

Minutes of the January 26, 2022, Arena Theater Board of Directors Meeting

1. **Call to Order** – Beattie called the meeting to order at 6:02 a.m.
2. **Roll Call** – Present – Beattie, Joakimides, Andersen, Archer, Wilkinson, McMurtry, Crutcher, More Boyd, Marrinan, Moseley, Steve McLaughlin and Molly Morgan
Absent – Sussman
Minutes - Archer
3. **Privilege of the Floor/Correspondence/Suggestion Box** – Moseley reported that there was a note left in appreciation for a Proof of Vaccination event.
4. **Approval of Minutes from the November 18, 2021 Special Board Meeting and the December 8, 2021 Board Meeting** – Joakimides moved and Wilkinson seconded the Motion and both sets of Minutes were approved.

REPORTS:

5. **President's Report** – Nothing to report.
6. **Treasurer's Report** – Andersen reported on the month of December and the last Quarter.

For December we had membership income of \$8,920 as well as donations of \$7,907, earned revenue was down slightly to \$9,567 while event expenses were \$12,255 and operating expenses were \$6,300. The balance of SVO Grant #1 of \$1,045 was used and approximately \$17,000 of SVO Grant #2 was used, leaving a remaining balance of \$37,500. Before the use of the SVO Grant funds the net operating income was \$6,900, largely due to memberships and donations.

For the quarter ending in December, net operating expenses were \$5,590, donations totaled \$30,899, we received a \$6,500 donation from Surf Market and \$19,620 in membership. Film Club resumed its regular schedule and had income of -\$3,421 for 9 showings (average loss of \$880/showing). Opera had income of -\$39, Bolshoi Ballet has income of -\$39 and Exhibits on Screen had income of -\$71 and Cinema had income of -\$8,413 for 48 showings (average ticket sales/showing of \$175). Income for the Quarter was approximately \$37,000, operating expenses were approximately \$22,000 and net income was almost \$16,000.

In the Quarter income was \$37,000, operating expenses were \$22,000 and the net income was almost \$16,000. Film Club resumed its regular schedule and had income of \$928 from ticket sales and \$312 from concessions for total earned income of \$1,240. The cost of film rentals alone was \$1,402 so Film Club is not even covering the cost of the film rentals and the additional costs (payroll, etc.) are not covered by ticket sales either. Cinema had income from ticket sales, concessions and on-screen ads of \$19,190, film rentals cost \$5,053 and there is higher payroll which resulted in a net loss.

7. Standing Committee Reports

a. **Finance Committee** – Archer reported that the Fin Comm had reviewed the December and last Quarter financial reports and noted that only events requiring Proof of Vaccination were making money. The situation with Cinema is serious because we are losing a lot of money.

Steve McLaughlin attended the meeting and participated in the discussion. It was noted that, more often than not, the ticket sales for Film Club do not even pay for the cost of the rental of the film. One of the things discussed was possibly suspending Film Club for an indeterminate period of time

because of the financial losses. The Fin Comm felt that we could use the current situation to get more information and didn't want to entirely suspend Film Club. As an alternative, Fin Comm recommends that from now on Film Club be 1x/mo. and require Proof of Vaccination and that policy continue through the end of June when all of the other programs that require Proof of Vaccination are over and the issue becomes ripe to discuss again. This strong recommendation has the support of everyone on Fin Comm and Steve McLaughlin. Film Club has agreed to provide a volunteer to check for Proof of Vaccination. He has been told by many former attendees that they are not returning to Film Club unless and until it requires Proof of Vaccination.

The Association's tax return has been signed and filed. We have begun to file the paperwork necessary to allow any interested employees to open an IRA through CalSavers.

b. Membership Committee – Joakimides reported that membership is down to 314 members with 490 total people including partners. We normally fluctuate between 500-575 so this a lower membership level than last year. Some former members have asked not to be contacted again because of the Theater's vaccination policy.

We had a good response to the Winter Fundraising Letter with donations totaling \$17,067 including regular renewals and December and almost \$11,400 in November.

