



## **Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers**

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 - 6:30 P.M.

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions.

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING.

**Present:** Jen Guman, Marie Smith, Margot Hall, Anna Wiedemann, Herb Rosenthal, Armel Romeo Kouassi (joined 6:33 p.m.)

**Absent:** none

**Also Present:** Operations Manager - Sheila Torres, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

**Call to Order:** Ms. Guman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

### **Public Participation:**

None

### **Chairman Report and Comment Chairman:**

Ms. Guman had nothing new to report.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Wiedemann motioned to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2021. Seconded by Ms. Smith. All in favor. Mr. Rosenthal abstained.

### **Operations Manager/Theater Report (Refer to Attachment A):**

Ms. Torres told members there was nothing new to report. She reminded the group of the *Shuttered Venue Operators grant* that Ms. DiMartino has been working on. She and Ms. DiMartino participated in a local SBA webinar that provided information on the application process which was very helpful. The *Shuttered Venue Operators grant* application portal has experienced a glitch and remains closed so Ms. DiMartino has been unable to submit the application. They are anticipating that the portal will reopen sometime next week.

Ms. Torres also told members that they have not yet opened an account with Mail Chimp for the ETH newsletter. The account will be set-up under the Mary Hawley Society. Ms. Guman commented that they should be able to begin setting up the account and obtain any necessary not-for-profit information later. The group discussed the opportunity to raise funds during Giving Day that would be used to pay the costs of the newsletter.

Ms. Guman confirmed members received financial reports from Ms. DiMartino. There were no questions.

### **Unfinished Business:**

**COVID – Governor Guidelines Update:**



Ms. Torres told the Board that although the State has increased the maximum capacity for theaters, the ETH theater remains at a max of 160 because of town and social distancing requirements. The Alexandria room remains at a max of 65. Ms. Torres noted that some renters have moved their events to other locations.

#### **ETH Pop & Bop Event Update:**

Ms. Torres reminded members that she and Ms. Brickfield have been working with the Borough to obtain the necessary approvals to hold the *Pop & Bop* event in the back parking lot of the ETH. There has been some back and forth conversation regarding the maximum number of permitted attendees. There is also a question as to whether vendors can have food samples. It has been confirmed that the event is permitted a maximum of 200 attendees. The performers and vendors will be in addition to that number. By the time all questions were answered it was too late to advertise, so they are considering moving the event to July.

#### **Movies/Drive-In/Schedule:**

Ms. Guman explained to members that she added this topic to the agenda because of the questions over whether the drive-in would be returning this season. Ms. Torres said she receives questions daily asking if the drive-in will return. Ms. Guman explained that the group needs to make an official decision. The first question is if movies are returning to the ETH. If yes, will they use the theater or a drive-in? Ms. Guman reminded members of the analysis done to determine the profitability of movies and the recommendation to scale them back. Before a final decision could be made the pandemic hit and theaters were shutdown. Ms. Guman shared a summary of the analysis comparing similar time periods for the movie theater and the drive-in. Considering all expenses, the summary for the theater was \$85,000, and the drive-in was \$45,082. Ms. Guman noted that the drive-in number does not take into consideration the cost of setting up the drive-in which would reduce the \$45,082. She added that the drive-in charge was \$10 per car, and the Board should consider increasing to charge to \$20 per car. The group discussed that fact that the theater allows for multiple shows per day, whereas drive-in only allows for 1 show at sun down. Mr. Kouassi asked if the capacity is considering the original capacity or current reduced capacity. Ms. Guman replied that she did not recall the theater ever selling out for a movie. Ms. Torres explained that first run movies, like *Frozen*, would sell out the theater, but it was not a common occurrence. Mr. Kouassi questioned if people would be willing to come back to the theater. Ms. Guman replied that if the Board decided to go with the drive-in option, money will need to be spent on set-up which they will make back in 2 – 3 years. Mr. Rosenthal said that once COVID is over he believes the novelty of the drive-in will wear off.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to decide between the drive-in and theater.

