

Ankeny Community Theatre Board Meeting Minutes August 6, 2018

Members Present: Scott Nielsen, Stacie Bendixen, Becky Plager, Susan Casber, Tammy Sposeto, Whitney Welp, Adam Haselhuhn, James Machamer, Nicole Titus, Doug Moon, Valerie Stratton

Members Absent: Ali Kirwen

The meeting was called to order at 6:28 PM by Stacie.

July Meeting Minutes:

Minutes were reviewed. No corrections needed.

James moved to accept the minutes, Susan seconded, and the motion was passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Doug just received June's report today.

There is a \$1400 uncategorized expense that Doug has not been able to review.

There has been a bit of concern with the timeliness of the accountant's report. Doug visited with her and they have agreed on the end of the month for due date to for her to finish the previous month's accounting to be able to review before the board meeting.

James moved to accept the treasurer's report, Whitney seconded, and the motion was passed.

Committee Reports: See end of minutes for full reports.

Building & Operations:

Scott is working on disposing of the old table saw. Elizabeth Wagner had a scroll saw that Don and Barb Wagner would like to donate to the theater. We will still need to replace with a larger saw.

Data Management:

No additional information.

Education:

Peg Golden George is interested in doing a makeup class, with potentially adding an option for kids to come have Halloween makeup done by the class participants as a fundraiser. Participants would have to purchase a makeup kit at the Theatrical Shop on their own before the class. This has been done in the past.

Finance:

No additional information.

Fundraising:

Discussed fundraiser at Orange Leaf. We don't have to work, just be there to greet people and promote ACT. We get 10% of the profit. Discussed options of signage such as a banner, poster, etc.

Option of taking the large poster off and display that; or develop foam board. Adam suggested a pop-up banner/banner stand. Cost \$250-\$300. Tammy will add to marketing committee to discuss further.

In addition, will take the bookmarks, brochures, etc. which will hopefully be ready.

Shifts:

4:00-5:00: Susan. James will try to be there shortly after 4. Will ask Lynn Arterburn.

5:00-6:00: Nicole. Doug may be able to be there by 6:15 PM.

6:00-7:00: Stacie (can stay until the end to bring materials back to ACT). Susan will also reach out to other super volunteers such as Kathy Polson, John Claes, etc.

Marketing:

No additional information.

Membership & Sales:

Adam met with Midwestix and recommended someone from the board meet with them annually even though we don't have to sign a contract for 3 years.

Play Selection:

Troy Gould and Cheryl Clark will come to September meeting to present final selections.

Production:

No additional information.

Volunteers:

No additional information.

Old Business:

Keys:

We are missing a key for the building after just rekeying in the past year. Does the fire department have it? Scott will check.

James suggested an engraving or permanent stamp of numbers on keys so can track who are assigned to.

New Business:

Annual Meeting – Sept. 17th:

Stacie updated plan for the annual meeting. Meeting starts at 6:00 PM but would like as many board members as possible to come at 5:30 PM. We will serve walking tacos. Tammy is working on the donation of meat; Scott asking HyVee for other fixings for walking tacos. Board members will be asked to bring a side dish or dessert. Will send out a sign-up. Estimated to plan to feed 60 people.

Business meeting will include: approve minutes from last year's annual meeting; summary financial report by Doug, and members vote to accept the report; recap accomplishments of the year (like a verbal annual report); favorite actors/actresses; Darel Hildreth award; honor Jerry Reid; recognize outgoing/incoming/current board members; transition to new President; early bird drawings for gift certificates (Scott working on gathering donations of gift certificates).

After business meeting, will do theatre Jeopardy trivia game about theatre in general and about ACT specifically.

Cloris Awards FYI:

Nomination announcement party is Thursday, Aug 9th at 6 PM at Des Moines Social Club (free).

Awards ceremony will be Sunday, Aug 26th at 7:00 PM at Hoyt Sherman Place (also free) – Honk! performing.

Tonic Sol-Fa proposal:

Tonic Sol-Fa is an a cappella quartet from Minneapolis-St Paul area. They contacted ACT with the idea of hosting one of their “pop-up” shows. There are options of fees/profits. They would help with marketing along with our own local marketing. Due to the size of our theatre, they would want to do 2 shows in one evening.

Potential dates: early Sept., several in Oct., Nov 1-3 or 5-10th.

Nicole made a motion for Stacie to reach out to Tonic Sol-Fa for scheduling them the week of Nov. 5-10th to get details to bring back to the board; Whitney seconded it; and the motion passed.

