

Ankeny Community Theatre Board Meeting Minutes December 11, 2017

Members Present: Nicole Titus, Adam Haselhuhn, Scott Nielsen, Stacie Bendixen, Valerie Stratton, Tammy Sposeto, Whitney Welp, Matthew Breaux, and James Machamer

Members Absent: Troy Gould, Al Witte, Susan Casber, Becky Plager

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM by Stacie.

Guest presenter:

Ryan Crane, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines – Agency Funds for Nonprofits
An agency fund through the Community Foundation provides a way for nonprofits to have a managed endowment and facilitates planned giving. See attached handouts.

Overall, the board feels these options are the direction ACT needs to go in order to help assure long term financial security of the theatre.

Scott motioned that the finance committee proceed with looking at the penalties for early withdrawal of CDs and analyze the contract to bring final recommendations to the board; Valerie seconded; the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

James motioned to approve the treasurer's report; Nicole seconded; the motion passed.

Nov. Meeting Minutes:

Matthew motioned to approve the minutes; Scott seconded; the motion passed.

Committee Reports: See end of minutes for full reports

Building & Operations:

No additional information.

Data Management:

No additional information.

Education:

To clarify, the class "The Role of the Assistant Director, Stage Manager, and Producer" is Jan. 20th, not the 27th.

Finance:

See above. No other additions.

Fundraising:

Adam updated that we received \$8,000 Bravo (we requested \$12,000). They were happy with some of the changes we have made with the finance committee. One thing we can improve upon is long term planning with actionable goals; establishing an endowment would be a good step in this direction. HuHot fundraising was our highest yet with \$537.89

Marketing:

Tammy confirmed that general ACT business cards are being printed for everyone to have on hand. Since we are not spending the \$3,000 for radio, we are considering doing direct mail to addresses gathered through Midwestix for people who had bought tickets previously.

Membership & Sales:

No additional discussion.

Play selection:

No additional discussion.

Production:

Nicole outlined their work in detail.

No additional discussion.

Volunteer:

No additional information.

Old Business:**Proposed bank account transition to Veridian:**

Matthew researched and presented a proposal to transition ACT's bank accounts from Community State Bank to Veridian Credit Union, so all our accounts are with one financial institution.

Community State Bank-

1. CSB does not allow for integrating a bank account with Quickbooks. This creates more work for the treasurer.
2. The \$10.60 per month fee we are currently paying is for their online banking. Matthew feels this is outdated and not worth the fee.
3. There is no fee for closing the current checking account.

Veridian-

1. Veridian allows us to integrate our bank account with Quickbooks, which will save time for the treasurer.
2. There is a current account ready for use.
3. They will provide debit cards for free to Matthew and another person (Cheryl for script ordering) but will charge for the new checks - \$69 for 500 (this is cheaper than what we spend for CSB online banking per year).
4. There is no fee for the account or for online banking. Exception: If we exceed 300 transactions per month they will charge \$.15 per transaction until the end of the month (Matthew can avoid this by batch depositing checks on months when a large number of memberships are arriving). This shouldn't be an issue.
5. Deposits can be placed in the night drop at any Veridian location. They will email receipts to Matthew instead of having to pick them up. They have deposit envelopes for free, no bags are needed.

Matthew proposed that he will proceed with ordering checks and debit cards for the account. Once received, he would plan to move \$20k to Veridian and leave the CSB account open for remaining

transactions. Also, once the deposit is made, he would change everything that's auto drafted from CSB to Veridian. There will be an anticipated 2 month transition period until we can completely close the CSB account.

James made a motion to accept Matthew's proposal; Whitney seconded; the motion passed.

New Business:

Decision on adding a Christmas Chaos performance:

Pros/cons discussed.

Decision was made to add a Sunday night show at 6:30 PM.

Box office: Valerie

Lead volunteer: Whitney

Treats: Matthew, Valerie

Mid-year mini-retreat:

Stacie would like the board to consider having a mid-year mini-retreat to address issues we cannot complete in regular board meetings. Stacie will put out a Doodle poll to find a date.

Other?

Assistant director's ability to also participate in try-outs for the same play:

Concerns were brought to the board's attention about allowing the assistant director of a play to also be able to try out for parts in the same play and how this appears to the other people auditioning.

For the upcoming auditions for *Almost, Maine* this Wed., Nicole will ask the producer, Michael Hollister, explain at the auditions the reason for the situation for this play – the difficulty of finding an assistant director for *Almost, Maine*, unless the assistant director was also allowed to audition.