Mr. Kouassi motioned to bring back theater movies. Mr. Rosenthal seconded. All in favor.

Ms. Torres informed members that when looking at revenue by days of the week, they must also consider the time of year. In the fall there are live events in the theater, so there are less movies shown. Ms. Guman shared a history of the ticket sales. The pattern of popular movie days is Tuesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Ms. Torres explained that Tuesdays are senior days and there would be two shows on that day so that is the reason for it coming up a little higher than the other weekdays. Ms. Guman felt that the Tuesday senior day was a community support day and that it's important to keep it in place. Ms. Torres agreed, but recommended



making it a Friday at 1 p.m. Ms. Wiedemann agreed with the Friday date. The group continued to discuss showing movies Friday – Sunday.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to show movies: Fridays - 1 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.; Saturdays – 1 p.m., 4 p.m., 7 p.m., and 9 p.m.; and Sundays – 1 p.m., 4 p.m. & 7 p.m. with a 4<sup>th</sup> show in the summer at 9 p.m. beginning July 2021.

Mr. Rosenthal so moved. Ms. Wiedemann seconded. All in favor.

### **Concert Series Update:**

Ms. Guman told members that Ms. Torres has 4 bands scheduled for the fall and asked that the Board weigh in on the dates. Ms. Torres told the group that the first band is scheduled for Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> which is the same night as the Newtown Arts Festival concert. Ms. Guman asked if members had any concerns with these two events happening on same night. She noted that rescheduling any bands may result in pushing them out to a year from now. Ms. Torres said she spoke with Barbara Snyder, organizer of this year's Arts Festival, and found the band scheduled for the Arts Fest is not a cover band like the ETH has scheduled so they may attract different audiences. Ms. Guman explained she brought this to the attention of the group because of the potential impact. Mr. Kouassi asked if they could determine a percentage of impact. Ms. Guman said she was not certain, and that weather may determine which event people would attend.

### **Technical Director Support:**

Ms. Torres informed the group that she has been speaking with the technician the ETH has been using for the theater to see if he would be willing to work directly with the ETH. The technician has provided a proposal that is agreeable. Ms. Torres recommended the Board consider working with this technician directly per diem. She further explained that she has been in conversations with another person who has the same experience and recommended the ETH have two technicians to work with. Mr. Rosenthal asked for clarification if the ETH would be paying the technician directly. Ms. Torres said yes, and they would be paying less.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to use this vendor to support live performances.

Mr. Rosenthal motioned to use the current vendor on a per diem basis. Ms. Smith seconded.

### **Compensation Model Changes for Theater Service Staff:**

Ms. Torres reminded Board members of two documents that she had sent out regarding compensation and that it would be best to make a decision on changing the model before the next fiscal year (July). Currently the ETH compensation model is based upon shift. The recommendation is to have a standard model that would pay employees by the hour. Payroll is time consuming with the current model, so moving to an hourly model will help decrease time required. Ms. Torres then told the Board of two employees who are being trained in other areas to ensure there is coverage and that these employees are very knowledgeable and are willing to learn more. She recommended adding a theater assistant role which would be broad and cover live events and movies. Ms. Torres continued to explain that as the minimum wage increases, the two employees who have more responsibilities will have similar wages to all other employees. She recommended increasing the pay for the two and continued to highlight the



value of both employees. Mr. Kouassi questioned if moving to an hourly model will cause the ETH to lose staff. The group discussed concerns and came to an agreement.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to move to an hourly compensation.

Mr. Kouassi motioned to go to the documented hourly rate model beginning July.

After some discussion, Ms. Guman clarified that this model changes the structure to an hourly pay beginning at \$14/hour for all employees, (\$1 above the state requirement), with the exception of the two more knowledgeable employees who will begin at \$15/hour and \$13.50/hour.

Mr. Rosenthal seconded. All in favor.

