

Columbus Scottish Rite Bodies
Post Office Box 727
Columbus, GA 31902-0727
Minutes of the Executive Committee
January 17, 2024

The Executive Committee was called to order by the Chair, Executive Committee, IB Phil Harris, 33°, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 17, 2024. Brother Matthew Burgess, 32°, gave the opening prayer and IB Harris lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Attendance was as follows:

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

Also present was HB Jonas Barlow, 32°, KCCH.

Instead of our regular Executive Committee meeting, this evening our Personal Representative lead a Strategic Planning meeting. The General Secretary previously provided each member of the Committee an electronic version of the Valley of Columbus Strategic Plan dated October 2020. IB Joseph Oelgoetz centered the discussion around the following questions:

- What is the mission/purpose of the Scottish Rite? Why should a Freemason join the Scottish Rite? Multiple missions/purposes.
- In support of our mission – what types of programs should we provide? Family programs; educational programs; required programs such as the Feast of Tishri,

Remembrance and Renewal, KSA Knighting and installation of officers; successful programs such as Burns' Night.

- Are we meeting on the right night? Is there a weeknight that would provide more participation?
- Are we meeting at the right time? 6:00 p.m. refreshments (dinner), 7:00 p.m. meeting.
- Dress code: Would relaxing the dress code from coat/suit and tie to business casual (shirt with a collar, business slacks – no jeans or shorts, and closed toe shoes – no sandals, flipflops) drive more members to attend? If not, why change?

The following are key points from the ensuing discussion:

- Assign a member to mentor each new member. The Strategic Plan states that the KSA will provide a Knight to the new member (and his significant other) to serve as their host for the first three meetings. The first line signer of the new member's petition should escort since he already knows the new member and can introduce him to the rest of the Brethren. The Strategic Plan already details how to onboard new members – we need to follow our plan.
- We need to push the College of Freemasonry and offer esoteric programs to our members. Many join to learn more about Freemasonry, we need to meet their need if we want them to attend. Suggestions included opening the Lodge of Perfection in long form and having the head of each of the four bodies give a presentation about one of their degrees.
- We should have a table lodge for St. John's Day at the Scottish Rite Center and invite all of the Lodges in the Columbus Scottish Rite Bodies area. This can serve as a good recruiting tool for non-Scottish Rite Masons who attend.
- We should portray the Hiram Legend in full form. Again, this can serve as a good recruiting tool for non-Scottish Rite Masons who attend.
- IB Oelgoetz asked everyone three things that Scottish Rite means to them. What motivates you to come to Lodge of Perfection meetings? The answers most given philanthropy, College of Freemasonry, fellowship and brotherhood, and leadership opportunities.
- There was discussion about members volunteering for positions and then not performing their duties. Remember the lesson in the South station – don't accept a job that you cannot or will not do. We need Brethren who will work.
- There was discussion again that our Strategic Plan is an excellent document, well thought out. The problem is that we are not executing that document. Everyone needs to take that part of the document that pertains to their area (i.e., recruitment, membership, retention, etc.) and execute.
- Are we meeting on the right night? Now that two of the Lodges in Columbus have gone from two meetings per month to one there are weekday nights available to move our meetings to. Some have said they would come if we met on any other night but Friday. Others have said that Friday is the only night they

can meet due to work and family obligations. Moving our meeting night would require by-laws change. After discussion it was decided to leave our meeting night as is.

- Are we meeting at the right time? Yes. Members cannot meet sooner because of work. The older members prefer not to meet later so they don't have to drive home late at night. Our current time is best.
- Dress code – some members of the Executive Committee agreed that coat and tie should be standard (polos in the hot summer months) to maintain the dignity of the meeting. Those who do not have a coat and tie can easily get one at a local store or Goodwill. Others said that the dress code should be relaxed. Members do not have time to go home and change between work and our meeting start time. Others, especially in the rural areas of our Valley, work on farms and don't want to come if they have to change. We should be more interested in having the member attend than what they are wearing. The Committee finally agreed that coat and tie will be the standard but we will not turn any member away who shows up for a meeting not wearing a coat and tie.
- There was discussion about doing a membership survey asking one question: what will get you to come to Lodge of Perfection meetings? IB Oelgoetz will work with HB Cameron Davis, 32°, KCCH to send out the survey.

There was a short business meeting after the Strategic Planning Meeting.

- HB Bayardo Reyes and HB Jonas Barlow volunteered to serve on a welcome committee, to ensure everyone who attends Lodge of Perfections meetings are warmly greeted.
- The General Secretary read for the second time the names of 15 Brethren who are three years or more in arrears in paying their dues (list enclosed). He sent a letter to each Brother and Brother Richard Luna reached out to them by telephone. They have not responded. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to suspend these 15 Brethren for non-payment of dues.
- Brother Matthew Burgess gave a report on the New Year's Fireworks fundraiser. We are waiting for the final audit from TNT but it appears that we made \$5,100 for our four days of work. He thanked everyone for helping with the fireworks stand. He is already preparing for the Independence Day fireworks sale next June.

Personal Representatives Comments. IB Oelgoetz:

- Thanked Brother Matthew Burgess, Fireworks Captain, and HB Jonas Barlow, Assistant Fireworks Captain, for their work leading the fireworks sale last month.
- Thanked everyone for braving the cold and coming to this evening's Strategic Planning session.
- Reminded everyone of our Spring Reunion next May. So far, we have seven petitions out – we need to get them in to the General Secretary. Proposed first

line signers should work closely with their petitioner to get their paperwork in.
And keep recruiting!

After the closing prayer by Brother Matthew Burgess, IB Harris closed this Executive Committee meeting at 7:53 p.m., peace and harmony prevailing.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger W. Buterbaugh, 33°
General Secretary and Venerable Master

Encl
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Brethren to be Suspended for
Non-Payment of Dues

- Jeffrey L. Davies
- John W. Denney III
- George R. Durbin
- John J. Hess
- Burt A. Hromy
- Joel W. Moore
- P.J. Morgan
- William L. Napier, Jr.
- James D. Nealy
- Abimelec Santiago
- Michael I. Skipper
- James N. Smith
- Brandon S. Thomas
- Michael D. Thomas
- Jeremy E. Wier