As a board, we will visit this issue and make a formal decision about future plays at another board meeting.

James motioned for the meeting to be adjourned; Nicole seconded it; and motion passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:59 PM.

Meeting & Other Dates:

Board meetings for 2017-2018 season:

Tues., Jan 9th – note date change

Mon., Feb 5th

Mon., Mar 5th

Mon., Apr 2nd

Mon., May 7th

Mon., June 4th

Mon., July 9th – note date change

Mon., Aug 6th

Mon., Sep 10th

ACT Committee Reports
December 11, 2017

Building & Operations

- The locks have been re-keyed and AI is getting new keys out to everyone.
- A urinal in the men's room was running and James made sure it is in working order.
- Scott will be working with Doug Moon & volunteers from Wells Fargo on Monday December 18th to get more cleaning/organizing done in the work room.
- Can you please request that John Claes take down any "for sale" postings about the bleachers? I will begin working in the storage area again as soon as Chaos is over and I will need to get them taken down to provide more room.

Data Management

- We added 35 emails to our contact list from people who subscribed when buying tickets on Midwestix.
- Evaluation surveys have been created to be sent out to cast members, directors and assistant directors after the end of each production. The drafts are saved in Survey Monkey.

Education

The committee is scheduled to meet December 29th at 4:30pm at ACT to plan the Open House scheduled for March 3rd.

The first education class is scheduled for January 27th. See below for details. A lesson plan was sent to Nicole from Melissa Moore. Nicole will review it and check with the production committee to make sure what she is teaching will be applicable to ACT. Adam will make sure it is put on the website for marketing and registration. **Can we include a plug for the class in the opening speech for Christmas Chaos??**

The Role of the Assistant Director, Stage Manager, and Producer

How do off stage positions work and co-exist to make a production successful? Join Melissa Moore, Simpson College graduate, on January 20th at 12:00 P.M.-1:40 P.M. to learn how a stage manager, assistant director, and a producer work in order to make production a cohesive unit. This class will offer some hands-on experiences to help transpose what's happening on stage to a script, how to help a director in rehearsal, and some fun warm-ups to help a cast break the ice. Each position is needed for a show to run smoothly. This class will teach you how each position operates and how you can apply some of the knowledge in future productions.

Activities that will be presented in this workshop include:

- How to write down blocking
- How to call a show/How to set up a prompt book
- How to set up a props table
- What to do during an audition
- How to help during a rehearsal
- How to budget a production
- Cast warm-ups

Finance

Finance committee meeting 11/7/17

Not going to do the show breakdown with the monthly financial report. Kind of deceiving - makes it look like shows are profitable or not, but it's not a real reflection.

Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines "agency fund" option

- ACT would have an "account" within Community Foundation that would function like an endowment, where our donors can donate to us. As a money management too, difference from a CD is that a CD is insured (same as FDIC but for credit unions), whereas Community Foundation endowment is invested in the stock market. We would get a larger return on investment. It's a risk, but pretty low risk.
- An individual donor who donates through the Community Foundation to the ACT account gets a 25% Iowa state tax credit. So if someone donates \$100 to ACT's Community Foundation account, they get a \$25 federal tax benefit (deduction - it lowers taxable their income by that much) and they get a \$25 Iowa tax credit (takes \$25 off the state tax they owe).
- Don't know what percentage Community Foundation takes. But it's a managed fund so they get an asset management fee.
- Don't know how we get our cash from the account. But with our CDs, we haven't needed to pull cash out of it for our operating expenses, so we probably wouldn't need to pull income out of this fund regularly.
- Joel will research this.
- Stacie will invite Ryan Crane to the December board meeting to pitch us on this.

Next quarterly finance committee meeting: Will have big-picture discussion about financial situation. We're on the edge of potential crisis.

If we hired a professional fundraiser, how much would it cost? We don't currently have enough to do this. Perhaps first step is to build up some corporate donations/sponsorships to build a base that we could leverage to invest in getting more.

Matthew will work on scheduling the rest of our quarterly meetings.

Fundraising

Did not meet this month

Marketing

Points of discussion from November Meeting:

1. To help increase ticket sales on Thursdays, we will implement a discounted rate and call it Throwback Thursday: \$8, \$10, \$12. Adam will add the price point in Midwestix. Specific targeting of individual groups will be encouraged utilizing our "Throwback Thursday" theme.
2. We discussed the marketing needs for Chaos and coordinated task assignments. We set email dates for 11/23, 12/1, 12/8, 12/14. Sold out show announcement filled the 12/8 slot.