#### **Annual Review of Tenant Leases:**

Ms. Torres said she reviewed the tenant leases and found the language was the same with the exception of two who were approved. The language had been updated to insert a late payment fee, which has been helpful because there have not been any late payments.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to table the annual review of tenant leases.

Ms. Wiedemann so moved. Mr. Rosenthal seconded. All in favor.

#### **Mary Hawley Society Update:**

Ms. Wiedemann told members that she had nothing new to report.

#### **Borough Zoning Update:**

Ms. Guman told the group that the Borough public hearing was scheduled for 7 p.m. tomorrow night and asked members to attend. Ms. Hall explained to members that the proposal went from the town Planning and Zoning Commission who made a recommendation to the Borough Zoning Commission.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Rental Rate Review/Increase:**

Ms. Torres brought to the groups attention that the day rental rates have not increased since 2018. She recommended increasing the day rental rate for the Alexandria room considering the kitchen clean-up, and the theater considering the improvements. Ms. Torres recommended to not increase birthday party rates as they are a great deal for families. Ms. Guman added that the Board must consider the cost of the technical director for the theater when determining the increase. Ms. Hall asked to receive the day rental price list for review. The group discussed how the increases would be determined, and Mr. Rosenthal asked Ms. Torres to provide her recommendations. Ms. Wiedemann noted that in the past there was a subcommittee of two people from the Board and Ms. Torres who determined increases. Mr. Kouassi volunteered and Ms. Guman said she would join also. Ms. Torres said she would also invite Ms. DiMartino to the conversations.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to table the possible increase to day rental.



Mr. Rosenthal moved to table. Ms. Wiedemann seconded. All in favor.

**Process for Recruitment/Training of Volunteer Ushers:**

Ms. Torres told members that besides the Mary Hawley Society raising money, it would also be helpful if they can get volunteers who can work at live events. The benefit to the Mary Hawley Society is that they can have signage at events noting they supplied the volunteers and get their name out in the public. The benefit to the volunteers is that they will be able to watch the shows for free. Ms. Guman asked if there was documentation that could be handed out to potential volunteers so they know what they would be responsible for. Ms. Torres said that she has an usher write-up that she can use. Mr. Kouassi recommended that the Mary Hawley Society distribute flyers about themselves so the public knows who they are and what they do. Ms. Torres said they were considering renaming the group to *The Friends of Edmond Town Hall* so people have a better understanding of what they do.

**Proposed Change to Building Hour of Operation (post pandemic):**

Ms. Torres told everyone she was considering adjusting the open hours of the ETH post COVID. The normal business hours for Monday – Thursday are 8 a.m. – 11 p.m.. The last hour is excessive especially since there are no movies during the week. Closing an hour early would save an estimated \$3,000/year and would have no impact to servicing the public. The group discussed the 8 a.m. opening time and Ms. Torres explained that people who rent the Town Hall for meetings typically start the meeting at 9 a.m. and need to arrive prior to that time for set-up. In addition, service technicians use morning hours to make repairs. The recommended new hours would be Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. – 10 p.m., Friday - Sunday 8 a.m. – 11 p.m. Ms. Hall asked what would be done if a tenant has a meeting until 10:30 p.m. Ms. Torres explained that their lease states the building is available during business hours but can also be flexible when necessary. Ms. Guman asked if there are any cases where a meeting or event extends past the closing time. Ms. Torres said there have been cases where renters asked to stay past 11 p.m., so they are charged for the extra hour. She does not allow anyone to remain past midnight as the ETH is in a residential neighborhood.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to accept proposed new hours of operation

Ms. Wiedemann motioned to accept the proposed hours of Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Friday through Sunday 8 a.m. - 11 p.m. Mr. Kouassi seconded. All in favor.

