

## Opera House Board Meeting Minutes: Tuesday September 19, 2017 – 10:00am

Present: President Mary-Carel Verden, Vice-President Jon Lewis, John Beutel, Gen Wilberg, Pat O'Connor, Paul Lawrence.

Absent/excused: Jim Borling, Mayor Donna Olson

Staff: Bill Brehm, Julia Blaikie, Nicole Richmond

1. The meeting was called to order by President Verden at 10:03am.
2. Motion by O'Connor to approve 7/18 minutes; seconded by Lawrence. Passed unanimously.
3. Director's report presented:
  - i) August was busy. Ticket on-sale event went smoothly; met 40% of annual projected sales on day one. High percentage of online buyers.
  - ii) Changes in place: no series discount, changes to obstructed view tickets, etc. Complaints have been minimal.
  - iii) "Population 485" shows on front page of State Journal—boosted sales immensely.
  - iv) Had a breather over the week of Labor Day to use some vacation hours.
  - v) Fall season began last weekend—all went well. Four shows coming up this week. Shows early in the season carry more risk, but some doing surprisingly well.
  - vi) Working on more consistency in our Facebook marketing pushes. Seeing positive feedback already.
  - vii) Oct will be packed with shows.
  - viii) Music Appreciation events cancelled for Sept. Consideration for how to reach would-be attendees. We no longer have Ben to help out; figuring out how best to handle the events.
  - ix) Still need to order more cushions—same ones? Different? Also need to buy a rolling desk with storage space for sound board set-up.
  - x) Figuring out whether to cancel Tom Wopat. The show missed the ticket on-sale, not selling well at nearby venues, etc. Tricky.
  - xi) Piano project: buy a new one? How to get it inside?
  - xii) Online buyers can round up their order to the next dollar as a donation.
  - xiii) Charging \$1 for mailed ticket orders.
  - xiv) Thinking about potential with ad space on print@home tickets as well as other marketing options.
  - xv) Soon it will be time to crank down the chandeliers to replace bulbs.
4. Financials presented by Director Brehm:
  - i) Wynonna sold out; many shows through spring are virtually sold out. Strong kick-off to the season.
  - ii) Added The Milk Carton Kids.
  - iii) We are at 91k in memberships for the 17-18 season.
  - iv) Had brainstorming meeting with finance personnel to iron out concerns, issues with credit card fees, etc.

- v) Estimate the subtraction of 5.5% from each ticket sold to adjust for comp tickets sold.
- vi) Had budget meeting with the Mayor & Finance Director to fix some things that were mis-coded due to our operating much differently than other City departments.
- vii) Plenty of time to push low-selling shows. Optimistic.
- viii) Seek pre-end-of-year donations? All membership funds within season should be allocated to this season.

5. SOHFA:

- i) Recent higher membership donations bring us closer to last year's revenue. Made 6k maybe? Will know more by next meeting.
- ii) CRMF is great event for community. The revenue is decent, especially considering revenue from comparable events.
- iii) Trying to get in touch with Tom Matson to figure out how much \$ from the grant remains.
- iv) Sending letter to top 200 Opera House donors requesting SOHFA donations.
- v) Piano project? Seat repairs or possible padding? Jeffris Foundation?

6. Next meeting Oct 17.

7. Motion by O'Connor, Beutel to adjourn meeting at 11:00am; carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Blaikie