3. Discussed marketing needs for Rabbit (January 13-15). Group Sales present unique challenges, which we addressed. Preview Night will be December 7. Emails are scheduled for Jan 11, Jan 4, Dec 21
4. Discussed marketing needs for Maine: (February 9-18). Audition Email 11/27, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/15
5. Submitting Policy Bible Entry "Marketing Checklist"
6. Discussed Promotions for education. January 20 Class on Stage Managing (see submission) Set Cost at \$20 for non members, \$10 for members. Email on January 5 to promote.
7. Blank Business Cards will be ordered for use of committee as a whole.
8. Committee is seeking quotes for direct Mail utilizing the Midwestix addresses since we aren't spending the \$3000 we spent last year on radio. More discussion will follow.

Email Schedule:

11/23	Chaos
11/27	Maine Auditions
12/1	Chaos
12/8	chaos
12/14	Chaos
12/21	Rabbit
1/4	Rabbit
1/5	Education
1/11	Rabbit
1/26	Maine
2/2	Maine
2/9	Maine
2/15	Maine

Membership & Sales

- We didn't get the Thursday price reduction ("Throwback Thursday" pricing) implemented in time for "A Christmas Chaos" before people starting buying tickets at the regular price. Rather than lower the price after some were already sold, we'll just start this in 2018 with "Almost, Maine."
- We sent personal thank-you notes to all members.
- We contacted last year's members who hadn't renewed. One renewal has come in since then.

Play Selection

Committee is reading a set of 9 scripts during Oct-Dec. Two Conversation gatherings have been held to give members an opportunity to discuss, compare and critique scripts. Will hold a wrap-up for this set on Jan 6 and begin reading another set of 12 scripts.

Will we also be implementing a grading system to make our results a bit more quantified going forward (vs Yes or No's which don't tell us as much as a grade regarding how much or how little someone liked or did not like a script.)

Production

November 18 - Production Committee Meeting. Present: Nicole, Cheryl, Doug, Matt, Mike, and Stacie. Not present: Becky. We set a deadline for next season's Director Application for Monday, February 19th. We will be meeting with all eligible directors on January 13th at 10 am to announce the next season and begin the application process. Cheryl is ordering scripts for the shows next season, she will bring scripts to January meeting so directors can read them. Stacie will update the check out sheet for directors to use, to keep track of scripts. Doug has created surveys for each show on survey monkey (one for actors and one for directors).

November 29 - Production Team Meeting for both Almost, Maine and Velveteen Rabbit. Lynn will be emailing the directors with marketing deadlines. The directors are working together for rehearsal space. Cheryl will be sharing her rehearsal schedule with Barb and Nicole when it is finalized. There will be no preview night for Velveteen. No concessions either (no intermission). We would like to include opportunities for children in our programs for Velveteen Rabbit (Honk auditions, summer camp, library classes). Al Witte is building the set for both shows, and Matt Tuttle is doing Tech for both shows.

December 6 - Production Committee Meeting. Present: Nicole, Becky, Doug, Stacie, Mike, and Matt. Not present: Cheryl. We discussed the Code of Conduct in detail. We will be taking this very seriously from now on. We discussed a few changes we would like to make; Becky is working on a new draft for the committee to look at. We have decided to put Contact Information (Production Chair, President, and President Elect) on the Code of Conduct. Everyone that signs the Code of Conduct will be given another copy to take home. We will post copies in the green room and each dressing room. When we hand them out at read-through, the Producer will read the whole thing, and answer any questions the cast may have, before it is signed.

After the read-through, the Producer will send out a welcome email to the cast. This welcome email will also include contact information for Producer, Production Chair, President, and President Elect. We will attached the Code of Conduct to this email, as well. Nicole is working on drafting this email.

The Producer will be more involved in the rehearsal process going forward. They will work with the Director, and they will stop by for rehearsals throughout the process (about once a week). We then discussed the definitions of roles here at ACT: Producer, Stage Manager, Assistant Director, and Director. All shows will have all of these roles. Melissa Moore is teaching a class on Jan 20th about these roles. Nicole is meeting with Melissa on Wednesday, December 13th to make sure her class aligns with the definitions the committee has come up with. Attached are the definitions.

