Columbus Scottish Rite Bodies
Post Office Box 727
Columbus, GA 31902-0727
Minutes of the Executive Committee
November 15, 2023

The Executive Committee was called to order by the Chair, Executive Committee, IB Phil Harris, 33º, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. HB Baron Conklin, 32º, KCCH 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/MK, CC	P
● Robert Lyon III, 32º, KCCH	Treasurer	A
● Baron Conklin, 32º, KCCH	VM, LOP	P
● Rossi Ross, 32º, KCCH	WM, KRC	P
● Ed Lynch, 32º, KCCH	Cdr, CK	A
● John Ohrt, 33º	Almoner/DOW	P
● Torrey Knight, 32º, KCCH	At Large	P
● Ditmar Chavez, 32º, KCCH	At Large	P
● Bayardo Reyes, 32º, KCCH	At Large	A
● Mark Stillwell, 32º	At Large	A
● Harry Ross, 32º, KCCH	Building Cmte	P
● Scott Lavelle, 32º, KCCH	Stage Cmte/VMAP	P
● Cameron Davis, 32º, KCCH	Communication/KM	A
● John Adams, 32º	Hospitality Cmte	P
● Richard Luna, 32º	Retention Cmte	P
● Jim Davis, 32º	Membership Cmte	P
● Matt Burgess, 32º	Chair, Fireworks Cmte	P
● Russell Ward, 32º	Cdr, KSA/IT Cmte	A

Also present were IB Dan Dawson, 33º and HB Jonas Barlow, 32º, KCCH.

The minutes of the October 18, 2023 Executive Committee meetings were read and approved.

In the absence of the Treasurer the General Secretary gave the Treasurer's Report. The Scottish Rite Bodies checking account balance on October 1, 2023 was $14,475.34. During the month of October there were $3,205.58 in deposits and $3,899.13 in checks and payments. The balance on October 31, 2023 was $13,781.79, which balances with the bank statement and QuickBooks. As of today, the checking account balance is $13,842.67. The Scottish Rite Foundation account has a balance of

$25,426.28. The Valley issued the quarterly payment of $1,500.00 to the Autism Learning Center. The perpetual membership account has a balance of $82,547.63. The Building Fund has a balance of $5,191.60.

General Secretary's Report:

- The Supreme Council will be sending out reminder dues notices around November 17. In January we will look at those members who are three or more years in arrears in paying their dues for appropriate action.
- The General Secretary received a request to demit from Brother Timothy Middleton. He is a dual member with the Valley of Fort Worth. He does not intend to return to the Columbus area and wants to drop his membership with the Valley of Columbus. We will vote on his request at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting.
- The General Secretary announced the dates of the Scottish Rite Leadership Conference: April 4-6, 2024 in Salt Lake City, UT; April 18-20, 2024 in Kansas City, MO; and May 2-4, 2024 in Jacksonville, FL. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to cover the fees of up to two of our Brethren to attend.

Almoner's Report: IB John Ohrt reported that the account has a balance of $2,349.96. There was discussion about Brother Henry Herman Williams, an elderly member of the Valley. He seems to have disappeared and neither Mount Hermon Lodge #304 (his home lodge) nor we can find him. He is in arrears in paying his dues. We will look at paying his dues from the Almoner's Fund as we continue our search for him. Finally, we will pass the basket at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting for donations to the Fund.

Venerable Master: HB Baron Conklin reported that the program for Friday's Lodge of Perfection will be the connection between Freemasonry and the military. We will also have the election of 2024 officers and the White Rose Ceremony in memory of IB Doyle Hatfield, 33^{o}.

Committee Reports:

- Building Committee – HB Harry Ross reported that the hood vent over the stove in the kitchen is repaired. He also replaced the toilet seat in the men's room. He is still working the electrical issues behind the stage.
- Stage Committee – HB Scott Lavelle reported that the electrical issues behind the stage need to be resolved. The stage is set for Friday evening's White Rose Ceremony.
- Fundraising – IB Dan Dawson reported that there have been several rehearsals for our play and all is going well. The presale of tickets has already started. He will do a big push on ticket sales this weekend. HB Jonas Barlow reported that the fireworks stand will be delivered on December 19 or 20. The fireworks are scheduled to be delivered on December 27. We can start selling as soon as they are delivered. The stand will operate through December 31.

