

YCMEA Minutes- Saturday, August 16, 2025

Notes about the minutes:

1. If you open the minutes in Google Docs and show the tabs on the left side, it will allow you to click on any of the headings to jump to that page.
2. Board members' emails have been linked at the beginning of the minutes.
3. The titles of our festivals are links that will take you to the specific page on our website.

Call to Order: 10:02 am

Present: [Jenny Thompson](#): president, [Chris Wright](#): treasurer, [Melanie Lynch](#): secretary, Kayla Solorio, Shannon Bates, Megan O'Brien, Tim O'Brien, Danae Nieto-Freifeld, Brandon Coz, Eric Dale, Shawn Pollard, Joel Santana,

Introductions

Approval of [Minutes](#)- Megan O'Brien moves to approve the previous meeting's minutes, Chris Wright seconds. Motion passed unanimously

Jenny notes that all of our meeting minutes going back to September of 2023 are on the website for your reference.

Treasurer's Report-

Bank Balances:

Checking Account-\$7688.74

Main savings (Business savings)- \$1,56.15

Second Savings (Ernest Ortega Scholarship Fund)- \$2,366.49

Dues are \$25 at the beginning of each year. Dues can be paid separately or can be added on any festival registration. In order to register for any event or festival, you will need to also be a member of the organization or to pay the non-member fee which is equivalent to the membership fee.

Any checks should be made out to YCMEA.

Please send all dues, registration forms, and payments to:

Chris Wright
2980 S. Rainbow Ave
Yuma, AZ 85365
Cell number: (928)246-6461

Important note: Please make sure that every time you pay for something for YCMEA you include the billing statement. They are all on the website. Without the billing statement, our treasurer will not know who the payment belongs to and what it is for.

Old Business

Using facilities-

The board will send an email to assistant superintendent Duane Sheppard regarding using facilities for our large festivals. If necessary, they will also meet with district leaders.

Online payments

1. In May we trialed the use of Square to collect donations at both Desert Band Festival and Celebration of Strings.
2. We will continue to use Square and a QR code to allow online payments since so many people no longer carry cash.
3. Jenny will look into setting up an online payment option as well; depending on cost and usability, this may or may not be utilized in the near future.

Scholarship students updates

Each year we offer music camp scholarships to Yuma County music students. This year we were able to send several students to NAU's Curry Summer Music Camp and they had an amazing time.

1. Melody Schuster (who was an 8th grader from Woodard and is now attending Kofa High School) received a full-ride scholarship and earned first chair in the camp's band.
2. Ruby Ceron (who was an 8th grader from Woodard and is now attending Kofa High School) received a half scholarship from YCMEA as well as a donation for the other half of the cost of camp.
3. Jasmine (Dani) Ortega (now a senior at Cibola High School) received a half scholarship for Curry Music Camp.
4. Shantall Acosta (a junior at Gila Ridge High School) received the Dallabetta scholarship that is sponsored by the Yuma County Arts Alliance but is awarded through YCMEA. Shantall was first chair clarinet at the camp and quickly became a leader earning a scholarship for next year through the Curry Summer Camp itself. This scholarship may be used for any summer program.
5. In addition, several students won a scholarship for private lessons from a local music teacher:
 - a. Alyson Flores (who was an 8th grader from Woodard and is now attending Kofa High School)
 - b. Ashley Perez (who was an 8th grader from Woodard and is now attending Kofa High School)
 - c. Brooklyn (Autumn) Wilson Flores (who was an 8th grader from Woodard and is now attending Kofa High School)

New Business

Festival of Excellence ([Honor Band](#) and [Honor Choir](#))-

1. Chairman- [Melanie Lynch](#), Co-Chair [Kayla Solorio](#)

2. Rehearsals will be once a week during the months of January and February and will be held at Woodard Junior High School. The specific day of the week will be announced once the guest conductors have been chosen.
3. We will have a “full day” rehearsal during the school day
 - a. The all day rehearsal will happen from 9:00 am- 1:00 pm on Friday, February 27th.
 - b. Transportation for this rehearsal is to be taken care of by the students’ school/director.
4. The concert will be on February 28th at 2:00 PM. The concert will be held at Woodard Junior High School and is open to the public.
 - a. Donations from this concert are what pay for the Ernest Ortega Scholarship.
5. Each year we take a tour with the performers at the end of the season.
 - a. Students generally perform at two different schools and then go to Wild River for bowling and pizza.
 - b. Tour will be held on Thursday, March 5th during the school day.
6. Fees
 - a. Honor choir fees are \$30 per student
 - b. Honor Band fees are \$5 per auditions (whether the student makes the ensemble or not) as well as \$25 for participation.
 - c. Fees collected are to pay for:
 - i. Honor band/honor choir t shirts
 - ii. Buses for tour
 - iii. Pizza and bowling
 - iv. Any music purchases needed
7. Guest conductors
 - a. If you are interested in guest conducting either the honor band or honor choir, please reach out to Melanie.