We have decided the Producer for each show will be a Production Committee Member. This person will be at Production Team Meetings, Auditions, and Read-throughs for the show they are assigned. They will send the welcome email at the beginning of the process, and they will send the survey after the

show closes. They will also attend rehearsals periodically. They will be the contact for the directors and actors of their assigned show. Mike will be the Producer for Almost, Maine. Nicole will be Producer for Velveteen Rabbit. Doug will be Producer for Doubt. Cheryl or Becky will produce A Few Good Men. Matt or Becky will produce Honk. Becky will produce Over the River and Through the Woods.

We also discussed the definitions for Stage Manager and Assistant Director. Right now, most of our Assistant Directors have been acting as a Stage Manager. We would like all shows to have both. The Assistant Director role will be more of an "apprentice" or training role. We require all directors to assist before they are eligible to direct. We would like assistants to have a role closer to the directors, and the Stage Manager will be the one to watch lines and write down blocking, etc. See attached Definitions.

Volunteers

1) Planning Volunteer Orientation meeting

-January 21 at 1:30 pm

-Request money from the Board for snacks for orientation meeting-will discuss this further with Matthew

-Whitney contacted Lorraine Huls, she will be providing an itinerary which was used for a previous

Volunteer Orientation meeting

-The Volunteer committee will meet briefly following the board meeting to review previous notes and Create an updated itinerary.

2) Updating the volunteer checklist

-The volunteer checklist has been updated and placed in the Volunteer binder.

3) Filling the volunteer spots for A Christmas Chaos

-All spots have been filled, the volunteer committee assisted with contacting individuals to Determine if they would be willing to volunteer for A Christmas Chaos

-The volunteer sign up has been created and was placed in the Volunteer binder.

4) Thanking our volunteers

-Following the God Committee, all volunteers were sent a follow-up e-mail thanking them for Volunteering for the show. They were also sent a link to sign up to volunteer for the upcoming show.

Production Committee materials:

Production team role definitions

Discussed at Production Committee meeting on 12/6/17

Producer/Production Manager (a member of production committee assigned to each show)

- Take lead on lining up the production team – tech, set, costumes
- “Morale officer” – facilitating cast experience, welcome committee, liaison to cast
- Oversee making sure goal dates are met – set, costumes, bios, marketing needs...liaison with all the other people who carry out tasks that make a show possible

- Problem-solver for director, liaison to board
- Take care of the things that are hard for the director to take care of or would pull them away from the stage
- Take in receipts to coordinate giving to treasure and reimbursement
- Organize things like cast party

Stage Manager

- Practical and organizational support
- Communicate the schedule and schedule changes
- Records director's decisions – blocking, etc. Is at all rehearsals. Is the person actors talk to if they miss a rehearsal.
- Watch lines?
- Calling cues and entrances
- Manage scene changes, props
- Director's representative during performances, making sure everything runs smoothly.
- Accountable for setup and cleanup
- Call breaks during rehearsal, if director is absorbed

Director

- Creative lead. Sets vision for production. Ultimate creative decision-maker. Interprets script and guides actors. Ties everything together – doesn't just direct the acting; has vision for all aspects, including lights, sound, scenes/set.
- Casting
- Determining rehearsal schedule and running rehearsals
- Executing the playwright's intentions

Assistant Director

- (Should be closer to director's role than stage manager)
- Usually, is in training to be a director. Also OK if there's someone who doesn't want to direct but wants to assist, as long as we're giving people who want to learn a chance to do so.
- Should be part of decisions and creative directing. Do some directing, participate in developing the vision and guiding the actors and tech aspects.
- Runs rehearsal in director's absence; backup

Director Meeting Agenda

November 18, 2017

- Introductions
- Production Meetings
 - Usually held 2 weeks before your auditions
 - Requested attendees-Production Committee, Marketing Chair, Board President, Lynn Arterburn, Director and Assistant Director
 - You can also invite your tech and set people to this meeting
- Show Auditions and Read-Through
 - A Board Member will be present for both
 - Code of Conduct, Photo Release, and Headshots will be taken care of at Read-Through
- Preview Night

- See attached policies
- Logistics
 - Ratings must be posted
 - Budget - \$1000 - Use it!
 - Copyright songs to be used before or after show. If you want a song during your show, talk to Cheryl Clark, she will ask for permission.
- Building Responsibilities
 - Concession Fridge is for patrons/donations only. Use the fridge in the Green Room.
 - Thermostat during shows - the Board Member running the box office should be the only one touching this.
 - Director is responsible for lights out and locking up.
 - Keys
- Producers
- Assistant Directors, Set and Tech Crew
 - Let us know if you need help finding any of these
- Studio Shows vs Main Stage
 - Concessions will be served pre-show as there is no intermission
- Survey Monkey
 - Following run of the show 3 different surveys will be sent out
 - Director will receive a link to send to cast and crew members to complete survey to evaluate the director and the experience they had
 - Directors will be sent a survey to evaluate their assistant director
 - Assistant directors will be sent a survey to evaluate the director
- Next Meeting: **Saturday, January 13 at 10:00 a.m.** at the theater
- Questions
- Anything you need help with

Handouts – Policies and Procedures

Comp Tickets

- President, production chair, and marketing chair together decide when to give free tickets.
- Directors can request “Director Comps” for special volunteers, etc.

