

Sudbury Savoyards Board of Trustees Minutes

September 5, 2018 at the home of Jim and Susan,
Minutes prepared by Kathryn Denney

In attendance: Tom Powers, Susan Elberger, Mike Lague, Brendon Chetwynd, Jim Ravan, Tony Parkes, Karen Powers, Kathryn Denney

Consideration of Agenda: Tom Powers

Paying for membership: Some people are paying already, and we discussed what we should do with this information. Also, board members are supposed to be paying dues. Some already have!

Bios of trustees should on web page: nobody has sent Tom anything recently.

TO DO: Update head shot and write biography if you're a new member of the Board.

Meeting Minutes from August: approved unanimously

Committees:

We again discussed the structure of programs of work, continuing from last meeting.

We verified membership and chairmanship of each committee.

TO DO: Be sure to communicate meeting time and place with the Board if you are a committee chair

We reviewed the responsibilities, authority, financial activities of each committee.

--Membership to EMACT, AACT, ArtsBoston, StageSource, etc. falls to Program Committee

--External Membership is already a budgetary item, but Brendon would like to know about anticipated expenses for things that might not be on the budget yet.

Example: For the upcoming performance at SouthGate, we're paying a pianist, we might possibly have to dry clean the costumes after the show. Brendon will be informed of all of this, as costs become more clear.

An activity/performance should be under the Program Committee.

Each committee should realize that the board can be informed of plans for which they might need money. *Don't be afraid to ask for money/spend money, so that we can develop and grow.*

Each committee needs to keep records on our activities, *especially those that cost money.*

Don't put cost controls on the employee level, because we *should* be doing things that cost money, to *invest* in the success of the company.

Kathryn asked a question Re: Accounting. if I'm paying someone for a performance, and we are getting money from having done the performance, what is the method by which we should give people money and accept money from vendors?

Answer: You can pay them and then fill out a reimbursement form

You can ask the treasurer (Brendon/Brad) how they would like to do it.

The Sudbury post office is confused about forwarding the mail from SUMC to our new address.

Committee Reports:

Audit and Finance Committee: no significant activity

Annual report submitted to the Commonwealth, IRS tax forms for feds and state

After the first five years, things will get more complicated/history of organization, but for now paperwork is pretty straightforward.

Program Committee—YEOMEN Update: Tons of things are going really well. Graham is assembling a dynamo team. On August 31 Kathryn went to Lincoln Sudbury, since both Graham and Laura were working, to meet with Francy, who said we could rent the space in February for about \$12,000-\$13,000. Francy was so agreeable that Kathryn came away from that meeting without any specific idea of how much it will cost to perform on the dates that Graham has requested. Francy gave us a worksheet for the cost of individual items at Lincoln Sudbury High School, such as the auditorium, the pit, and tables, but each item has a different situation: the pit has a one-time, flat rate. The auditorium and lighting equipment are paid for each time they are used. Nobody is sure about the tables, and other items on the list. There is also a mysterious 58% discount, from three years ago, with no commitment to continue it or change it.

Communication with the school has been a challenge so far. Graham will send Francy an email in an attempt to firm up dates and rates, and hopes to sign a contract soon.

Suggestion for Graham: Talk to Peter Welsh/Laura Jacobson/Ed Fell about details to figure out dates and rates.

Tom Powers will attend a production meeting, to fill in holes with school rental.

Suggestion that there should be ONE person who is in charge of communication with the school.

Production Meeting should be scheduled soon, and the team will organize the audition dates, publicity strategies and rehearsal schedule.

Program committee will meet two weeks from Thursday, September 20th

Complimentary ticket policy is online.

There is also documentation of certain Producer Responsibilities.

DRI needs grounding as to what the Board expects and when to get permission vs. using the autonomy of doing things in an individual way.

For example: There is a policy on the website (from 10 years ago) about complimentary tickets. The DRI will want to be familiar with that, and make an explicit change to it if desired.

TO DO: Yeomen Production team: A stream of updates to the Board would be helpful as we are going. Sharing successes and areas in which we need help will keep everyone understanding that we are working hard, and that people want to know where we are in the process.

Location Committee: no report at this point, but there is a “lead on technical space.”

Communication Committee: Roberta has updates on the Website which will be brought to the Board meeting in October.

