

Minutes of the October 27, 2021 Meeting of the Arena Theater Board of Directors

1. Call to Order – Beattie called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call – Present: Beattie, Joakimides; Andersen, Archer, McMurtry, Wilkinson, Sussman, Crutcher, More, Boyd, Marrinan and Moseley as well as Jean Ohman, Steve McLaughlin, Molly Morgan, Roberta Rams, John Thompson, Laurie Barton, Ronna Frost and Maria Arana.

Absent: None

Minutes: Archer

3. Privilege of the Floor/Correspondence/Suggestion Box – Nothing.

4. Approval of Minutes from September 29, 2021 Board meeting – The final draft Minutes had been circulated earlier in the week. Beattie moved to approve the Minutes, Sussman seconded and the Minutes were approved.

REPORTS:

5. President's Report – Beattie was happy to see all Board members and visitors for this meeting. He noted that we had received a \$6,500 gift from Surf Market last week in honor of its 65th Anniversary and wanted to publicly thank them for their generosity.

6. Treasurer's Report – Andersen reported that in addition to our regularly-scheduled film we had one Film Club event last month. Cinema lost \$2,610, Film Club broke even and Opera had season ticket sales with a profit of \$1,135. Membership/donations totaled \$2,687 while operating expenses were \$5,549 for a net operating loss of \$2,862. We used \$13,800 from the SVO Grant and that brought total income from all classes for the month to \$9,222.

7. Standing Committee Reports -

a. Finance Committee -

Discussion and vote regarding Restricted Funds policy – Archer reported on the changes that the Fin Comm has suggested to revise our Restricted Funds Policy so that it will provide more control for the Board's management of the funds. From now on, when a restricted fund is to be opened the donor and Board should agree on length of time and dollar amount being sought. The proposal was discussed and Sussman made a Motion to revise our Restricted Funds Policy consistent with the circulated proposal, Archer seconded the Motion and it was approved.

b. Membership Committee – Joakimides reported that membership is holding steady at 536. The Committee is working on the Fall/Winter Fundraising Letter to be sent out by mid-November.

New membership perks proposal – Joakimides reported on this proposal to revise the membership perks. The proposal would eliminate the Cinema Stars Program and incorporate some of those perks to other membership levels. These include:

Membership – Members Rewards Card, \$3 discount on Film Club, 1 medium popcorn (single) or 2 medium popcorn (double)

Sponsor Memberships (\$240) – Members Rewards Card, \$3 discount on Film Club, 10 medium popcorns

Patron Membership (\$500) – Members Rewards Card, \$3 discount on Film Club, medium popcorn all year long

Benefactor Membership (\$1,000) – Members Rewards Card, \$3 discount on Film Club, any size popcorn all year long and 10 movie passes.

Wilkinson moved that we adopt this proposal for new membership perks, Joakimides seconded and the Motion was approved.

c. Fund Development Committee -

Board vote on fall fundraising letter – Joakimides presented the draft letter which had been circulated previously along with the draft Planned Giving Brochure. McMurtry noted that it was well written and nicely spirited reflecting well on our Theater. Joakimides moved to approve the draft Fall Fundraising Letter, Beattie seconded the Motion and it was approved.

Board vote on planned giving brochure – Wilkinson described that the Committee has been working in this as an additional funding source. The Brochure was generated by the Committee and, if approved, it will be mailed out with the Fall Fundraising Letter and will also be available in the Theater lobby. Joakimides moved that the Brochure be adopted, Wilkinson seconded and the Motion was approved.

d. Programming Committee (includes cinema, live, telecasts, publicity, and film club)

Cinema – Marrinan reviewed upcoming movies over the next month.

Live – Boyd reported that she is working on a live show for February, 2022. It will be a singer/songwriter solo performer and a sit-down audience. Our offer has been accepted, but there are several contingencies that would allow cancellation of the event if necessary.

Telecasts – Boyd reported that we had to cancel last week's Opera because of poor satellite connections. We had a sold-out showing, but will have to re-schedule the event for November 6, 2021. The first Bolshoi Ballet for this season will be November 21, 2021.

Publicity – Moseley reported that, in response to requests, we now have a second bar on our website which will lead to a detailed description of our COVID Protocols. It is already on the individual pages for events, it is also accessible from a bar at the bottom of the web page.

Film Club – Steve McLaughlin thanked Cheeta Sussman and Joel Chaban for hosting Film Club for the last couple of weeks while he was away and noted that it was great to be back in the Theater and able to see films on a big screen. Film Club will resume the prior schedule from when we were interrupted last year and will show those films through the end of 2021. The Committee will meet in late November to schedule the first three months' events for 2022. He noted that attendees have been complying with our masking and distancing requirements and there have been no complaints.

e. Facilities Committee – McMurtry reported that we have been preparing bids in advance of completing Grant Applications. There was a question as to whether the roof over the Green Room may need replacement and the quote for the job (including permits, removal and disposal of the old roof and a new two-layer roof) was \$22,500. He inspected the roof and it still looks in good shape so that we need not pursue a grant for this at this time.