Winery/dinner theater fundraiser idea:

Tammy had a conversation with a winery, The Cellar at White Oak, in the Cambridge area. They also have a wedding venue. Previously they tried a dinner theatre last year with an out of state company which fell through. He would like to keep it local. He is proposing that he will provide the venue, the caterer, help pay for the royalties, and would want to split the proceeds to cover his costs. He has regulars that attend special events – a recent band hosted 300 people, multiple caterers event at \$75 a plate sold out, etc. He sells tickets on Midwestix. He is interested in putting on the show “Tony and Tina’s Wedding.” He would like it by the middle of November at the end of the wedding season.

We agree it is an exciting opportunity but have concern with time frame, especially with the option of Tonic Sol-Fa. We would like to investigate further. An ad-hoc committee will go meet with him.

Committee: Becky, James, Tammy, Whitney, and will invite Ali.

Will ask Cheryl Clark to obtain one copy of the script so we can be informed of what the show requires.

Tutorial: Personal Facebook marketing:

Adam presented “How to do the Facebook: A non-expert guide to creating better posts to promote Ankeny Community Theatre”. He showed examples of Facebook posts and discussed the pros and cons of each. Take-aways: tag actors in the show, tag ACT, provide link or information on how to buy tickets (www.ankenycommunitytheatre.com), include photos, include personal invite/testimonials, add humor, list dates. Board members should go to ACT’s Facebook page and leave a 5-star positive review; respond and comment on other people’s posts; “check-in” at ACT location when come to show.

Other?

Jerry Reid memorial fund:

Discussion regarding the ~\$1,400 monies donated in memory of Jerry Reid. It would be nice to be able to announce at the annual meeting what we’re doing with the funds. Tools have been discussed before but was concerned as not a permanent or visible place to recognize him. Stacie would like to still discuss this but somehow figure out a way to recognize him such as on storage and posting a plaque, etc.

We also have extra monies (\$260) from the Elizabeth Wagner memorial fund that was designated for a chair nameplate. This money was added to our general fund.

Stacie made a motion that we allocate Jerry’s and leftover Elizabeth’s memorial monies (a total of \$1,648.97) to buy tools and tool storage; Nicole seconded; and motion passed. James will work on it.

Ankeny Arts Council:

BRAVO will be attending the Ankeny Arts Council on Sep 10th. Doug suggested a board member attend to be able to ask questions to improve our grant proposals. Starts at 5:30 PM at City Hall. Doug will ask John Claes to attend as he wants to be on the fundraising committee when he joins the board this fall.

Scott motioned for the meeting to be adjourned; Nicole seconded it; and motion passed.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Meeting & Other Dates:

Board meetings/events for 2017-2018 season:

Thur., Aug 16th ORANGE LEAF FUNDRAISER

Mon., Sep 10th – board meeting

Mon., Sep 17th ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Sun., Sep 23rd BOARD RETREAT 12:00-6:00 PM

Mon., Oct 15th HuHOT FUNDRAISER

ACT Committee Reports & Materials August 6, 2018

Building & Operations

- We continued running the dehumidifiers and it appears to have taken the musty smell out of the auditorium.
- Scott installed shelving for the pop by the refrigerator. It has been secured to the wall to be safe.
- Two name plates have been replaced and one new one put on. The name plate for Elizabeth Wagner is in row E (for Elizabeth) per request from Don and Barb.
- Don and Barb offered to donate a saw that they found at Elizabeth's house. Scott will take care of getting the saw and it will probably have to be stored in the storage unit.

Data Management

New board member Ali is going to start working on data analysis of sales and attendance to help inform play selection and other aspects. Nothing else to report besides ongoing operations.

Education

2018 Camp Review

- This is a general overview. More details will be provided when Lynn attends the September meeting.
- Total Camp Spots Filled: 146 (135 last year)
- Youth Attending: 134 (125 last year) / Difference between the 2 numbers is because some of the youth attended more than 1 camp.
- Total Number of Staff: 16 staff + 1 director

- Number of Hogwarts Interns (gr. 9-10) - 5
- 1 Scholarship given out / a family of 3 asked and then backed out the week before camp
- All weeks ran very smoothly with only couple very minor issues. Biggest thing we faced was the day of the tornadoes and that wasn't even an issue. All the kids were absolutely great about it.
- As of right now, we should be getting our deposit back from Prairie Ridge Church. Since the last time I talked to them, I haven't heard that anything was found that we would need to cover. Person who writes checks was gone for a couple weeks so if check doesn't come through in the next week or so, I will contact them again.

