

**WHEELER OPERA HOUSE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

DATE: Wednesday, March 13, 2009

TIME: Noon

LOCATION: Wheeler Lobby

PRESENT: Board Members: Ron Erickson, Chairperson
Brian O'Neil, Vice Chairperson
Matthew Loden
Pamela Cunningham
Barbara Conviser

Absent: Jane M. Battaglia
Cathy Markle, Secretary

Staff: Gram Slaton, Executive Director
Heather Larson, Senior Operations Manager
Rose Bennett, Senior Finance Manager

RECORDED BY: Jeanne Kayne, Senior Administrative Assistant

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Erickson called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 11, 2009 MINUTES.

Chairperson Erickson called for the approval of minutes from February 11, 2009. Cunningham made the motion with O'Neil seconding the motion. The motion carried and the minutes were unanimously approved.

III. FINANCIALS.

Erickson asked Bennett if City departments have been on time making their loan payments, and Bennett replied that they have. He also commented that the Wheeler was ahead of budget so far this year and that Slaton was doing a good job. Slaton mentioned that all the closings in January and February from the Residences At the Little Nell helped with keeping the RETT healthy. Loden asked about what the employee housing fund was in reference to. Slaton explained every department in the City is required to contribute to that fund.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

21CMP OPEN HOUSE

The Wheeler is gearing up for the April 6 open house meetings, holding two sessions –11:30am – 1pm and 5:30pm – 7pm. Farewell Mills Gatsch and Rowland + Broughton will have displays of relevant previous work, as well as some simple rough-outs of the proposed Wheeler expansion. There will be very light refreshment for the public, and each session will begin with educational tours of the backstage areas. The sessions will conclude with FMG doing a formal presentation similar to their December RFP presentation. Slaton has created a draft of a newspaper ad for public notice and for the Wheeler Board's review and input. Slaton noted that it would be great to have Board representation at both sessions.

WHEELER BOOKLET

The new Wheeler booklet has been well received and several cartons of them have been distributed to the public through key live events at the Wheeler, as well as through the Wheeler's ALL ACCESS Grassroots TV show and casual distribution through the box office. It was so well received it was suggested the Wheeler produce a hardbound version of it. The Wheeler is in discussion with Aspen Historical Society to have the book available for purchase in their gift shop, and Aspen Music Festival and School has taken several cartons for distribution at Harris Hall. A companion DVD is in the development process and should be completed in time for the May anniversary date. This DVD will include a number of interviews with long time locals. The book concentrates more on history, while the DVD will concentrate more on community testimonials.

PIT REPAIR

The tear-out and replacement of the pit floor and substructure is on target for May. The working plans and an Invitation To Bid are now out to contractors. This work will require taking the building down for the entire month, so there will be little to no public activity.

STAFF LOAN TO AMFS

The Wheeler will loan four staff members to the Aspen Music Festival and School this summer, in order to help alleviate their staffing and budget issues during what everyone anticipates to be a difficult summer for all the arts groups. Loden mentioned that the AMFS is very appreciative to have access to the Wheeler staff and he thinks they will fit very comfortably into the AMFS logistics.

21CMP UPDATE

FMG was in town for three days last month for presentations of three possible program directions. Slaton extended a thank-you to those Board members who were able to participate in the meetings with the architect team. FMG also met with Community Development on Pre-Application issues and found everyone to be very cooperative and positive towards the project. Since FMG's return, we have had a phone conference with Jaffe Holden, the acoustical firm on the team, about tech equipment and expected usage. FMG will be back in Aspen in a week for concentrated programming meetings at the end of March. They will then come back April 5 for their first meetings with P&Z and HPC, as well as to help with the open house meetings. The meetings with P&Z and HPC will take place on March 25; Erickson suggested that the Board members would want to attend.

V. ACTION ITEMS.

REVISED MISSION STATEMENT

Erickson thanked Cunningham for creating a draft of a revised mission statement. Discussion then took place on the individual points and what the mission statement should be. Cunningham expressed her reasoning behind her suggestion for changing the mission statement. She felt it needed to encompass the expansion and to include what the Board and the Wheeler are going forward with now. Suggestions were made and considered, and the group came up with a proposed revision, as follows:

The mission of the Wheeler Opera House is to support and advocate for the preservation, sustainability and future of the historic venue and its property through exceptional performance experiences for residents, guests and performers, and to enrich the cultural assets of the Roaring Fork Valley.

Erickson asked for a motion to approve the proposed revision of the mission statement. O'Neil made the motion to approve the revised mission statement; the motion was seconded by Conviser. The motion carried and the revised draft of the mission statement was unanimously approved.

GOALS

Erickson suggested that the educational opportunities portion from the previous mission statement be moved into the Goal statement. Please provide any suggestions or discussion items to Gram. There will be a discussion and possible adoption of these items at the next Board meeting.

VI. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS.

ORDINANCES OF 1979 & 2002

Erickson stated that Assistant City Manager Ready sent out an email to the City Attorney John Worcester, and that Worcester suggested that a new ordinance with changes to the 2002 ordinance language that created the endowment be drafted. Slaton said that he had sent such a draft to Ready and was waiting for his response. He did say after talking to him that Ready suggested keeping it as simple as possible so as not to raise any flags or to suggest that there are too many changes being made to the 2002 document. Slaton hopes to have the draft for the Board by April.

VII. MEMBERS COMMENTS:

Cunningham attended Aspen Historical Society's production of "Bully" and mentioned that the audience would fit perfectly in a new smaller facility. Kudos to the cross-selling of the Oates concert series with the posters mounted in the bathrooms; Cunningham suggested that dates be added to the posters.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

IX. OLD BUSINESS UPDATE:

Slaton mentioned he pulled out the 2005 Genovese-Vanderhoof organizational audit to see how far the Wheeler has come. Slaton thought it would be interesting to do a five-year review and close out the audit. Several Board members agreed that this would be an appropriate action, and Erickson suggested a State of the Wheeler memo be prepared to forward to City Council, with attention being brought to the advances that have been implemented and successful at the Wheeler.

X. NEW BUSINESS: None

XI. ADJOURNMENT.

Erickson called for a motion to adjourn. O'Neil seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:14pm.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2009, IN THE WHEELER SECOND FLOOR LOBBY.