Columbus Scottish Rite Bodies
Post Office Box 727
Columbus, GA 31902-0727
Minutes of the Executive Committee
February 14, 2024

The Executive Committee was called to order by the Chair, Executive Committee, IB Phil Harris, 33º, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Brother Matthew Burgess, 32º, gave the opening prayer and IB Harris lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Attendance was as follows:

● Joseph Oelgoetz, 33º	Personnel Representative	P
● Phil Harris, 33º	Chair, Executive Committee	P
● Roger Buterbaugh, 33º	General Secretary/VM, LOP	P
● Torrey Knight, 32º, KCCH	Treasurer	P
● William Block, 32º, KCCH	WM, KRC	A
● Harold Culpepper, 32º, KCCH	Cdr, CK	A
● Harry Ross, 32º, KCCH	MK, CC/Bldg Cmte	P
● John Ohrt, 33º	Almoner	P
● Rossi Ross, 32º, KCCH	DOW/Grand Knight	P
● Ditmar Chavez, 32º, KCCH	At Large	P
● Bayardo Reyes, 32º, KCCH	At Large	A
● Steve Smith, 32º	At Large	A
● Dan East, 32º, KCCH	At Large	A
● Russell Ward, 32º	Cdr, KSA/IT	A
● Scott Lavelle, 32º, KCCH	Stage Cmte/VMAP	P
● John Adams, 32º	Hospitality	A
● Jim Davis, 32º	Membership	A
● Richard Luna, 32º	Retention	P
● Matthew Burgess, 32º	Fireworks	P

Also present was HB Chuck Hall, 32º, KCCH.

The minutes of the December 13, 2023 and January 17, 2024 Executive Committee meetings were read and approved.

On behalf of the Treasurer the General Secretary gave the Treasurer's Report. The Scottish Rite Bodies checking account balance on January 1, 2024 was $15,976.17. During the month of January there were $17,184.50 in deposits and $19,179.07 in checks and payments. The balance on January 31, 2024 was $13,981.62 which balances with the bank statement and QuickBooks. As of today, the checking account balance is $12,448.47. The Scottish Rite Foundation account has a balance of $24,151.28. We made a $1,500.00 donation to the Autism Learning Center in January.

The perpetual membership account has a balance of $84,686.55. We transferred $1,560.00 from the perpetual membership account to the Scottish Rite Bodies checking account to cover the per capita for 52 life members. The Building Fund has a balance of $5,693.44. We transferred $600.00 in building fund donations from the Scottish Rite Bodies checking account into the Building Fund for the period July – December 2023.

General Secretary's Report:

- The Scottish Rite Center had its annual fire inspection by the Columbus Fire Department on February 2, 2024. We passed with no deficiencies noted.
- Brother Brice Martin submitted a request to demit, as he is moving to Canada to be a missionary. It will be presented for a vote at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting.
- We paid 90% of our per capita to Supreme Council in the amount of $6,900.00. Supreme Council will bill us for the remaining per capita this month.
- We paid our annual property insurance bill in the amount of $3,239.00.
- The Valley of Columbus lost 29 members in 2023 – 14 due to death and 15 were suspended for non-payment of dues. We need petitions for the Spring Reunion to bring our membership numbers up. So far, we have one petition in hand for our Reunion May 17-18, 2024.

Almoner's Report: The Almoner reported a balance of $1,869.96 in his account. He received no requests for assistance.

Venerable Master: IB Roger Buterbaugh reported that he will give a presentation on the 14º at the Lodge of Perfection meeting Friday night. The Personal Representative will install HB Harold Culpepper as the Commander, Council of Kadosh and will present HB Baron Conklin, 32º, KCCH his Past Wise Master jewel.

Committee Reports:

- Building Committee – HB Harry Ross reported that we had a leak in our roof over the stage area with water dripping onto the stage and running down the wall. He believes the heavy rain and strong wind we experienced earlier may have forced the rain down one of the ventilation vents. He will check it out.
- Stage Committee – HB Scott Lavelle reiterated HB Harry Ross's report about flooding on the stage.
- Fundraising – Brother Matt Burgess reminded everyone of the Independence Day fireworks fundraiser starting in June.
- Membership Committee – no report.
- Retention Committee – HB Richard Luna reported that 26 Brothers have not yet paid their 2024 dues. He is working with Brother Jim Davis on a program to recruit and retain members.
- Communications – no report.