We are extending complimentary membership with donations of \$500 or more.

Two Have-a-Seats were sold this month.

The Committee recommends the Annual General Membership Meeting be conducted by Zoom and suggested that it be held on Monday April 25, 2022 to avoid conflict with tax filing deadlines. The Committee will be searching for one or more Board candidates and would like to broaden the diversity of the Board going forward. "Board equity" is an increasing consideration in Grant applications.

b. Fund Development Committee – Wilkinson focused on what is coming up in the future and, especially, the Spring/Summer Fundraising Letter. The Committee invites suggestions for the content and layout of the letter. The letter will discuss our current schedule and the new membership perks.

The Community Foundation Grant for the carpet has been submitted.

He also discussed the Science on Screen series that will be produced with the Science Grant that Sussman obtained and he discussed the three films that will be shown.

c. Programming Committee (includes cinema, live, telecasts, publicity, and film club)

Cinema – Marrinan reported that upcoming movies include Spiderman No Way Home, The Last Daughter, The Tragedy of Macbeth, Learning to Live Together, Belle (Japanese Animation), The Power of the Dog and Don't Look Up.

He reported that it is too soon to tell how the Wednesday night Proof of Vaccination requirement has affected the box office which might be confounded by the movie being shown. Joakimides reported that people have responded very positively to the Proof of Vaccination requirement.

Marrinan suggested that we consider making more cinema events require Proof of Vaccination to see if that would boost box office because "we are really hurting." Andersen suggested that a more careful selection of films with a wider audience appeal might assist in boosting the box office. Boyd responded that in years past we have seen that Oscar-nominated films have done well. She believes that people are nervous to go to the movies and many are screening films at home.

Live programming survey and possible actions – Boyd reported that she has cancelled the February 12 live singer/songwriter show because it seemed too soon given the Omicron variant and we delayed increasing our capacity which would have seriously affected the financial aspects of the show. The Committee also wants to include the results of the recent survey in its decision-making going forward.

The Board has decided to remain at 30% capacity at this time given the Omicron variant. McMurtry had heard that the County has limited attendance to 50 people and asked whether we needed to reduce our floor plan. Steve McLaughlin clarified the County's order which was based on the inability to maintain 6' social distancing so this would not apply to us at this time.

A local band has volunteered to perform for a "soft opening" for the Theater toward the end of February. The Committee has a meeting next week and they will discuss this further at that time. There are some Blues shows tentatively scheduled to begin in March.

The Board reviewed its December decision to increase seating from 30% (55) to 50% (91) which had been put on hold with the increased Omicron infection surge. The Board will revisit this in the coming months. Andersen confirmed that our 30% limit is still within the County's COVID-19 Guidelines as long as it is combined with social distancing. .

Boyd shared the results of the Live Programming Survey. There were 280 responses, with non-members responding in greater numbers than members (by a ratio of approximately 2:1). For future live events, 44% of all responses favored requiring Proof of Vaccination, only, 21% favored Proof of Vaccination and/or negative COVID-19 test results while 34% opposed requiring either a Proof of Vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results.

The results of 99 members that responded confirmed that 71% of members supported a Proof of Vaccination requirement (54%) while another (17%) favored the alternative of a negative COVID-19 test result and a much smaller number (29%) opposed requiring either Proof of Vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results.

For the 186 non-members that responded, 37% supported requiring Proof of Vaccination while another 22% Proof of Vaccination and/or negative COVID-19 test results while 41% opposed requiring either.

The results of this survey confirmed that 71% of members and 59% of non-members supported requiring either a Proof of Vaccination and/or negative COVID-19 test result for entry into the Theater for live events. Boyd pointed out that the results confirm that people feel safer when there is a Proof of Vaccination requirement and would be a reasonable step to increase attendance and to be responsive to the wishes of our members and community.