**CIP:**

Ms. Torres updated the group that the ADA bathroom project is going well and the project manager said it would probably be done in May. She continued to tell everyone that she met Mr. Spreyer, the Town Purchasing Agent, on the roof project. Mr. Spreyer has brought in a new company to look at the project as a whole. In the process of looking at the roof they have discovered a leak over the theater. This company wants to come back and do a moisture test of the roofs. Mr. Rosenthal asked about the condition of the slate roof. Ms. Torres said that there are a few pieces of slate missing that will be replaced. The company recommended repairing one leak from the inside, and said they may be able to restore the flat roof instead of replacing it so the savings can be used to repair the roof over theater.



**Comments from Board Members:**

Mr. Rosenthal asked when the Board will elect a Chairperson and possible Vice Chairperson. Ms. Guman said that she will add this to the next meeting agenda.

**Executive Session:**

The chairman asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session, inviting Ms. Torres, to discuss contract negotiations.

Ms. Hall moved to enter into executive session. Mr. Rosenthal seconded. All in favor.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:07 p.m.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:28 p.m.

Ms. Guman asked for a motion to approve the proposal for the rental rate for a renter for the months of December and November as discussed in Executive session.

Ms. Wiedemann so moved. Ms. Hall seconded. All in favor.

**Adjournment:**

Ms. Hall motioned to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Ms. Smith seconded. All in favor.

*A recording of the meeting can be found using the link below, or contact  
[Kimberly.Chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov).*

[Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers 4/13/2021 \(prior to Executive Session\)](#)

[Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers 4/13/2021 \(post to Executive Session\)](#)

## ETH MANAGER'S REPORT – 13April 2021 – Sheila Torres

### Overview

Began free movie weekend. Had some projector issues and fortunately thanks to staff were able to work through them. Had to order parts.

- **Shop & Bop** – Helen Brickfield felt it would be best to wait until later in the summer, possibly July to have this event because initially there were some questions about how many people could attend and whether the vendors could provide samples. We were not clear on possibilities in a timely fashion, which left little time for marketing the event. Helen asked for a weekend in June but we have the theater booked every weekend so June is not ideal.
- **Grants** – Lauren has been working very hard to prepare for the Shuttered Venue Operator's Grant. We had all information and forms gathered and then they had technical glitches. We are now waiting for them to reopen the website. Our suspicion is that it will be open up next week. Thankfully, Jen G. had provided us with the link to attend the local SBA webinar and they were extremely helpful.
- **ADA Bathroom** – The custom doors have been completed and the carpenter cancelled last week's appointment, but he is due to come in the next two weeks to do measurements. According to main project manager, this bathroom should be completed by May.
- **CIP Exterior Renovations** – Met with Rick Sprayer and contractor to inspect roof work. More extensive work will be needed because leakage is also happening on the main roof (over the theater, not just the flat roof). The contractor is going to start by doing a moisture test.
- **Plumbing Issues** - The installing them and insulating the steam pipes in the LSOD chase and the cleaning of the carpet is still left to do.
- **Newsletter Changes** – The MailChimp account not yet opened but can be opened through Mary Hawley Society.
- **Ticketing Tool** – I need to meet with Mike Guman to discuss best way to arrange the seating chart for upcoming concerts given current restrictions.
- **Rentals for Live Events/Movies/Bookings** –
- **Movies/Drive-in** – We began the free movie weekend and extended the movie through this week. Based on the experience this week we may keep the movies to the weekend only. I continue to get requests, questions about the drive-in and also are we bringing back "regular" movies. Met with Amy Mangold to discuss partnership on drive-in. They were interested in perhaps sponsoring some of the movies or working with us. They are trying to see where we can have the movies, perhaps in Reed parking lot or other places.
- **Theater Completion and Support** – DNR will be here April 19 and April 20 to complete the lighting changes to our theater.
- **Work/Inspections Completed**



Attachment A

**Elevator** – Part installs for boiler were completed as well as check-up on elevator where a sticky button was causing people to not be able to go to the Ground level.

**Boilers** – Received boiler certificates from Hartford Steam Boiler