Honor Band

1. The YCMEA honor band is open to students currently in grades 6 through 9.
2. Students are chosen by audition:
 - a. Two etudes will be selected (percussion may have additional etudes and will audition on snare and mallets)
 - b. A scale sheet will be sent out to include major scales up to 4 flats and 2 sharps (concert pitch) and a one octave chromatic scale.
 - i. No additional points will be given to students playing additional octaves.
 - ii. Students who play only one octave of any two octave scales will receive half points.
 - iii. Scales must be memorized for the audition.
 - c. There will be a short sight reading selection for students.
3. Audition fees are \$5 per audition; Some students audition on multiple instruments. Those students will pay for each of their auditions.
 - a. These fees are due for any student signed up for an audition, even if they do not show for their audition.

4. Auditions will be held on the morning of December 6th at Woodard Junior High School. Please plan to attend with your students. If you are unable to attend, please have another music teacher or another adult present in your place.
 - a. Auditions are done live with a music educator as a judge. In special circumstances, we can arrange for a recorded audition.
 - i. If your student needs a recorded audition, please let Melanie Lynch know at least a week in advance so that the scales and sight reading can be sent to you for that student. You will then need to bring a device to play the audition on in order for the judge to critique the audition.
 - b. Audition music will be sent out in October.
 - c. Audition registrations are due by November 21st

Honor Choir

1. The YCMEA Honor Choir is open to students in grade 6-12.
2. There is no audition for the honor choir.
 - a. Students will be submitted by their music teacher.
 - b. There is no limit to how many students a director may submit.
 - c. Students do not need to be in choir at their school to participate as many of our schools do not have a choir program.
 - i. Before submitting students, please make sure that they: can match pitch, can hold on to harmonies/parts, and can blend with other singers.
3. Registrations due: December 17th

Solo and Ensemble

1. Chairman- [Kayla Solorio](#)
2. Registrations due: March 27th
3. This festival is open to any musicians (band, choir, orchestra, guitar, etc) at any level elementary through college whose teacher is a member of YCMEA.
4. The festival will be April 18th at Crane Middle School
5. Cost is \$5 for solo and \$15 for ensemble
6. Accompaniments may be live or pre-recorded.
 - a. If you use pre-recorded, please bring a device to play the accompaniment on.
 - b. Piano will be provided.
 - c. If you need any large equipment, please reach out to Kayla ahead of time to make sure she can accommodate the request.
7. Please bring an original of the music for the judge.
8. If you are interested in judging, reach out to Kayla.

Junior High/Senior High Choir Festival

1. Chairman- [Megan O'Brien](#)
2. The festival is tentatively scheduled for March 12th
 - a. The location has to change as Gila Ridge HS is no longer available due to a band concert.

- b. Shawn Pollard is checking to see if we could possibly use AWC.
- c. Chris Wright is checking to see if we could use First Christian Church
- d. If neither location works, we will have to change locations.
- e. This festival is open to choirs of all sizes and grade levels.
- f. If you are interested in judging the festival, please reach out to Megan.
- g. Registrations due February 12th.

Large Ensemble/ ABODA Festival

1. Last year, Todd Livingston from Arizona Band and Orchestra Directors Association reached out as ABODA is making an effort to include more rural areas in the state.
2. Jenny gave him the date of March 19th and the location of Gila Ridge High School
3. We are waiting for confirmation from ABODA.
 - a. If the ABODA festival does not happen, we will move forward with our normal Large Ensemble Festival
 - i. If this happens, we will need a chairman for this event.