Boyd suggested that the negative COVID-19 test result requirement could be handled if the Theater provided, administered and interpreted the results of an on-site rapid COVID-19 test for entry into the Theater. Andersen supported the requirement of Proof of Vaccination and/or a negative test result as a moderate compromise. More argued that it was discriminatory to only test non-vaccinated persons and that, instead, all persons should be tested, regardless of vaccination status. Wilkinson pointed out that the tests are not easily available, and we would have problems maintaining an adequate supply of tests. He also suggested that it was not a practical solution because of the burden and expense. Andersen suggested that the cost of a COVID test was \$10@ and suggested that unvaccinated persons should be surcharged for that cost as a part of their ticket price. The Board voted to table this and take it up either at the next meeting or call a Special Meeting if a decision is necessary sooner for publicity for the upcoming Blues show.

Telecast – Boyd reported that the upcoming Opera, "Rigoletto," is sold-out. Moseley noted the next Bolshoi Ballet, "Jewel" by George Balanchine, will be shown on February 6 and the

next Exhibition on Screen “Frida Kahlo” which will be shown the following week is also expected to be well-attended. The next NT-Live event, Sondheim’s “Follies,” will be at the end of the month.

Publicity – Moseley noted that the programs that are doing well have sponsorship or underwriters and she suggested that this could be a solution to some of the Film Club financial issues. Steve McLaughlin clarified the difference between sponsorship and underwriting.

Film Club - Steve McLaughlin reported that the Film Club re-launch showings have not drawn significant audiences, with average attendance of 13+ in November and December. Pre-pandemic shows were drawing 35-50 and that was the assumption he relied on in recommending that Film Club charge admission (\$7/members and \$10/non-members) and reopen at a full schedule. He agrees with Fin Comm’s suggestion to 1x/month with select programming likely to attract a larger audience. He suggested that in addition to Film Club continuing one time perm month, and suggested the first Monday of each month for the immediate future that Film Club be allowed to require Proof of Vaccination similar to what the Board had previously approved for Opera, Bolshoi Ballet, NT-Live and Exhibition on Screen.

Other alternative publicity ideas included an on screen add (listing past Film Club showings), Facebook, list serves, etc. Moseley noted that the weekly Film Club email goes to 1,040 addresses. Alternative solutions were discussed. Boyd suggested a reduced schedule, on screen ads and more publicity for some period of time (suggested 3 months). Steve McLaughlin recounted what he said at Fin Comm and suggested, again, that there be fewer showings. He also suggested that we reach out to the Film Club “regulars” for their support as well. He suggested that the decision apply through June in order to get a better idea as to whether this solution works and he noted that it is less severe than a cessation of Film Club. Moseley pointed our current policy of not requiring a Proof of Vaccination has not generated an increase in attendance.

Andersen moved that Film Club schedule be amended and go forward with one time/month showings and be allowed to require Proof of Vaccination though June 2022 in order to see what data can be obtained and relied upon for future Board decisions. Archer seconded the Motion and it was approved.

d. **Facilities Committee** – McMurtry reported that the foliage in front of the Theater have been trimmed. The heaters went down over New Year’s weekend due to no fuel. He explained how that situation was resolved. They re-filled the fuel tank and it appears that the fuel line had a leak in it. The regulator, pigtail and underground line were replaced but the heaters’ burners had been contaminated with carbon (from the alternate fuel) and they had to be cleaned. As of now we are running on one heater.

e. **Personnel Committee** – Archer reported that we’ve hired a replacement for the Second Projectionist position.

OLD BUSINESS

8. **Reopening committee update** – Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

9. **Science on Screen update** – Deferred.

10. **Reporting volunteer hours reminder** – Wilkinson reminded all Board members to turn in their hours monthly because they are often needed for Grant Applications.

11. **Mural for wall facing parking lot** – Wilkinson circulated the information about the proposed mural. The proposed design includes the history of Point Arena. This will be discussed in greater detail at our next meeting.

12. **Theater participation in 4/23 Fringe Festival** – Deferred.

13. **Next meeting date and time**—The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m. with the next meeting to be held on February 23, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.