

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

Present: Jon Lewis, John Beutel, Mary-Carel Verden, Bill Brehm, Jim Borling, Paul Lawrence

Absent: Lisa Reeves, Genevieve Wilberg, Mayor Tim Swadley

Staff: Brandi Brandes, Victoria Flynn

1. The meeting was called to order by President Verden--10:04 am.
2. Motion to approve October 15, 2019 Minutes by Lawrence, second by Lewis—10:05 am.
3. Director's Report—10:06 am.
  - a. We have been very busy with successful shows: Rhiannon Giddens (2), Steve Earle (2), Richard Thompson, Pokey LaFarge, Iris Dement, Anais Mitchell.
  - b. Having a three-person staff can be very challenging during weeks when we have four show weeks. It would be hard to maintain over the long term. We are at capacity for what current staff can do.
    - i. We would like to have a set production crew to allow Opera House necessary hours to maintain administration and communication with City staff.
  - c. An article was recently published in the Courier Hub about the new piano. It helps to build momentum for the development of the first floor.
  - d. During the winter down time, we will be bringing various historic items out of storage to be displayed on the second floor, reorganizing, and cleaning.
  - e. We have gotten a quote to restore the three rooms on the first floor which including replacing the flooring and ceiling tiles, painting the walls, and adding better lighting.
  - f. We continue to work on the strategic planning process while moving forward with licensing to add alcohol sales.
    - i. To start, we plan to work with catering companies to offer refreshment sales during big shows.
  - g. We are looking into the purchase of additional seat pads & limited premium cushions to offer as an upcharge with ticket sales.
  - h. We are reinvestigating what a seating upgrade would look like in the room to "enhance the comfort".
  - i. The development of the first floor is getting support and enthusiasm from visitors. We're also asking for feedback from the business community.
  - j. We are planning a high ticket fundraiser for Feb. 15. With funds going to development of the first floor.
  - k. Booking for the 2020-21 season will begin in January.
  - l. The City budget passed
    - i. Spoke about the future of our print advertising. We are still in disagreement over the solution.
      1. We do have a digital version of the Arts & Culture Guide online, but we are looking at options.
      2. We will likely form a sub-group to look at marketing.
  - m. In January we will be retrofitting LED stage lights that mimic incandescent.

- i. Lights will cost about 50% less and reduce power usage overall.
  - ii. SOHFA has been holding on to \$14,000 for this purpose.
- 4. Financial Report—Brehm 10:56 am.
  - a. Profit is up and we are tracking positively.
    - i. Expenses are up by \$7,000.
    - ii. Contributions and Brochure revenue are up.
    - iii. Memberships are up \$15,000.
    - iv. Order fees and ticket sales are also up.
  - b. September shows were on trend as not selling as well as the rest of the season. Womack was down, but the two Giddens shows were very profitable.
    - i. Kaki King was the greatest loss early in the season.
  - c. Ticket sales are pacing ahead.
  - d. Guarantees for 2020 spring shows are not on this report.
  - e. Revenues come in before costs go out so there are future expenses not yet recorded.
- 5. SOHFA Report—Lewis 11:07 am.
  - a. The piano article was published.
  - b. SOHFA talked about the strategic plan.
  - c. Working on the February 15 fundraiser.
- 6. Music Appreciation—John Beutel 11:15 am
  - a. Attendance increased by 100.
  - b. It was a great season.
  - c. The piano is a big asset.
  - d. There was great promotion in the Hub.
  - e. The spring session is almost all scheduled.
- 7. Lewis moves to adjourn, second by Lawrence. 11:18 am.

Respectfully submitted by Victoria Flynn