Celebration of Strings

1. Chairmen- [Danae Nieto-Freifeld](#) and [Megan O'Brien](#)
2. This is a large orchestra festival where students from across the county come together to create 2-3 combined orchestras of different levels.
 - a. Level 1 is for beginners
 - b. Level 2 is intermediate
 - c. Level 3 is for more advanced students
 - i. We have not done level 3 for several years.
3. Cost for the festival is \$5 per student
 - a. This pays for their dinner
 - b. If the director and/or any chaperones would like to have dinner that day, please include that at registration. Cost is \$5 per meal.
4. Additionally, there is a \$25 fee for each director who registers students.
 - a. This goes towards purchasing music for the event.
5. Rehearsal goes from 1:00 PM until 4:00
6. After the rehearsal there will be
 - a. A practice for getting on and off stage
 - b. A guest performance
 - c. Dinner
 - d. A quick gathering/tuning
7. The concert will start at 6:30 PM in Post Auditorium
8. Melanie will do paperwork for Fourth Avenue JH and dinners
9. Music will go out in December
10. Festival is May 1
11. Registrations are due by March 20th

Desert Band Festival

1. Committee: [Melanie Lynch](#), [Eloisa Arviso](#)
 1. We could use another person for the committee, please reach out if interested.
2. This festival is a large festival for our newer band students.
 1. This can be students from grades 5 up including high school beginning band students.
 2. Performers will be divided into three levels: elementary band, middle school beginning band, and middle school intermediate band
3. Festival Dates: May 7 and 8
 1. Students will participate on one of the days; we do two days to accommodate the large number of students participating.
4. Fee- \$25 director fee and \$5 per student
5. Music will go out in December
 1. Jenny and Kayla will help with the music selection process
6. Cost for the festival is \$5 per student
 1. This pays for their dinner
 2. If the director and/or any chaperones would like to have dinner that day, please include that at registration. Cost is \$5 per meal.
7. Additionally, there is a \$25 fee for each director who registers students.
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Scholarships

1. Chairman- [Randy Wright](#)
2. Committee- Chris Wright, Jenny Thompson, Joel Santana, Melanie Lynch
3. Each year, YCMEA awards scholarships for summer music camps
4. The process has several steps
 - a. Applications
 - i. There is an online application
 - ii. Students should answer in complete sentences
 - iii. Along with the application, students need a letter of recommendation from their current music teacher.
 - iv. Due January 16th
 - v. The committee will meet to review applications.
 - b. Selected students will move on to the audition process. The audition consists of
 - i. A prepared solo
 1. Pieces may be accompanied or unaccompanied.

- a. If the piece has accompaniment, it should be performed as such, but the accompaniment may be recorded or with a live accompanist.
 - i. Finalists will be given one rehearsal with a pre-selected accompanist. These will be schedule through YCMEA.
 - ii. Finalists may also use their own accompanist.
- ii. Scales
 1. Middle school students- full range major scales up to 4 sharps and 4 flats and full range chromatic
 2. High school students all major scales and chromatic full range
 3. Scales should be memorized
- iii. Sight Reading
- iv. Interview
 1. The committee will conduct a short interview with each finalist

Bank Changing

We have discussed changing banks for a while now due to the fact that our current bank closes at 4:00 PM which makes it difficult to make deposits and other transactions. We held off on the process until the 501c3 undertaking was complete.

1. Chris Wright will research costs, fees, etc for Washington Federal
2. Jenny Thompson will do the same for Wells Fargo
3. We will need a checking account and two savings accounts.

Articles of Incorporation

Jenny will update articles of incorporation because the board has changed and Jenny has had an address change.

Other news:

- Danae Freifeld is the new orchestra teacher at First Christian in addition to teaching for the college and privately.
- Deltrina Grimes is now officially DOCTOR Grimes. Congrats Dr. Grimes
- AWC has a new piano professor- Prof. Hopkins
- Community Band may work with Ballet Yuma again.
- Joel Santana is available for instrument repair (woodwinds, brass, and strings). Contact him at (928)246-6143
- [Shannon Bates](#)- Our Bertrands Rep- Instruments are restocked, she comes out monthly if you need something, reach out. 858-472-5417
- Tronix closed
- AWC string ensemble happens on Thursdays; they're hoping to get the word out more. [Danae](#) and [Maggie](#) would like to come to any schools with orchestra and talk to the students as well as play for them.
- Junior High Nights

- Kofa High School is 9/26 with a rehearsal on 9/23
 - Music: Dynamite, Land of 1000 Dances, Push It, Star Spangled Banner, Kofa Fight Song
- YHS is 9/11 (Thursday) with a rehearsal on 9/9

Next meeting: November 15th 10 am at Crane

Adjourned: 11:25 AM