Adopted: 3/7/16 board meeting

Preview Night

“Preview night” means the final dress rehearsal of a show. For any show, studio or main season, it's the director's decision whether they want the final dress rehearsal to have an audience. (They can choose to keep it a closed rehearsal if they want - i.e. no preview night. But most directors find it valuable for the cast to have a small audience before opening night.)

\$5 per person unless individual has a pass

When a preview night is planned:

- Director can give free preview night passes to special volunteers or others who helped with the show in some way.
- Director works with Marketing volunteer (currently Lynn) to determine if there is any particular audience to invite as guests for preview night. (For example, “The God Committee” is about

organ donation, so staff from the Iowa Donor Network and families impacted by organ donation will be invited.)

- If there is no other special group invited, a Marketing volunteer (currently Lynn) works with local senior/low-income housing facilities to invite their residents.
- Cast members do NOT receive any preview night passes to give to family/friends.
 - Rationale: As a nonprofit organization with limited seating, we need most audience members to pay, and family/friends of cast are a key audience source. Letting them see the show for free means giving up too much revenue that we need to support the theater.
- Only those with a pass will be admitted to preview night for free. We have a few people who sometimes show up uninvited for preview night; they are charged \$5 each at the door.
- We do not use the Midwestix system for preview night. If money has to be taken for admission, cash or check only. We do put out the small gold donation boxes so attendees can put in cash donations if they wish. All money collected on preview night (for admission or donations) is added to opening night's Concessions total for accounting purposes.

Director selection

- Generally, a person needs to have assistant-directed at least one show at ACT to be eligible to direct. Exceptions may be made by the board, e.g. for guest directors.
- Prospective directors will apply for each show they want to direct, regardless of how many times they have directed at ACT in the past.
- When a person is applying to direct for the first time, the Production Committee will ask director(s) they worked with for input/a recommendation.
- Production Committee selects the slate of directors, and the board approves.

Assistant Director selection

The Production Committee has the authority to approve assistant directors selected by directors. They should monitor that people who assistant-direct are people we would be comfortable having direct in the future.

Tech positions (set, lighting, sound consultants/designers/operators)

The committee recommends that two people be in the booth for each show, e.g. an experienced volunteer and one who is learning.

Production Team Meetings

Production team meetings will occur two weeks before each show's auditions to set expectations and make plans. The show's Director and Assistant Director meet with Production chair/committee, Marketing chair/committee, and Board President to work through all deadlines (for Standing Ovation programs and headshots, etc.), determine what tech help is needed, discuss promotional giveaway ideas, other marketing ideas, etc.

Committee report at 12/7/15 board meeting

Bulletin Board

The director of each show can take care of the entry hallway bulletin board (featuring cast members' photos)

Cast Parties

For cast parties, we allocate \$6 per cast/crew member for the production. The Production chair should work with the Director to identify how many cast/crew there are and share the amount they have to spend.

Photo/Video Releases

- All participants in ACT productions and programs (or a parent/guardian for a participant who is a minor) are asked to sign a waiver granting ACT permission to publicly photos/videos of them in marketing and social media. If a participant does not grant permission, ACT will not publicly use photos/videos of them (with the exception of including their headshot in the playbill).
- When programs are hosted jointly with third parties, ACT will follow its usual policy of obtaining permission via signed waivers before publicly using photos/videos of participants, OR if obtaining signed waivers is not practical (e.g.), ACT **will not** use photos/videos.
 - Example: For kids' workshops hosted at the public library, parents often do not accompany their kids into the building so there's no opportunity to ask them to sign a waiver. To abide by our policy, we will not post/use photos of the participants - but the public library sometimes posts photos on their website/social media, in which case ACT can share/link to those posts. *Action for this scenario adopted at 2/3/16 board meeting*

Video of productions

ACT does not record video of any production. All publisher arrangements are different, and this consistent policy protects ACT and simplifies our operations.