed concern that any changes in the application process be clearly communicated to bands, usually announced in the October 15 issue of *The Bridge*. He is concerned about working with only a global limit. He would prefer to implement a limit on the number of soloists per band, say four. Any unused slots could go into a lottery. We could also set aside 20 slots for participants from non-competing bands. Helen Tyler suggested that bands could organize a list of four soloists, but also include a reserve list. If the non-competing slots don't fill, names on the reserve list could be selected. Doug Yeo believes we should stipulate that any available slots would be filled by lottery from the reserve list.

Discussion included the issues of no-shows (unusual), cancellations (rare, but do occur) and the rationale for making provision for Solo & Ensemble entrants from non-competing bands. (They are NABBA members and it provides a way for them to participate and see how NABBA works.) *Bridge* editor Yeo reminded the group that the full process must be clearly communicated to bands before they apply.

Motion carried, but not unanimously.

Adjudicators

Contest chairperson Harrelson reported that Richard Marshall and Bram Gregson are confirmed as adjudicators for 2009, and that the committee is working through a list of other possible adjudicators. The committee also discussed using a local person (Mark Tate) as the percussion judge. Art Henry expressed his willingness to contact all the names he had suggested on nabbaboard.org.

Renaming sections

Chairperson Harrelson briefly reviewed the committee's suggestion to keep the Championship section, add Section 1, rename the remaining adult competing sections 2, 3, 4, then combine and rename the Open and Exhibition sections. **Lee Harrelson moved changing the section names to Championship, 1, 2, 3, 4, Open, Youth and Youth Open (seconded – Doug Yeo).**

Doug Yeo observed that we can't combine the Open and Exhibition sections, since the Exhibition section is generally a not-competing section. Helen Tyler suggested that different levels within one section could be adjudicated by awarding gold, bronze and silver medals and a certificate, not points or ranking. Medals would be based on the band's performance of the program, taking more of a festival approach. Doug Yeo observed that the Open section would then have no winner, no sponsorship, etc. Lee Harrelson spoke in support of Helen Tyler's ideal. Barb Burtch and Helen Tyler suggested that certificates/results could say something like, "These bands have achieved a silver performance standard, selected from appropriate repertoire, etc."

Pat Herak believes that the exhibition section has been misunderstood until now. This suggestion presents a more clear-cut way of bands competing with themselves. Here is a tangible way to say what their performance means.

Joe Johnson spoke in support of renaming the sections, that the ranking of 4, 3, 2, 1 is much more user-friendly than the current section names. Doug Yeo still finds problems with defining the new Open section. Previously, competing in the adult open section meant the band used non-standard instrumentation. Last year, although they were missing players, a band competed in that section with standard instrumentation. Jim Grate noted that when that band originally signed up, they did have non-standard instrumentation. He then asked if the Open Section would include any band, any size, any instrumentation, and any repertoire. When Susan Henthorn stated that Open section bands must play brass band repertoire, Doug Yeo asked who would come up with the list. Although Joe Johnson believed this would not be hotly debated, Doug Yeo agreed, but said it would become an issue.

In response to an inquiry from Theresa MacDonald, Lee Harrelson said the section would be intended for bands just starting out in NABBA or that have never been to the event as a way to discover what competition section would fit them best. Pat Herak asked if the goal is to create a path to competition, would there be a limit to the number of years a band could remain in the Open section, to which Lee Harrelson replied there would not. He also said that there would be no limit on the size of the band either, to which Jim Grate responded that this might open the competition to the non-Brass Band tradition.

Tom Stein spoke of his total support of competitions. However, he observed that some directors in the wind ensemble world (and many NABBA directors are in that collegiate world) strongly feel that music is something that should never be the center of a competition. Therefore it is possible that even a top-notch group may want to enter for comments only. Helen Tyler noted that festivals cap youth bands at 70 members, but that is somewhat venue dependent. Joe Johnson reminded the group that the rules currently say that the Open section is for bands using non-standard instrumentation, but limits the number of players on stage (28 brass). We may want to include language to limit the number of players.

Jim Grate pointed out a conflict – that brass bands could enter the Open Section that would not qualify as NABBA member bands.

Doug Yeo wondered if this section would be better suited to festivals than a competition setting. All details would need to be very clearly defined in every way. The board can not approve this without specific language in hand. This section of the motion turns a part of the completion into a festival by allowing bands to play anything. Pat Herak suggested that it might be right to move the Open Section to regional festivals, but those are not yet in place. This could encourage professional bands to play. He suggested a minimum size of 17 brass members.

Theresa MacDonald asked what we want to use the section to accomplish and how is it a positive for NABBA. If we have a concern that non-British style brass bands would enter, we could have a separate fee for that portion of competition weekend. Art Henry raised the issue of what would happen to groups that fell just below our stipulated minimum of playing members for the Open section, if they would need to compete as an ensemble. Lee Harrelson said he was not as concerned about this type of group, as they aren't probably moving toward becoming a brass band. He would be happy to word that bands using proper instrumentation should probably move to section 4.

Doug Yeo observed that we need much more discussion on this issue, as well as specific language for the proposed new Open section.

Motion defeated.

Regarding renaming sections and assignment of bands to sections, Lee Harrelson reported that an overwhelming majority of committee are in favor of changing names. Whether bands self-select or how they might be assigned to sections remains to be determined. The committee also discussed the move to Eb and Bb basses.

Doug expressed his disappointment that, at the conclusion of this meeting, there is little to report to NABBA members about rule changes, apart from the changes in registration. Many issues remain regarding the contest, including its format and myriad related details.

Lee Harrelson moved that Championship section test pieces be played on Friday evening, with own choice pieces played Saturday evening (seconded – Rico Belotti). Motion carried.

The board was reminded by Doug Yeo, *Bridge* editor, of the need to articulate the big issues of registration changes and capping the solo and ensemble portion soon, so that publication deadlines can be met. Barb Burtch also suggested that it would be helpful for bands to know when Friday night's competition begins.

Doug Yeo expressed his enjoyment in editing and publishing *The Bridge*. No one immediately volunteered to become the next editor, but it would be in NABBA's best interest to have his replacement in place by the April board meeting so that Doug can work with the person for a smooth hand-off. May 15 will be his final issue as *Bridge* editor.

President Morris noted that all other business can be covered on nabbaboard.org but everyone must participate and get into the habit of logging in on a regular basis. We didn't have a chance to cover everything, but it is always the case that we have more to cover than we have time to cover.

Frank Washburn clarified some details about the band photographs that Jim Grate has asked him to do. He will shoot every band with no a session fee. He asked if he could take photos of each band on stage during their performance, whether bands would like that or a 'staged' photo taken at a later time. Rusty Morris suggested perhaps using one of each. Frank Washburn suggested he could take the photo during the first number and it would be ready for review by the band after leaving the stage. He indicated he would arrange for a second photographer to cover a second venue as needed.

- XI. Time did not permit discussion about the size of the Board, the future of Silver Bells, and several general issues regarding NABBA's future (position of *Bridge* editor, treasurer, website, etc.)

President Morris declared the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Susan K. Henthorn, NABBA Secretary