He did also begin to investigate the cost of replacement carpeting and is awaiting a bid for a complete re-carpeting of the Theater with a higher grade of carpeting with installation as well as removal and disposal of the old carpeting. He will present this bid to the Fin Comm for review.

f. **Personnel Committee** – Archer noted that all employees save one had been vaccinated and the one unvaccinated employee did not object to weekly testing.

OLD BUSINESS

8. Reopening committee update – Boyd reported that the Committee is discussing the complaint that people in the auditorium have been removing their masks during the showing and it was decided that the ushers would remind patrons when they are seated (as well as the additional signage and PSA trailer). The majority view on the Reopening Committee is that we do not need to require proof of vaccination for all events at the Theater.

9. Discussion and decision regarding requiring vaccinations or negative Covid tests for all theater attendees, staff and volunteers - Archer tried to frame the issue by reminding all that the Mendocino County Health Officer issued an Order that requires posting a Placard for all establishments where food and drink are served. This Order applies to our Theater and we must post one of the three Placards beginning November 1, 2021. Andersen showed each of the three proposed Placards and described their differences.

Steve McLaughlin noted that the Theater already would qualify for either Green or Yellow (as to all employees being vaccinated/tested weekly). Ronna Frost noted that she was against any vaccine mandate because it discriminates and divides the community, would reduce the number of people that would come to the Theater and would be too much to impose on our community. She suggested a hybrid that would allow Committees/Producers to have different requirements than the overall Theater.

Archer shared additional information that had been gathered since the last meeting. He discussed the reason(s) why Opera had previously requested leave to require proof of vaccination and disagreed with the view that season ticket sales were the only reason for the request. A straw poll at the last Opera showed 100% in favor of proof requirements and 95% who would not attend without it. He shared straw poll results from NT-Live and Film Club with similar results. He advocated that the Board approve the Yellow Placard with the caveat that Committees/Producers could come before the Board for approval of a proof requirement for their events. Sussman agreed with that view based on the science, the state of the pandemic and his belief that the Yellow Placard would be the one that would be well-received by our community.

Beattie cited recent County case figures and wondered when people will have a lower threshold re COVID risk. McMurtry added that his decision to get vaccinated was a decision for himself, his family and his community. He cautioned against the politics of this Placard decision and felt that our cleaning protocols and air scrubbers are working well. Wilkinson added that this is a decision that we need to make, not based on our personal feelings, but a decision that would be best for our community. He believes that the Yellow Placard would be acceptable to our community and if any Committee/Producer wants permission to have a proof requirement they should be able to do so and feel safe in going to those events.

Crutcher added that because people in the audience can eat and drink during the performance that this might compromise the safety of all others in the auditorium and she was in favor of allowing a proof of vaccination requirement. Jean Ohman reported that the Opera regular attendees were adamant about wanting a proof of vaccination requirement for their events. She would prefer the Green Placard, across the board, but noted that the Yellow Placard with proof requirements for Committees/ Producers upon request would be an acceptable compromise. She noted that there were no complaints about this requirement for the first two Opera presentations this season.

More said she understood that the older demographics of the audiences for some of these programs may well cause them to need proof of vaccination to feel safe in the Theater. At the same time, she pointed out that the Theater has, essentially, been operating under the conditions of the Red Placard and people keep coming to our Theater and she questioned whether there was anything to worry about. She said she felt that a Yellow Placard was the choice that most in our community might support.

Archer made the point that this Board has already established a precedent by approving the Opera Committee's request for a proof of vaccination requirement for its presentations this season and that, even if the Board adopts the Yellow Placard, that precedent would apply to future requests from other Committees/Producers.

Anderson mentioned that someone had suggested a "vaccination night" for our first-run movies at which proof of vaccination would be required and suggested that the Reopening Committee might consider this going forward. Molly Morgan agreed that the audiences for Cinema and Live are very different than Opera and the other programs, but feels a proof of vaccination requirement is discriminatory and urged the Board to "sit tight" and just wait on any other proof requests.

Marrinan noted that there are many long-time Cinema regulars that are not attending movies because they do not feel safe without a proof of vaccination requirement. Archer pointed out that the middle course of the Yellow Placard, with the precedent allowed upon request, would allow us to prudently manage the Theater and better ensure its financial stability. Wilkinson added that even if we adopt the Yellow Placard, since we've already allowed Opera to have a proof requirement we must exempt that program for this decision. He suggested that more information and polling from the other Committees/Producers would be necessary to better inform the Board's decision-making.

Sussman moved that we adopt the Yellow Placard, seconded by Wilkinson and the Motion was passed.

10. Board and staff donations toward Halloween candy, part of PAMA's Halloween event – Joakimides reported on the Theater's contribution to Halloween on Main Street this year. She purchased candy and some flats of fruit which she will be handing out in front of the Theater. The Board agreed to individually contribute to offset the costs.

NEW BUSINESS:

10. Next meeting date and time —It was agreed that the next meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on December 8, 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.