

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

DATE: Wednesday, October 12, 2011  
TIME: Noon  
LOCATION: Wheeler Second Floor Lobby  
PRESENT: Board Members: Ron Erickson, Chairperson  
Brian O'Neil, Vice Chairperson  
Richard Cohen  
Bruce Fretz  
Tom Kurt  
Luke Seamans

Absent: Matthew Loden, Ex-Officio

Guests: Jeff Pendarvis, City Asset Manager  
Steve Bossart, City Asset Manager

Staff: Gram Slaton, Executive Director  
Amy Kaiser, Sr. Manager – Operations  
Lauren Pierce, Marketing Coordinator

RECORDED BY: Lauren Pierce, Marketing Coordinator

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. APPROVAL OF August 10, 2011 MINUTES**

Erickson called for the motion to approve the minutes of August 10, 2011. Cohen called for the motion to approve the minutes; Fretz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Board reviewed the Financial Report for September 2011. Slaton pointed out to the Board that the current financial report would follow the same track as in past years, where significant monies were added to the Wheeler savings account, if we had not taken on the remodel project.

**IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Slaton introduced the Board to Amy Kaiser, the Wheeler's new Senior Manager for Operations. Amy joins us directly from the Yale Alumni Chorus Foundation where she worked since June 2007. Prior to that, Amy was with the Orlando Shakespeare Festival for a year, and before that was with the Pearl Theatre Company in New York City for four and a half years. She brings a wide range of experience to the job, which is great because she will be hitting the ground running.
- The third MountainSummit: Mountainfilm In Aspen festival saw not only improved attendance but greatly improved financial results. From a subsidy of \$39 per head in 2009, to \$11.50 subsidy in 2010, to \$3 in 2011. Once again, it was an

excellent mix of awareness, inspiration, and incredible storytelling, with truly moving speakers and special guests.

- Our 2011 – 2012 shows are up and will be on sale to the public on Monday, October 17. The good news is that we are partnering in some way or other with many of our Aspen arts groups, something we haven't seen this much of since 2008. Groups include the Wheeler Associates, Theatre Aspen, Jazz Aspen Snowmass, and even Steve's Guitars in Carbondale.
- Aspen Film's Filmfest was a mixed bag this year, with better attendance numbers but a steep drop in its box office receipts due to discounting and a more complicated and expensive bill for services due to "extras" that they built into the program. The Wheeler has been put in the position of being supportive once again and taking over \$4,200 off the settlement, but Aspen Film has been warned that this is the last time that the Wheeler can make this kind of adjustment for them.
- We have been reluctant to give any fall dates to the Wheeler Film Society to book, because Aspen Constructors and the Asset Management team asked us at the beginning of the renovation project to withhold bookings as much as possible during the construction period. While the Wheeler staff is targeted to move back into its offices starting November 7, it is anticipated that the Fiercely Local team will be working extra hours to get the restaurant space open and that this will impact the ability to book during the workweek. Also, we anticipate that City Council will have some reaction to the amount of subsidy that the Wheeler Film Society program requires and this has made for further reluctance on my part until we can present and receive feedback on this information.
- Slaton asked the Board to consider the next construction project for the Wheeler to undertake, once the remodel concludes in a few weeks, and suggested that it be the Wheeler balcony, with a target for execution of Spring 2013. The Board is all in favor for moving forward with the balcony improvements, although Cohen remembered there being constraints from various historical preservation concerns about changing the balcony during the 1983-1984 renovation.

## V. ACTION ITEMS

*None scheduled*

## VI. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

### *Update on Board Seat*

The application process for the open Board seat is now closed. City Council is in the interview process until the end of January.

### *Update on Basement/First Floor Remodel*

Pendarvis expressed that the basement remodel has made good progress and has finalized all phases of the interior design. The team is looking at October 20, 2011 to sign off the upper portion of the restaurant space to the tenant. They are currently finalizing the design of the front steps leading into the restaurant space. They are also hanging duct work in the alley from the

kitchen to the roof, which will be finished by the end of the week. Slaton informed the Board, that since the last meeting, the team found the 4 inch waste lines from the lobby had been 90% closed off due to their pitch, along with cracks across the tops, sometimes as much as five feet in length. The construction team replaced all horizontal pipelines saving the City thousands of dollars if this has become a catastrophic event later. Slaton explained his goals for the construction project are to focus on the air handling system, hand over the tenant space and then focus on the basement offices.

*Update on Direction from City Council*

Slaton explained to the Board that City Council put the Wheeler on their top 10 goals for this year. Council set a goal for the Wheeler - to run more efficiently. Slaton created a 22 page document to explain the Wheeler's programs and present/anticipated subsidies. The Board believes the document is wonderful and encouraging. Fretz called for a motion that the Board first approves the document and second direct Slaton to proceed in the manner of programming the individual events and festivals as he has been. After a short discussion, Erikson seconded the motion and the Board passed the motion, unanimously.

VII. MEMBERS COMMENTS

Fretz informed the Board that in 2013, the Wheeler will be 125 years old, requesting to keep it in mind for programming the 2013 season. Fretz also requested that the staff support an alliance with the Aspen Young Professionals Association, to encourage the younger generation of Aspen to become stake holders of the Wheeler Opera House.

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

IX. OLD BUSINESS UPDATE

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Erickson called for a motion to adjourn. Cohen made the motion to adjourn, and Seamans seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:11 pm.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011, IN THE WHEELER SECOND FLOOR LOBBY.