



## Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 11, 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, Herb Rosenthal, Anna Wiedemann, Armel Romeo Kouassi (joined 6:47 p.m.)

**Absent:** Margot Hall, Marie Smith

**Also Present:** Stacey Olszewski - Mary Hawley Society, Operations Manager - Sheila Torres, Linda Zukauskas – Voices, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

**Call to Order:** Ms. Guman called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. without a quorum.

### **Public Participation:**

None

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

Ms. Guman had nothing new to report.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Rosenthal reminded the Board that the minutes could not be approved until there was a quorum.

*The Board returned to the Approval of the Minutes at 7:19 p.m.:*

Ms. Guman asked for an approval of the minutes from the regular meeting held April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Torres pointed members to the *Compensation Model Changes for Theater Service Staff* section on page 3 of the April 14<sup>th</sup> minutes. She explained that the increase for the two additional staff members was incorrect and it should be simplified to “a higher rate”. Mr. Rosenthal explained that technically the minutes could not be changed and the motion would have to be amended.

Ms. Torres asked that the motion be amended to state, “The Board of Managers has approved the movement to an hourly payroll for all employees at \$14 per hour starting effective July 1<sup>st</sup> to coincide with the raise in the minimum wage and a higher rate for two more skilled and experienced employees.”

Mr. Rosenthal made the motion for the compensation model to be amended as stated by Ms. Torres. Seconded by Ms. Wiedemann. All in favor.

Mr. Rosenthal then motioned to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2021. Seconded by Ms. Wiedemann. All in favor.



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

Ms. Torres said she had nothing in addition to her report and would answer any questions.

Ms. Guman noted the great news on the Shuttered Venue Operators grant and Ms. Torres agreed. Ms. Guman asked if there was a timeline. Ms. Torres said there were no other updates at this time.

Mr. Rosenthal questioned how soon the \$4,000 would have to be spent on the generator. Ms. Torres said that there hadn't been a major overhaul of the generator for the 9 years she has been an employee with the Edmond Town Hall. She expressed concerns with delaying maintenance of the generator any longer because of the unpredictable weather. Mr. Rosenthal then asked if the maintenance could be done after July 1 for next fiscal year, and Ms. Torres said yes.

**Unfinished Business:**

**COVID – Governor Guidelines Update:**

Ms. Torres told the Board there was an update from the Governor, but it was more focused on jobs. She is receiving daily calls and emails from renters asking if they can sell more tickets to their events. Ms. Torres reached out to the local Health Department who explained that they are waiting for further guidance from the State Department of Public Health. The Edmond Town Hall will continue to operate under the March and April restrictions until more guidelines have been released. Mr. Rosenthal asked if Ms. Torres tried to contact the State Department of Public Health directly. Ms. Torres said yes, but she has not received a response yet. She would like to know when they will be providing the updated guidelines. Ms. Guman asked when the first live event is scheduled. Ms. Torres said it is next week, and because it is prior to the May 19<sup>th</sup> date it will be under the current restrictions. There are many dance recitals scheduled after the May 19<sup>th</sup> date and these are the groups that would like to know if they can expand their event.

**Annual Review of tenant leases:**

Ms. Guman asked the Board if they would like to make any comments or table the discussion until the next meeting. Ms. Wiedemann recommended tabling until the next meeting. Mr. Rosenthal noted that the increases looked fine. The annual review of tenant leases was tabled until the next meeting.

**Mary Hawley Society Update:**

Ms. Olszewski began by informing members that she is currently working with the bank in regards to the checking account. She continued to tell the group that the biggest thing is they need members. Currently there are only two Society members including herself and they are not able to get as much work done as they would like. Ms. Olszewski has been in conversations with an accountant and a lawyer to at least work as consultants to the Mary Hawley Society. She will notify the Board as soon as they have confirmed. Ms. Wiedemann recommended contacting local newspapers to do an article. Ms. Olszewski said they could do a press release. She added that she would even like to see a youth force. Ms. Guman told Ms. Olszewski that at the last Board meeting they discussed how other venues highlight to potential volunteers the benefits of volunteering such as free viewing of shows.