2017-18 Library Workshops

- 22 workshops held (30.25 total hours)
- 218 youth participated
- 2018-19 workshops will begin in October

ACT Education Committee Meeting 07/30/2018

Attending: Susan Casber, Lynn Arterburn, Debbie Rasko, Anne Claes, Andrea Lupo

Adult Education-Update from Susan

We discussed possible future classes for next year.

1. October-Make-up class with possible fund-raiser offering Halloween make-up for kids before trick or treating.
2. Charissa Hamel- Possible light design and musical auditions.
3. Michael Hollister-Shakespeare dialect and language
4. Cole-Making props and possible puppets (Kids class)
5. Cheryl Clark-Costuming a show

Susan will contact Peg Goldman, Charissa Hamel, Michael Hollister, Robert Uy, and Cheryl Clark to seek possible dates for this next year classes.

Lynn will contact Cole regarding possible dates for his class.

Youth Education-Update from Lynn

July Tour: Hope Lutheran Church of West Des Moines brought their summer day care group (approximately 31 kids grades K-5) for a tour and talk this morning. We used our same format and program as the YMCA tour and committee members were in attendance. The program was well received.

Lynn will be finalizing her camp summary and hopes to present it to the ACT Board.

The next meeting has not been scheduled yet.

Finance

Finance Committee Meeting on July 25, 2018

Attendance: Doug Moon, Stacie Bendixen, James Machamer, Joel Anderson

Committee feedback for 2018-19 budget planning:

- Building and Operations: same
- Data Management: same

- Education: same, until we decide what to do for camp
- Finance: budget \$1,000 for accounting services. From our notes: “We’d estimate perhaps 10-15 hours per year, costing \$400-\$600 per year. We can expect to need more of her time at the beginning, so the first year’s cost will probably be higher – it’s hard to estimate until she gets started.”
- Fundraising: include \$500 for mailings
- Marketing: no response
- Membership and Sales: same
- Play Selection: no response
- Production: no response
- Volunteer: same

Budget process:

- Need to input actuals for FY18 into budget so we can compare where we over- and under-spent. Budget probably has more detailed line items than expenses. Doug will work on this after his show is over.
 - During the year, we should update the budget every couple months with spending, so we track how close we’re getting to budget as we go.
- Important when selecting shows to look at how much it’s going to cost us. Think about special set pieces and costumes that will be needed.

Payment methods

- Look into a “line of credit” card. The amount of your limit is tied to how much money you have in the bank; if you don’t pay it off, they’ll take the money out of your checking account. It’s a “charge card”. They have the ability to go in and grab your assets if you don’t pay - they have access to your collateral. But it has to be issued in someone’s name.
 - Doug will look into a line of credit card at Veridian.
- Netspend is a brand name for pre-paid debit cards. There are fees charged for loading it. Low-income or unbanked people or people without enough credit use them instead of traditional credit cards and debit cards.
- We also like the idea of seeing if we can have an account at Ace Hardware. They probably don’t have as much selection as Lowes or Home Depot, but is nicer than Ankeny Hardware and probably has what we need.
- Proposal: Pursue an Ace Hardware account to provide for a lot of what we need. Then when someone needs to buy something elsewhere, they can buy themselves for reimbursement, or if they don’t want to do that, we’ll give them cash with the expectation that they return receipts and any leftover cash.
 - Doug will go talk to Ace.
 - We would ultimately like to see if they’d give us a discount and be considered a sponsor. Work on a relationship.
 - And, we’ll try it out and see if they have the selection we need.

What to cover in financial report at Annual Member Meeting:

- Go over a summary of how much income and expenses we had for the year. Make the point that shows don’t make us a profit ultimately (an individual show may show a profit, but then we use that profit to pay for overhead costs of running the theater); we stay open through donations. YOU (donors) keep the lights on.

- Could make a point that if we wanted to break even and stay open without any donations, tickets would be e.g. \$45...but our mission is to make as many people be able to experience theater as possible, so we keep ticket prices as low as we can. Thus we need your donations!

Fundraising

Set up Orange Leaf fundraiser night. August 16 4-7pm. Would be nice to have members of the board present and mingling with patrons as they come in to purchase frozen yogurt.

Reminder HuHot night is October 15 from 5-8pm. Please put it on your calendars.

