

Minutes of the Newberry Opera House Foundation Board

Date: 10/27/2021

Time: 4:30pm

Location: South State Bank

Board Members in Attendance: Tom Pope, Luke McCormack, Al Pressley, Steve Wilson, Keith Avery, Susan Wessinger, Peggy Barnes-Winder, Jack Shields, Robert Matheson, Joe McDonald, Liz Rivera, Beth Hipp, Foster Senn.

NOH Employees in Attendance: Molly Fortune, Anne Smith, Megan Shealy.

Board Members Not in Attendance: Morrie Scherrens, Les Hipp, Matt DeWitt, Mattie Dillion.

Call to Order: Chair Jack Shields called the meeting to order at 4:30pm and noted that a quorum was present.

Minutes: The minutes of the September 30, 2021, meeting were approved unanimously on motion of Peggy Winder(which was seconded by Luke McCormack).

Conversations: The Chair introduced, per the agenda, three topics for discussion as follows:

1. Amphitheater: The Chairman went around the room and asked for each Board Member's input as to their feelings about the amphitheater site downtown and the opinions shared by the members were emphatically and unanimously in favor of an amphitheater in Downtown Newberry run or managed by the Newberry Opera House. The various reasons given by the different Board Members were: central location; increased revenues from big shows and bigger bands, community unity; many small towns in South Carolina have already installed amphitheaters (successfully); the pilot concert in June 2021 was a big success; it would help the Newberry Opera House financially.
2. Board Participation in Pre-Shows: The Director reported that there were difficulties in scheduling Board Members to introduce all of our shows, along with the Director and/or Staff. The Director passed around a sign-up sheet of persons to participate for shows in the next few months and got a good response of volunteers. The consensus was that we will continue our efforts to get all Board Members to participate in appearing on-stage at shows to introduce the performers.

3. Donor Wall: This discussion centered around whether now was the time to do a Lifetime Giving Wall. Discussion was that this is a very good time to install a wall as it is expected that costs for the wall should be greatly offset by the additional revenues generated from increased giving. The Development Director, NOH Director, and NOH Staff will proceed with a schedule for completion of the Lifetime Giving Wall.

Old Business:

- Masks & Staff: The Director reported that the Newberry Opera House follows legal guidelines with regard to masks and will continue to do so, but this issue will be revisited every month to be sure that our policy is sound.
- Gift Card Findings: The Director reported that we have total liabilities for gift cards of about \$238,000, some of which are expiring soon. The Newberry Opera House is following a policy of charging fees where possible and also writing all cardholders on 1/1/2022 to encourage them to use the gift cards for tickets as to push all of our customers to utilize their gift cards so that we can remove the liability. This policy will be reviewed and voted on during the November 2021 Board Meeting.
- Executive Director Report: The Director discussed the fact that our customers are still nervous about Covid and ticket sales are definitely off from where they were pre-Covid.
- Finance Committee Report: The Business Manager gave a financial report and made some corrections. Finance Chair Susan Wessinger also reported on the fact that \$200,000 from the Greenwood Capital account (the origin which was Frank Smith) is being moved to the Development account at Edward Jones. A motion was made by Tom Pope and seconded by Keith Avery and it passed by vote of 14-1 (Robert Matheson opposed). It was also discussed that the Frank Smith funds were deposited many years ago and we will discuss whether, when we compute the interest earned on those funds while at Greenwood Capital they should also be deposited in the Endowment account. This would be discussed at a future Board Meeting.

- Development Committee: Tom Pope discussed the fact that we now have a Development Task Force, which includes the Chair, the Development Director, and Committee Chair, as well as Keith Avery, Rick Farmer (non-Board Member), and David Senn (non-Board Member). We will pursue a strategy to engage the large companies who have businesses in Newberry to participate prior to Giving Tuesday and also to formulate a strategy to engage these companies in the future towards increased giving. Development Director Anne Smith also gave a report that our individual giving in this quarter is \$136,853, which is 23% of our goal of \$605,500 budgeted. It was also noted that the balance in our Endowment account, after the transfer of the \$200,000 from Greenwood Capital, would be \$275,000.

- Program Committee: Robert Matheson, as Chair, will be organizing this committee to include non-Board Members to get their input to discuss booking more matinee shows (now that Covid is over) and to focus on diversity and programming, NAFA, big shows, etc.

- Retreat Action Review/NAFA: Joe McDonald, Chair, reported that his committee has met on numerous occasions and discussed various topics, such as finding people in the community to be “ambassadors” for the Newberry Opera House. It was noted that we have 180 artists in Newberry County; these people should be engaged. It was also pointed out that our relationship with Newberry College and the schools should be strengthened and Al Pressley is now actively engaged in this endeavor. Joe McDonald passed out a NAFA memo which included goals and objectives for NAFA going forward.

- Capital Committee:

- Branding & Economic Development: That committee is engaged in working to increase our brand and to develop the community via the arts.

- Guild: Beth Hipp reminded the Board that the Oyster Roast will be downtown this year and it will be on Sunday, November 7, 2021. All Board Members were encouraged to attend.

- Review of Action Items: The action items identified in the Retreat from August 2021 were looked at, many had already been accomplished, and others remain.

- New Business:

Adjournment: With there being no other business or announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Pope