In addition, Mr. Rosenthal told Ms. Olszewski that at the last meeting the group discussed the idea that people may not connect the name *Mary Hawley Society* with the Edmond Town Hall. Ms. Olszewski said this was something that had been brought up to change the name to *The Friends of Edmond Town Hall*. She is currently speaking with attorneys to see what can be done to change the name such as a DBA. Ms. Olszewski continued to tell the group that the Society has met with Marygold's to discuss a potential combined effort. Follow-up is required.

The group then discussed the possibility of holding a carnival at the Edmond Town Hall and concerns with COVID requirements. Ms. Olszewski recommended a *Taste of Newtown* type of event where there are food trucks, vendors and music or an art event. Both have less liability and less of an outlay of money. Ms. Guman noted that due to COVID many activities had moved to the fall. Ms. Olszewski recommended a smaller scale event to make it easier to comply with COVID requirements.

The group then discussed the IRS reports that have to be filed by the Mary Hawley Society, and Ms. Olszewski explained she is currently working with an accountant on this matter.

Ms. Guman asked if the money raised through the Fairfield County's Community Foundation Giving Day was deposited directly to the Mary Hawley Society account. Ms. Olszewski replied yes and further explained that the Foundation takes a percentage of the donation.

Ms. Guman thanked Ms. Olszewski for attending the meeting.

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

Ms. Guman reminded members that Borough Zoning made some minor changes to the permitted uses in the Landmark Buildings zone before it was approved.

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

Ms. Guman told the Board that she and Mr. Kouassi met with Ms. Torres to review rental rates. Mr. Kouassi said it was a good discussion. Ms. Guman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the ETH Board of Managers Subcommittee meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Mr. Kouassi made the motion. Seconded by Ms. Guman. All in favor.

Ms. Torres sent members a document with current rates and suggested new rates. She also sent a document with rates charged by other places in the area. Ms. Torres explained that there have been no rate increases since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Ms. Guman added that the suggested rates are taking into account inflation, and what similar spaces in the area are renting for. Ms. Torres explained that in addition, people renting the theater for a live production will have to pay for technical direction effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. This charge will offset the cost of a technical director. Ms. Torres explained that she determined this fee by averaging prices from a proposal.

Mr. Rosenthal motioned to approve the recommended rental rate increases on the rental rate comparison document that was sent to the Board. Ms. Wiedemann seconded. All in favor.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Chair and Vice Chair Appointments:**



*Chair Nomination:*

Mr. Rosenthal nominated Ms. Guman for the Chair of Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers and noted her outstanding work. Mr. Kouassi seconded. All in favor.

*Vice Chair:*

Ms. Guman made a motion to nominate Ms. Wiedemann for Vice Chair and noted that she is an asset to the Board and has held the position in the past. Mr. Rosenthal seconded. All in favor.

**Lack of Video and Audio Support:**

Ms. Torres raised to the board the fact the Edmond Town Hall is still without a video and audio support vendor. She has been trying to find a similar arrangement as they had with the prior company; however companies in the area either do installation or do support on an event-by-event basis which becomes expensive. There was an issue on May 1<sup>st</sup> where the amplifier stopped working during a recital rehearsal. Ms. Torres brought the amplifier for repair. The group discussed the options for finding a vendor recommendation, and the various functional roles involved in theater support. Mr. Rosenthal asked what companies is used by other theaters. Ms. Torres explained that many theaters have knowledgeable staff so they do not need outside support. Mr. Kouassi recommended asking venues with staff if they have any recommendations. Ms. Torres emphasized that a support company is needed, not an individual because of the various skill sets required. She will continue outreach for a recommendation.