Marketing

- Show info and edited show descriptions were completed and given to Bekah for season overview materials and Doug A for the website.
- Over The River photography was accomplished on July 25 and photos were made available on the 29th.
- Frankenstein production meeting was conducted on 7/31.
- New Season posters are completed and a few are available in the office if you'd like to post them.
- The Summer newsletter went out on July 29th. In addition to emailed to our full list, a hard copy was mailed to current members because it contains information about membership and season punch cards for next season.
- Emails went out for audition notices for both Frankenstein and Passing Notes. A combination email went out to avoid any confusion. Then each audition received an email by itself closer to the actual date.

Membership & Sales

Membership and Sales Committee Meeting on 8/1/18

Attendance: Stacie Bendixen, Lynn Arterburn, Valerie Stratton, Scott Nielsen, John Claes

Annual Meeting on Sept. 17

- Published start time of 6:00. Start meal at 6:00, business meeting at 6:45, with entertainment to follow.
- Tammy will line up donation of taco meat for walking tacos. 20 pounds. Tammy and Valerie have roasters to put it in.
- Venue has roasters too. It has pitchers, dishes, etc.

Trivia/Jeopardy for entertainment portion of annual meeting

- Look online for a Jeopardy template that you can put on computer and project it. Clickable.
- We should involve Jo Reid in coming up with content about ACT history.
- How do we divide up teams? Or just individuals?
 - Call on individuals. If correct, give them a Smarties candy; if wrong, give them a Dum-Dums sucker.
 - "And the points don't matter..." Don't keep score
 - Just have people raise their hands and get called on to answer; spread it out.

- 5 categories, 5 questions each
 - ACT history – **Lynn with Jo**
 - Season that just finished – **John**
 - E.g. Give synopsis of story and have them name the show
 - E.g. What show featured this song? (Play a song)
 - Theater terms – **Valerie**
 - General theater trivia about famous shows – **Cheryl**
 - Quotes and song lyrics from famous shows – **John**
 - Shakespeare
 - Could include plays that have been turned into movies
- Questions due by August 15.
- Stacie will work on the physical format. Lynn will bring display board she used for camp. Will probably do this instead of an electronic format on a computer – then don't have to hassle with projector and screen.

Honoring Jerry Reid at Annual Meeting

- Where do we draw the line on doing this? Someone's feelings are going to get hurt when we get to a point of deciding who gets honored this way or not.
- But Jerry was a founder of ACT. Agreed we want to do something.
- Lynn will ask Dick Wilson if he would like to say a few words. 5 minutes max. Want to have a board member who knew Jerry well introduce this – Scott will coordinate to have either himself or Becky do it. Lynn will ask Jo if this is OK with her.
- We discussed whether to also acknowledge Elizabeth Wagner during the annual meeting. We decided that the basic threshold for honoring someone this way is that they were actively involved at ACT (as opposed to a non-involved family member of someone involved). Elizabeth was not involved at ACT, so we will not be mentioning her. We want to be sensitive and sympathetic but want to avoid setting a precedent that would be difficult to manage in the future.

Voting:

- STACIE will send Lynn what she needs to print the postcard ballots for voting on the board slate and Darel Award winner.
- STACIE will work on gathering what's needed for special edition of newsletter with candidate/nominee info, meeting info, how to RSVP.

Valerie will talk to Adam about finishing out the Favorite Actor process to identify winners.

Member packets:

- STACIE: Ask James if he wants to revise welcome letter from president
- For Lynn to print what's needed to be stuffed in folders: deadline for her to have it all is Sept. 10

Targeting members who have not renewed yet

- Facebook post, promote chance to win a gift certificate if you donate by Aug. 25
 - Use graphics other than ACT logo, to get attention
- Postcard or letter to remind people who haven't renewed
- Wait till after first show, as some people bring in paper forms at checks to the first show.
- What about a Facebook message? Nah, too spammy

Attracting new members

- Facebook post
- Focus on people who buy tickets – convince them to donate
 - Send an email right after a show to people who attended – “Did you enjoy the show? Support us with a donation!” Before they forget about us.
 - What if it was written in the voice of the director? Or an actor?

John recommends: Freshen up and cut down on the pre-show speech.