Governance Committee: Membership policies and tracking who has paid, who is involved, etc. Absentee voting? Proxy? In general, with all these committees, we ask ourselves: How much external input do you want? Utilizing resources of others who came before us, while also doing things the way you want to.

Development Committee:

Tom read a letter from Jim Parmentier. REALLY nice.

Kathryn will send a thank you letter on letterhead (Susan has some to email us), with photos, and Brendon will send him the tax letter.

PROTOCOL: Development committee will take care of thank you notes, and Brendon will send tax receipts, for each donor, as they come in. This needs to be teamwork between Development and Audit and Finance.

Completed September 14, 2018

Development Committee activities: Short term focus is on a fundraiser from the Chairman of the Board, we will supply sample text, with different prizes for different levels of donation.

Kathleen O'Connor will be videotaped to make suggestions as to fundraisers.

Clare McCully says to start a fund drive in October, and that it's perfectly fair to use grants as a matching fund.

Cultural Council Grant writing workshop being attended by Kathryn and Mike, who will then teach other people how to write them in their local areas.

Concern: Fund Matching is raising some questions: don't do it? Get explicit permission from donors as to whether they want to be part of the 10K Club, vs. an individual guaranteed donor.

Prizes, goods and services also raised some questions: goods with identifiable value get subtracted from donation.

--StageSource Cards (gives you a 2 for 1 discount to other theater organizations, and costs us nothing)

--Premium Seating at performances (costs us nothing, but requires labelling seats as reserved)

--Donor Dinner (possibly catered by one of our common gathering restaurants).

Will we need a non-profit postal code, if we are going to do snail mail letters?

TO DO: Text of a Fundraising Letter by October meeting, worked on between Tom and Development Committee members

TO DO: (Kathryn) Schedule a Development Committee Meeting

Budgetary Expense estimate: space rental, food, supplies, etc.

Questions: Membership? To whom do we grant membership? In other local community theater groups, this is distinct from donations. Membership is not tax-deductible, because it gives you a benefit.

Membership is a FEE, whereas "donations" are over and above that.

Tom: When we became a 501c3, we got emails from "Flipcause" (help non profits to make money.)

There are companies who want to help you make money. "The Best Fundraising engagement platform for non profits." Development Committee can look into that.

Planning Committee: Susan has put together several surveys, to determine who are we trying to please, and in which direction our group should be moving. Goal-setting. How do we get more than a dozen people to put in the work to get the work done?

Action the Board needs to take, regarding "The Suicide Pact." Several people think that we have long since abandoned the idea of closing our doors, and that September 30 will come and go without incident.

What do we need to do to hold this in abeyance? Is there something else we should address in October?

Susan expresses dismay that people haven't responded to surveys. Sorting through data is cumbersome, and might preclude polling the whole membership.

Space: what should be our long-term goal? Susan is using the term "Stumble Forward" to describe going forward WITHOUT planning.

Tom: we are not interested in asking the company to participate in the planning process. However, some points do matter, to the general participants in shows, so we should consider what questions to ask our wider community.

Brendon: Are we planning, or are we not planning? Action item: task list for board. How do we retain data? Planning is separate. What's important to us?

Accounting-wise: Income and expenses always need to be categorized. He is distinguishing between show expenses and operating expenses. It all rolls up into one. Savings/checking. Where does a donation go?

Tony: it does make a difference as to how to how successful a show "appears"

Tom: Personal donations: unrestricted gifts. Otherwise, especially with grant writing, we might have to be specific about what we're going to use a grant for.

The point is, we need to find a way to track and record this type of thing. What makes sense for items that are used for a show, but are not consumed, such as paintbrushes and lumber, props and costumes?

What is the general arc that we want to go? Time frame, space, money, retreat.

October Retreat to be planned. Susan will send out a doodle poll about dates. SMART goals for each committee to do things on a timeline.

Karen and others are thinking that a retreat is not a productive use of our time right now. Other retreats have been fruitless.

--there has been a shortfall of effort

-- we are unprepared for a balanced answer

--we need to narrow down the scope of questions we are asking.

TO DO: Tom will send out an email to the whole board, asking if there should be an immediate retreat, in October, and we will vote. If accepted, Susan will create an agenda for the retreat, and we will have a doodle poll to decide which Sunday it would be best.

Next meeting October 4 at Kathryn's house at 7:30 PM. 25 Wood Road, Marlborough MA

Meeting adjourned 10:37 PM