**Broader Marketing of Suite Rooms:**

Ms. Torres directed members to the Zoning Changes section of her report. With the approval of the Landmark Building zone, they are now able to advertise to a broader market. Two spaces that have the potential to be leased under the new zoning change at an increased rate are 103 and 202. Ms. Torres recommended first approaching the current tenant to see if they are interested, allowing them the first right of refusal. Mr. Kouassi said that it made sense to adjust the rate according to the market and allow the current tenant the right of first refusal. Ms. Guman added that she did not see any issues with this and clarified that the current tenant is renting by the day. Ms. Torres confirmed this is correct and said she would want a 1-year lease contract.

**Comments from Board Members:**

Mr. Rosenthal told members that now there is a quorum they could approve the minutes. (See *Approval of Minutes on page 1.*)

**Adjournment:**

Ms. Wiedemann motioned to adjourn at 7:27 p.m. Mr. Rosenthal 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 5/11/2021 meeting](#)

# ETH MANAGER'S REPORT – 11 May 2021 – Sheila Torres

## Highlights/Issues

**Autism Awareness Fundraiser** – Linda Jones exceeded her goal. She had much praise for our staff.

**Jeniam Foundation** - Reassured me that they want to rent Suite 103B but their legal experts are combing through the lease and they are having to change their insurance requirements in a new way so it's causing a delay. They viewed the space recently and have plans to redecorate and improve it.

**Zoning Changes** approved should allow us to advertise to a broader market. We have two unleased spaces: Suite 103A (\$400) and Suite 202 (\$430). Current Suite 202 renter can have first refusal right.

**NewArts** has confirmed that they wish to rent our theater in December to perform 'A Christmas Carol.'

**Live Shows** – Preparing for dance recitals almost every weekend starting with May 15. Also spending much time enforcing and clarifying rules because renters want to take liberties with COVID restrictions.

**Theater Support Concerns** – I have been unable to find a vendor that can provide the type of support we need for live performances. Vendors are either installers, or they provide support on an event by event basis at quite a high cost. Concerns as we have bookings starting May 15 and amplifier broke during rehearsal on 5/6.

## Overview

- **Grants** – Lauren was able to submit the SVOG grant once it reopened. The good news is that an estimate was given, which means our application seems to meet preliminary requirements. Also, the SBA has announced that they expect the grant to be fully funded. This means that even though our venue falls under the lowest priority, we may be able to get some funding. I will keep you posted but we are hopeful that we will be able to receive some funding.
- **ADA Bathroom** – Project manager was here to take samples of the wall tile. All other components have been ordered: sink, faucet, door hardware, etc. Completion is not likely to happen in May as we had hoped, it may be more like the end of June or later.
- **CIP Exterior Renovations** – Roof contractor performed moisture test. They expect to send results around week of May 24. They believe our roof is in good enough condition that it can be refurbished rather than replaced. They will be able to do both roofs. The last time they were done was in 1998/99. I have concerns about the other needs, since the leaks we have may be related to brick pointing. I will follow up with Rick on this and other concerns to make sure we cover all issues. I have also asked that the gutter cleaning proceed, but they have to come back with a new quote because material costs have risen since the initial quote.
- **Newsletter Changes** – Set up Mailchimp account. The Gumans will be helping with the design.
- **Ticketing Tool** – Based on input from our concert agent, it would be best to do concert tickets manually to ensure seating is done in accordance with restrictions. I still need to follow up with M. Guman for ideas on best way to do the seating chart with Ticketleap.
- **Generator** – Our building generator is due for upgrades to hoses and other parts that are worn down. These parts have never been replaced since my tenure here (about 9 years) and it will cost over \$4,000 to get it done. The only thing we have replaced in these 9 years was the battery, which we replaced recently. We do however, service the generator every year for a cost of about \$900.

## Work Completed

- **Theater Lighting** – DNR completed the theater lighting work that was not covered by the Town of Newtown CIP. As of Monday, May 10, the project is complete and we have an app on our phone to turn lights/curtains/projector, etc. on and off