



**Sons In Retirement Inc.
Minutes of Special State Board Meeting
Hiddenbrooke Golf Club, Vallejo.**



Wednesday July 15, 2015 at 9:30am

State Board Members

President: Bob Hairston	Director, Region 3: Jimmie Johnson*
Vice President: Don Dill	Director, Region 4: Bob Staib
Secretary: Derek Southern	Director, Region 5: Robert Fox
Assistant Secretary: Ron Flagel	Director, Region 6: Dick DeVoe
Treasurer: Karl Ryden	Director, Region 7: Patrick Misener
Assistant Treasurer: Hal D'Ambrogia	Director, Region 8: Jerry Strain
Director, Region 1: Bob Roberts	Director, Region 9: Mark Stuart
Director, Region 2: Russ Salazar	Director, Region 10: James Filippo*

Invited Participants

Past Presidents: All	SAT: Walt Schick
State Advisor, Parliamentarian: Dwight Sale	SAT: Ed Benson
Incoming Director R4: George Gorohoff	

Call to Order

The Special Board meeting was called to order at 9:30AM by President Bob Hairston. Secretary Southern confirmed a quorum was present. Sir Bob Roberts gave the invocation and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance. President Hairston welcomed the invited participants.

Introduction

President Hairston explained he called this meeting because he wants to ensure that the Board go into the Annual meeting with a fresh positive attitude and show that the SIRInc leaders really know what they are doing. He also wanted to give the G&M group a proper opportunity to present and explain the RAMP process. The Board also needs to attend to a proposed rule change..

He reminded attendees that they needed to confirm their attendance at the President's dinner and if their wives are interested in the wives' program organized by Ed Benson.

Rules: Dwight Sale substituting for Larry Powers stated he would only read rules 164 and 385 and not the explanations (for which see Appendix A).

RULE 164. The Big Sir is an ex officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee on which he shall not serve in any capacity.

MSP

RULE 385. The Big Sir may appoint one or more members including himself to serve on a Branch Travel Committee to assist in the conduct of an effective travel program. Any elected officer of a Branch may serve as Branch Travel Chairman or as a member of the committee, but as a member of the BEC he must abstain from voting on Branch travel matters. (Revised 11/13/07, 7/15/15)

MSP

Dwight informed the Board that the G&M Committee has suggested the Branch Membership chair will now arrange for the production of the form 27. The name of the person performing this role will be required on Form 20 so we have a specific person to communicate with about the form. A later message asked the State Executive Committee interim for approval of Rule 131.1 (see Appendix).

PRESENTATION

Can the RAMP process help declining branches change to growing branches?

Summary: The SAT team presented a case for adopting a logical approach to support the administration of a Branch, and presented a toolbox (RAMP) to assist branches in becoming stronger. Four fundamental principles were mentioned several times:

- Culture: Branches should accept that growth is not only desirable, but possible, while recognizing this is a long-term change taking several years to fully implement. Getting new members involved is just the first step.
- Flexibility: Branches must review the available tools and use those applicable to their situation if they want to become a growing branch. There is no feasible "One solution fits all", we have to adapt to circumstances.
- Continuity: Because the span of a single Big Sir is typically one year a Branch should assign responsibility for each of the 4 areas of RAMP to Directors of the Branch. By doing this the Directors can create continuity and follow an Action plan over a period of years.
- Communication:
For change to occur open communication between Branches and their members, and between Branches, Area Governors, and Regional Directors is necessary. The logic of the proposed changes must be understood, and feedback must be encouraged so necessary changes can be incorporated into the RAMP toolbox.

The Board agreed that the approach could work and agreed to its adoption.

Presentations:

Derek Southern presented data collected from a survey of the 24 branches identified from Form 27 records as having grown in membership over the 4 year period 2011-2014. A description of a 'typical' successful branch was synthesized from the median data, and that lead into a branch evaluation and a RAMP discussion.

Attendees assessed this 'typical' branch, and then discussed the assessment of their own branch. A common idea from the Regional Directors was involving new members in the life of the branch. A common problem among branches was obtaining volunteers. How long should a branch wait before encouraging new members to volunteer? One branch favors orientation of new members at which the new member is told the branch expects 3 things from them: get involved, we have a spirit of volunteering so you may be asked to do your part, and bring in new guests.

Walt Schick described a 4 Step Process for obtaining volunteers for key positions such as Little Sir, or sometimes Big Sir. Walt showed a list of members who had joined a branch in the last 3 years and showed how their interests (from the application form) can lead to more candidates, or to a new activity! The example came from a branch having a problem with volunteers, their BEC found this approach very useful. Job descriptions for all the branch positions are posted on the State website. Interview the first choice for each role in person, NOT by phone, with a small team. Look for ways to remove objections, eg if finding a speaker is an objection, suggest a speaker committee. Succession planning for 1-3 years

ahead is strongly recommended. Too many branches still have not created a nominating committee, better training needed for Big Sirs. Keep records of key members who were considered by the nominating committee as a starting point for the next year's team, continuity is important.

Ed Benson introduced the four RAMP teams by showing the templates of job descriptions he downloaded from the website. The Goals sheet for Volunteerism (sheet 4.2 in the provided binder) was used as a model to show how future RAMP training meetings can be organized. The process has been tested in Area 8 and Area 2. Similar sheets were shown for Recruitment, Activities, Membership Relations, and Publicity. Branches will not be told HOW to operate, we will show them WHAT needs doing. Branches have flexibility to adapt ideas to solve their own problems. Small branches may not be able to set up all these committees, but the ideas are good. Get the job done with what you have available, flexibility is critical.

Each attendee used their branch assessment to create 4 goals, each with 2 actions.

The attendees agreed that the process presented to them has the capability to change SIR culture and turning membership around.

A vigorous discussion ensued concerning the time available for RAMP training during the October State training. Training Chair Mark Stuart stated that Regional Directors had control of the agenda for their region, and they could allocate as much time as they needed for presenting the RAMP process. He wants BASIC SIR to be taught so that Branches are run effectively, ie a focus on operation principles and is willing to allow 2 hrs in the morning session for the process described; the whole process includes Branch Assessment, 4 components of RAMP, Goals and Action Plans, and how to solve Volunteer problems.

Material that is taught each year (eg How to be a great Big Sir) is a prime candidate for modern training methods such as video presentations. This would ensure that the key areas were presented consistently by an expert, and branches could discuss the video topics and decide which were applicable to their branch. Sir Dwight Sale pointed out that without a solid administrative framework at a Branch the RAMP process would be irrelevant.

Mark Stuart said he has asked RDs to identify experts in all the roles, Officers as well as RAMP components, to be available for training each Region. Mark reported that his branch discussed the 4 Ramp functions in mid 2014, by October they appointed 4 of their 6 Directors to be responsible for the functions. As a result their membership is already up by 16 members this year. The process they adopted is less formal than that presented to this meeting, but applying the concept of **flexibility** has worked well for them.

It was agreed that further RAMP training would be provided to branches in early to mid 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.