- Membership Committee – Brother Jim Davis is the new Chair, Membership Committee. He is working on a PowerPoint presentation that we can take to Lodges to encourage Brethren to join the Scottish Rite.
- Retention Committee – Brother Richard Luna reported that 45 Brothers still have not paid their 2023 dues. He is reaching out to them.
- Communications – no report.
- Hospitality/Refreshment Committee – Brother John Adams reported that dinner at Friday's Lodge of Perfection will be turkey and the dinner for December will be prime rib. He is working on the menu for Burns' Night in January.
- VMAP – HB Scott Lavelle reported that he has submitted the 3d Quarter VMAP Report. The 2023 report is due in February 2024.
- DOW – IB John Ohrt reported that the White Rose Ceremony for IB Doyle Hatfield, 33°, will take place at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting
- KSA – no report.
- IT Committee – no report.
- Rite Care – IB Phil Harris reported that the Autism Learning Center is working to hire more staff for the influx of clients. What slows the admission process down is the need for a professional to evaluate the potential client and get insurance approval. It can take up to 90 days from the evaluation to the approval. Columbus State University is working on a program to certify evaluators. Pancakes with Santa is scheduled for December 2 at the Columbus Shrine Club. We are inviting the Autism Learning Center clients again (we are covering the cost of their meal). It will be from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and the cost is $5.00 per person for all you can eat. We will have the Child Identification Program set up for any of the children who attend.

Meeting schedule: November – Veterans Day Program, December – Installation of Officers and Christmas Program, and January – Burns' Night. RWB Brian Coffey accepted our invitation to be our Feast of Tishri speaker in 2026.

Old Business: None.

New Business: The Chair, Nominating Committee (IB Roger Buterbaugh) gave the nominations for 2024 officers (enclosed). Elections will take place at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting. He reminded everyone of the motion passed at the July 19, 2023 Executive Committee meeting about lack of attendance of officers. It states, "The Executive Committee discussed again the lack of attendance at Lodge of Perfection meetings for Brethren in line for the four Bodies. After discussion a motion was made, seconded, and carried that any of the top five officers in each Body who do not attend at least 75% of the Lodge of Perfection meetings each November – October will be removed from the line, exceptions approved by the Personal Representative and Chair, Executive Committee". The clock started on November 1, 2023 and will run to October 31, 2024, at which time the General Secretary will provide the Chair, Nominating

Committee; Personal Representative; and Chair, Executive Committee a list of those officers in each body who did not meet the 75% threshold. To get the word out to everyone the General Secretary will announce this at Friday's Lodge of Perfection meeting and will include it in his next article of the Ashlar. Each body head will contact everyone in their line and inform them of the 75% attendance policy no later than January 31, 2024.

Business for the Good of the Order:

- HB Baron Conklin announced that Mount Hermon Lodge #304 approved a by-laws change to go to one meeting per month starting in January 2024.
- IB Phil Harris announced the Rose Hill Lodge #484 Boston butt's fundraiser on November 18.
- HB Ditmar Chavez announced the Columbus Commanderies Christmas Observance to be held December 10 at 3:00 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Center. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to allow the Columbus Commanderies to hold their observance at the Scottish Rite Center with the $50.00 usage fee to be paid.
- IB John Ohrt discussed the Columbus Christmas parade on December 2. The Columbus Masonic lodges will be marching in it.
- HB Jonas Barlow announced that Fort Benning Lodge #579 will confer the Entered Apprentice degree on November 27.

Personal Representative's Comments: IB Joseph Oelgoetz:

- Thanked everyone for attending this evening.
- The Sovereign Grand Commander sent him an e-mail about how well our latest issue of the Ashlar was written. IB Cole, 33^{o}, bought a paver for our paver garden. The new Grand Master of Masons in Georgia also purchased a paver.
- In the past he has been paying for jewels out of pocket (past officer jewels, Lily of the Valley jewels, etc.). However, this should be a Valley of Columbus purchase and not his personal purchase. He will develop a "jewel budget" and present it at the next Executive Committee meeting for approval.
- Asked questions for all of us to think about. Are you enjoying the Scottish Rite? What do you like and don't like about the Scottish Rite? Do you enjoy the Lodge of Perfection meetings? Are we meeting the needs of the younger Brethren? Are we meeting on the right night? Are you happy with the leadership of the Valley of Columbus? We need to revise our strategic plan and come up with ways to improve attendance. In the near future the Executive Committee will have a planning session to discuss these questions.

Our next Executive Committee meeting will be December 13, 2023 (note that this is a second Wednesday, not the third).
HB Baron Conklin gave the closing prayer and IB Phil Harris closed the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger W. Buterbaugh, 33º
General Secretary