Midwestix and ACT Meeting

July 12, 2018

Kathryn Dickel, Midwestix CEO

Adam Haselhuhn, ACT Representative

- We pay **\$1.80** when someone reserves a seat via season punch card. That is based on a \$12/ticket price average for a season punch card.
 - This was decided upon in a “handshake agreement” between Midwestix and Joel after we signed the contract last time. Both sides realized it had been overlooked how the 15% fee would work on season ticket transactions per show (because when the user checks out in Midwestix they don’t re-identify themselves as a “senior – non-member punch card holder” so there was no way to track (except manually) the pricing. They just agreed on average to use the \$12 price level.
 - A senior, member, 6-punch card holder averages out to \$11.67 per show over the 6 shows for the upcoming season.
 - An adult, member, 6-punch card holder averages out to \$14.67 per show over the 6 shows for the upcoming season.
- **After discussion, the changes agreed upon were:**
 - The new contract would be a 3 year contract at this locked in rate of 15% all sales (and the \$1.80 on season punch card sales per show). It would automatically renew if no action taken by either party.
 - It would be advised to have an “annual meeting” with them just to talk numbers, hear trends they are seeing in the industry etc.
 - Instead of **15%** of season punch card sales up front (34 purchases of punch cards via Midwestix this past season) they will charge us **10%** on punch cards sold via them.

Additional Discussion

- **She recommended that we raise our ticket prices***
 - Her rationale was:
 - We never increased ticket costs initially when switching to a system that would cost us more.
 - We can continue to not charge “fees” to our customers but make back additional revenue that we are currently burdening as an expense that we never “course corrected” for in the initial set up. (ie. Raise the total price instead of not raising sticker price but then passing fees on to the customer – then they get mad because the appearance is that there is a ticket vendor so they pay extra)

- We can continue to advertise a ticket cost that will be the same. (They see \$18 on a poster, they pay \$18. No hidden costs at check out).
 - Iowa Stage and other community theaters and venues have all raised ticket prices across the board.
 - *Do not raise children's ticket prices. She was impressed with Honk and Velveteen Rabbit sales. ***Their experience over the phone was these were mostly brand new customers for us.***
- **Early Entry Pass idea**
 - Older customers who want specific seats could be offered to pay a bit extra for an "early entry pass" for them to get to come in 15 minutes before anyone else so they can get the seats they want.
- **Donors and Purchasing**
 - Consider (if possible) tracking ticket purchasing habits on donor records.
- **Top Customers**
 - Pull a list of our top 50 ticket buyers and send them appreciation notes and possible deals/discounts for loyalty.
 - In general do more outreach to top ticket purchasers.
- **Season Punch Card potential buyers**
 - Review customers who potentially purchased 3+ tickets in a season and reach out personally to encourage them to buy a punch card and become a member. Not just a mass email. Personal outreach.
- **"Teaser Shows"**
 - Identify ways to do what she called "teaser shows." Something that will put a lot of butts in seats for "one night only" and then market to that audience about your regular programming. (Hypothetical example of Simon Estes performing at ACT). Make money that night. Expose new audiences to your theater. Recruit them to attend your regular shows.
- **RE-MARKETING**
 - Target folks who have come before but not come back recently. Use discount codes. Get them to come back with 25% off their order etc.
 - Who came to Honk and Velveteen? Market Elevator Family at them with a BOGO offer?
 - Who bought tickets to a comedy a year ago but hasn't been back? Target them with a BOGO.
 - Etc. etc. etc.
- **Use Discounts More**
 - She noticed we ***don't utilize a lot of discounts.*** Most other theaters are giving out codes. This goes into the Re-Marketing she talked about. A butt in your seat at \$9.50 is better than no butt in your seat at \$0.
- **Any way to partner with Ankeny High School?**
 - Huge auditorium. High school shows sell out. 1000 attendees in one weekend is like 2-3 of our regular shows.
- **Ankeny targeting**
 - For a price, Midwestix can run a list of everyone in their entire universe (so all midwestix clients' databases) of people who live in Ankeny and target an email at them with a discount rate for us to attract new audience members. She is going to check on what that list size might be if it would be worth it.
- **Always be thinking of "how can Midwestix help us"**

- They are proud to be our partner for ticket sales. They are full-service. If we need a list, they can pull. We should never be afraid to call and ask “can you do XYZ...?” The answer is usually yes, and they will find a way to help if they are able.
- They want us to be successful. The more we sell, the more they get paid so it is a win/win 😊

Play Selection

The committee has its final meeting to craft the 2019-2020 season proposal on August 23. Cheryl and Troy will present it for board approval at the September meeting.

Production

- Production meeting for Frankenstein was held 7/31. Auditions August 5th and 6th.
- Passing Notes- auditions 8/18 & 8/19. Production meeting will be Aug 25th. Doug has already been in contact with Lynn and Tammy on deadlines.

Volunteer

- Replied to volunteer e-mails
- Sent out two call for volunteers e-mails for "Over the River and Through the Woods."
- Contacted the ACT board to request filling of empty volunteer slots.
- Sent out volunteer reminder e-mails to all "Over the River and Through the Wood's" volunteers.