

## Opera House Board Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, March 19, 2019 10:00 am

Present: Mary-Carel Verden, Gen Wilberg, Bill Brehm, Jon Lewis, John Beutel, Tass Johnson

Absent: Jim Borling, Paul Lawrence, Mayor Tim Swadley

Staff: Nicki Dowland, Victoria Flynn

1. The meeting was called to order by President Verden at 10:00 am.
2. Motion to approve 1/15/19 minutes. Passed unanimously.
3. Director's Report presented by Brehm, 10:05 am.
  - a. We are heading into the busiest months of the spring season—April & May.
  - b. Tom Sharpe was cancelled on Mar. 8. It was the lightest show in Brehm's history with the Opera House.
  - c. Both Marty Stuart shows were sold out. Marcia Ball & Sonny Landreth put on a great show, though it was longer than most. Sam Bush was added to the schedule late. It was a good show, but did not sell out.
  - d. Selling merch in the Mayor's office is working out well. The artists often comment while on stage and think of themselves as "temporary mayors" of Stoughton.
  - e. Coming up this week is Michael Perry, Rodney Crowell, and The Subdudes. None of those shows are sold out, but they are all well over 300. Leo Kottke is sold out and Asleep At The Wheel is very close to selling out both shows.
  - f. There is an ad coming out in the Wisconsin State Journal Spring Arts Guide.
  - g. We are working with SOHFA to book for Catfish on July 4-7.
  - h. We are also in the midst of booking for next season. We'll see the return of some favorites and some exciting new performers.
  - i. City Staff are moving out of their offices beginning at the end of next month. Many ideas are coming to the surface from patrons, staff, ushers, and the public.
  - j. The Gift Shop is doing well and getting new signs soon.
    - i. What is selling well? The Coat Check and beverages. Some snacks and t-shirts.
  - k. Bill is working with SOHFA and a teacher from the UW system on a strategic development plan.
  - l. Music Appreciation begins Monday, April 1 and runs for 7 consecutive weeks.
  - m. Violinist Madlen Breckbill will be hosting a Stoughton Chamber Music Festival in August.
4. Financial Report presented by Brehm, 10:30 am.
  - a. Closing out at the end of February, the second half of the season is selling well.
  - b. Brehm will keep financial reports close by when booking for next season and keep the program diverse.
  - c. Jazz shows are harder to sell, but patrons enjoy them when they come.
  - d. Should we spend more on advertising? Are we utilizing our resources? Sponsorships?
  - e. We must remember the Opera House has a value that goes beyond dollars. The plan is to stay true to the character of the Opera House.
  - f. More offerings at the Opera House will require more staff.
  - g. Brehm would like to add a small performance space on the main floor for smaller, local events.
5. SOHFA Update presented by Lewis
  - a. The strategic plan is underway which will also include a survey.
  - b. SOHFA continues to plan for Catfish in July.
  - c. SOHFA is working on a new grant application with Betsy McClimon of The Wahlin Foundation Inc.
6. Motion to adjourn by Beutel, second by Johnson, 11:08.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Flynn