- Hospitality/Refreshment Committee – The General Secretary reported that Friday's meal will be bell peppers stuffed with chicken parmesan.
- VMAP – HB Scott Lavelle reported that he submitted the 2023 VMAP on January 21, 2024.
- DOW – HB Rossi Ross said he has assumed Director of Work duties from IB John Ohrt. IB Ohrt will help/train him for the Spring Reunion.
- KSA – HB Rossi Ross reported a very successful Burns' Night Celebration last month. They gave the General Secretary $1,410.00 to deposit into the Scottish Rite Bodies checking account.
- IT Committee – In the absence of Brother Russell Ward, IB Roger Buterbaugh distributed the quotes from Spectrum for new phone and internet service. For 300 Mbps and phone the cost will be $79.98 per month. For 600 Mbps and phone the cost will be $119.98 per month. At the request of Brother Ward, IB Buterbaugh called AT&T and asked the cost of upgrading from our current copper to fiber. The cost for 100 Mbps is $60.00 per month, for 300 Mbps $70.00 per month, for 500 Mbps $100.00 per month plus a $200.00 gift card, and for 1 Gig $150.00 per month and a $500.00 gift card. AT&T reported that fiber service is not yet available around the Scottish Rite Center but will be installed soon. After discussion the Executive Committee decided to table this until the March Executive Committee meeting to give Brother Ward enough time to investigate other options and to present his findings.
- Rite Care – IB Phil Harris reported that he and Brother Jim Davis recently toured the Autism Learning Center and met their staff.

Meeting schedule:

- February – open and close the Lodge of Perfection in long form and presentation on the 14°.
- March – Brother Jacob Robideaux, 32°, will give a presentation on a Scottish Rite topic (topic to be determined).
- April – Remembrance and Renewal.
- May – Spring Reunion (speaker back up if we do not have enough petitions for a Reunion).
- June – Cap and Ring Ceremony if we have a Reunion. Flag Day program lead by HB Baron Conklin.
- July – Knights of St. Andrew initiation and installation of officers.
- August – HB Harry Ross will present on one of the Columbus Consistory degrees.
- September – Feast of Tishri. RWB Mark Bradley, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, has accepted our invitation to speak.
- October – Fall Reunion (speaker back up if we do not have enough petitions for a Reunion).
- November – HB Harold Culpepper will present on one of the Council of Kadosh degrees.

- December – installation of 2025 officers and Christmas program.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

- IB Joseph Oelgoetz discussed a calling system called Phone Bite to call members and remind them of Lodge of Perfection meetings. It is currently being used with success at the Valley of Middle Georgia. The cost is 30 cents per call but we might get it lower. He asked everyone to go to PhoneBite.com, check out the system, and be prepared to discuss it at our March Executive Committee meeting.
- IB Oelgoetz talked about the Sovereign Grand Commander's Zoom call with Personal Representatives and General Secretaries held February 7. Of particular interest was the Cinematic Reunion from the Grand Lodge of Missouri. This is something we can look at as a guide for Zooming our esoteric meetings.

Business for the Good of the Order:

- IB Phil Harris reminded everyone of the Valley Association of Past Masters (VAPM) and Lodge of Research #2 meetings to be held at Fort Benning Lodge #579 on February 29. The VAPM will meet first, following by the Lodge of Research.
- Fort Benning Chapter, OES will have a schnitzel lunch fundraiser on March 2 at Rose Hill Lodge #484.
- Columbus Chapter, OES will have a hamburger steak fundraiser also on March 2, at Mount Hermon Lodge #304.
- The First Annual Golf Tournament to support the Masonic Children's Home will be March 2 at the Shellman's Bluff golf course.

Personal Representative's Comments: IB Joseph Oelgoetz:

- The Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia Scholarship application window is now closed.
- HB Cameron Davis, 32°, KCCH developed an app for the Valley of Columbus called "Be a Scottish Rite Mason". When someone clicks on the QR code it will take them to information about the Valley of Columbus and an on-line petition. IB Oelgoetz encouraged everyone to put it on their phone and use it when they talk with prospective new members.
- We will look at a Bring a Brother Night, for prospective candidates and their wives. We can conduct a short play about being a Scottish Rite Mason, talk about membership, and have a meal. Hopefully we will inspire the prospective candidate to submit a petition.
- Non-Scottish Rite Masons can take the Master Craftsman's course on Symbolic Lodges. Encourage them to take the course, and perhaps it will motivate them to petition the Scottish Rite.

- The Sovereign Grand Commander said no to using “Journey On” from the Northern Jurisdiction as part of our recruiting presentation to Lodges.
- There is a lot of educational opportunities at scottishrite.org, click on the Education tab. You will find podcasts, book clubs, papers, etc. about Scottish Rite Masonry.
- We should look at a mentoring program where one Reunion class mentors the next Reunion class.
- The next Biennial will be August 15-19, 2025.
- With the sale of the Atlanta Masonic Center and procuring a new Valley of Atlanta Scottish Rite Center north of Atlanta, several of their members who live south of Atlanta (Newnan, Peachtree City, Jonesboro, etc.) have expressed an interest in transferring their membership to the Valley of Columbus. They claim its an easier drive to Columbus than driving through Atlanta to get up north. We may be getting new members from the Valley of Atlanta.

Our next Executive Committee meeting will be March 13, 2024.

IB Phil Harris gave the closing prayer and closed the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger W. Buterbaugh, 33º
General Secretary