

San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association

Board Meeting Minutes – SDWFWA Library

April 12, 2026

Directors:

President	Gary Anderson (Present)
Vice-President	Erika Cheswick (Present)
Treasurer	Pete Sterling (Present)
Secretary	Oi Ling Kwan (Present)
Member Shop Director	Dallas Keck (Present)
Design in Wood Representative	James Strawn (Present)
Past President	Lou Adzima (Present)

Invited Guests: Diana Ram, Dara Sariaslani (Membership Team)
Members present: Tom Pak, Paul Shankin, Rick VanHatten, John Goodrich, Kevin Swanson, Dave Hubbard, Justin Goodridge, Susan Darrah

Meeting Minutes

Meeting is called to order at 1:31 p.m.

Welcome and Announcements

Gary

Gary welcomes all members. The first part of the meeting will be devoted to the discussion on membership fee increase and inputs from members are welcome. The only rules he emphasizes is that only one person speaks at-a-time.

He also announces that Diana Ram has accepted the position as Human Resources Director.

Membership Fee Increase

Overview and Objectives

Gary

When the Member Shop opened in 2017, it had 125 members utilizing 3,000 square feet with used and donated equipment. Since then, membership fee increases applied only to new Silver and Gold Memberships without affecting members who joined previously. Upon renewal, Member Shop fees remain the same as when they first join – Grandfathered). This practice has resulted in a complicated fee schedule as we now have four different levels. Meanwhile expenses continued to go up with inflation. These expenses include insurance, utilities, equipment maintenance and replacement, consumables such as abrasive, adhesives and finishes, lease payments, common area charges, etc.

With the acquisition of Suite D in 2025, expenses have increased by \$10k per month.

The funding for the Shop has always come from three avenues: Membership Fees, Education Classes, and Holiday Gift Sales. Along with efforts to increase revenue from classes and gift sales, we must look into membership fees increase for the Shop.

Proposal

Dallas

For discussion starting point, Dallas puts forth a membership fee as it exists currently compared with inflation-adjusted fees from 2017 to 2021. He also points out that the Shop Membership turn over has been low and the waitlist is substantial. There is no local comparison known. In considering the Fee increase, certain principles must be applied: that it must be fair and consistent to avoid creating resentment, that it maintains accessibility and affordability, that sustaining shop members cannot be assumed, and that volunteers should be acknowledge and encouraged.

Dallas recommends the following:

- Price for 5 extra slots be raised to \$75.
- A special “Sustaining Member” be created for donors.
- Bronze Membership be set at \$50 with a \$15 discount for online payment.
- Board of Directors commitment to review rates annually.

Input from Members

All

A few members submitted their comments to the Board prior to this meeting. All those who are present have opportunities to express their opinions. Several themes emerge as follows:

- All levels of Membership are incredible value, especially when the annual fee is applied as hourly rate.
- For Bronze members to get coffee and donuts at the Eye Openers, merchandise discount, participate in SIGs, and professional photograph of their projects should warrant at least \$50-70 annual fees.
- Sustaining members who want to support the Shop but do not use the Shop Slots can choose to pay the current rate or keep their old rate.
- Those who do have time or do not wish to volunteer should have a buy-out option of paying \$1,000.
- Volunteers need to be recognized. Paying money to get out of volunteering sends the wrong message.
- All fee structures need to be equitable. Everyone in the same category should pay the same annual fee. The gap between members whose annual fees have been “Grandfathered” and those of the current new member is substantial in some cases. To minimize the financial burden, the adjustment for closing the gap should be spread out over 5 years.

- Some members are on a fixed income and paying an increase in membership fee may be challenging. Tutoring may be an avenue to bring in additional income.

Deliberation by the Board

After deliberation, Gary charges the Membership Team (represented by Diana and Dara) to return to the next Board meeting with recommendations for the following:

- 5-year plan to close the gap between Grandfathered membership fees and the current membership fees.
- A fee structure to raise about \$4,000/month from membership fees based on the numbers of members in each category.
- Appropriate annual Bronze Membership Fee: \$50, \$60 or \$70?

Designed in Wood Update

Jim

Jim reports that there are 100 entries currently. He would like to see more entries submitted.

Steering Team Update

Erika

The Steering Team's vision for SDFWA's future is not just a Shop, but a campus which can house a variety of activities. A campus not only for San Diego but internationally.

Jim suggests renting out shop space as an alternative revenue.

New Items

Lou points out that a sign is needed for the train which SDWFA is helping to rebuild. Such sign to indicate SDFWA's involvement and contribution.

Lou asks if the webpage is complete. Gary suggests to bring Mike Lewis to the next Board meeting to give an update.

With no further business, meeting is adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Oi Ling Kwan