



Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, July 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, Arnel Romeo Kouassi, Anna Wiedemann, Herb Rosenthal

Absent: none

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

Members of the Public: Betsy Paynter

Call to Order: Ms. Guman called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

Public Participation: none

Chairman Report and Comment Chairman:

Ms. Guman gave kudos to Ms. Torres and staff at the Edmond Town Hall because of an email received from Lori at Center Stage thanking them for the work done to get her production running smoothly. Ms. Guman also thanked them for their work on the other dance recitals. Ms. Torres said she would pass the message on to the staff and noted that June was a very busy month and they were happy to have the business. She also told the Board that she is planning to send an incentive to the dancing schools who are new to the Edmond Town Hall to encourage them to come back next year. Ms. Guman then said that Ms. Torres has done a great job with giving tours of the building and noted her knowledge of the building and excitement when she gives tours. Ms. Guman thanked Ms. Torres for going above and beyond and that because of Ms. Torres it really shows what a charm the Edmond Town Hall is in Newtown.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Hall noted for the record that she had abstained from voting on the approval of the May 11th meeting minutes in the June 8th meeting because she was not in attendance at the May 11th meeting.

Ms. Wiedemann motioned to amend the minutes from the regular meeting on June 8th, 2021 as stated by Ms. Hall. Seconded by Ms. Hall. All in favor. Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Kouassi abstained.

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

Ms. Torres began by updating the Board on the transition to the eFinance system. She told members that Ms. DiMartino has been doing a great job and has been attentive to the new



system. She explained that since the eFinance system is not designed for the type of business run by the ETH, it will be necessary to maintain both eFinance and QuickBooks. A meeting will be scheduled with the Town's Assistant Finance Director, Leslie Muldoon, to discuss workarounds to minimize the paperwork involved in the process. She continued to explain that the Town wants everyone on the same system so the ETH is trying to adjust and adapt.

Ms. Torres reminded members of the situation with the bats and informed the group that she was told they could actually be chimney swifts. Both bats and chimney swifts are protected so it is advised to wait until the second frost of the season so that they leave, then measures can be taken to exclude them.

The elevator has been repaired and cost was less than expected.

Mr. Kouassi asked if the reason to migrate to the eFinance system was only to be on the same system as the Town, and told the Board that in his experience most non-profits use QuickBooks or Quicken. Ms. Torres explained that the Board of Finance requested all Town departments be on the same system for transparency and to make it easier for the Finance department to see the most current activities. Mr. Kouassi asked if there was any cost savings. Ms. Torres answered that there is no cost savings, and could even be considered an added cost because of the additional time required by Ms. DiMartino to make the double entries.

Ms. Torres told everyone that she finally received quotes for the building renovations; however a couple of items were missing such as the dormer over door bathroom of the Alexandria room and gutter work. An updated quote is pending. Ms. Torres expressed her excitement that it appears they will be able to get most of the work done.

Ms. Torres said that the bathroom renovation is complete and is now fully ADA compliant. Due to the small budget there are not any drastic changes in the bathroom, but the necessary updates have been made to accommodate wheel chair accessibility.

Ms. Guman noted movies started again last weekend and continue through to this weekend. Ms. Torres said that today (7/13) is the last day. This month (July) had two free movie weekends sponsored by Ingersoll because the month of June was booked with dance recitals. Both attendance and concessions were good. The next movie is Godzilla vs King Kong, which will not be free and is expected to attract a different audience. Ms. Torres explained to the Board that this is a trial to see how well movies do. Mr. Rosenthal questioned a \$2 loss on the report. Ms. Torres explained that Immaculate High School was showing a movie which was a successful event the previous month; however, this time the High School did not inform the ETH that they were bringing their own concessions so money was lost. Ms. Torres said that in the future she will ask if concession will be needed for private movie events. She continued to tell members that Bubble Mania was an event held for the Cyrenius Booth Library who was charged for the theater as a rental.

Unfinished Business:

COVID – Governor Guidelines Update:

Ms. Guman told the Board that this will probably be the last time *COVID – Governor Guidelines Update* will be on the agenda as they will move to in-person meetings in August.



Ms. Torres said that people are still calling asking if they have to wear masks. For recitals, dancing schools wanted masks required for their events so the ETH staff also wore masks.

Video and Audio Support:

Ms. Guman reminded everyone of the search for a new video and audio support vendor. One vendor visited the ETH and stayed for several hours. Ms. Guman said that this vendor was very thorough and went through the building documenting specification. She has since received a quote from them. Another vendor is scheduled to visit the ETH next week. Ms. Torres agreed that the vendor who had visited was very thorough and that she was impressed with how he reviewed the existing spec document in comparison to the equipment and made helpful corrections. Mr. Kouassi asked how a decision will be made on which vendor to select. Ms. Guman replied that they will compare the coverage provided by the vendors to each other as well as to the previous vendor, and then compare the cost. She further explained that there is a certain level of baseline service required. Ms. Torres added that the ETH needs a little more hand holding because there is no staff with the necessary skills.

CIP Update:

Ms. Torres informed the group that she received the schedule from the Finance Director. In the June Department Head meeting, they were told to work on year 5 of the CIP. The Finance Director explained to Ms. Torres that the first 5 years are approved, but departments are asked to update the CIP for 10 years. She continued to tell the Board that in a conversation with the electrician who worked on the ADA bathroom project she was advised to not make updates to the electrical unless something breaks. The reason being is that there is potential to create more problems when trying to switch things out. With this said, Ms. Torres recommended to the Board that the electrical upgrade in years 6 – 7 of the CIP be replaced with a project to better utilize existing space for staff needs. Ms. Guman noted that any revisions to the CIP would have to be approved by the Board before being submitted in August. Ms. Torres said that she will be able to have the changes to the Board by the end of the week. Mr. Kouassi expressed that that they should first ensure there are no safety concerns with the electrical. Ms. Torres agreed with Mr. Kouassi and told members to keep in mind that the ETH is made of brick and steel with only the trim being in wood. Fire department inspections results show no concerns. Ms. Torres said that she could also move the electrical upgrade project out in the CIP.

New Business:

New Tenant:

Ms. Torres told members that she received letters from Sabrina Post who is interested in renting a room which would rent at \$440 per month. Ms. Post asks that the Board consider her becoming a tenant. Ms. Guman asked if anyone else was interested in the space. Ms. Torres said that the space was shown to another potential tenant, but they were interested in the VNA space. Also, NewArts wanted to use the space to store their props for one month. Ms. Guman asked if this space is the last leasable space in the buildings and Ms. Torres replied yes. Mr. Rosenthal asked if there would be an executive session to discuss the possible tenant. Ms. Hall recommended the executive session be held at the end of the meeting. Ms. Torres informed the group that Ms. Post told her she is leaving her current space so she would appreciate an answer as soon as possible so she can plan accordingly.



Mr. Rosenthal moved to add an executive session at the end of the meeting for the purpose of discussion of the potential tenant. Ms. Hall seconded. All in favor.

Staff Review/Pay Increase:

Ms. Hall moved that this topic also be consider in executive session. Mr. Rosenthal agreed.

Mr. Rosenthal amended his prior motion that the purpose of the executive session be to review the potential tenant and to review staff personnel. Ms. Hall seconded. All in favor.

New Non-Profit creation:

Ms. Guman began by telling everyone how 2 years ago some Board members visited Allison Stockel, Executive Director at Ridgefield Playhouse and Brett Elliot, Executive Director at The Kate, to try and figure out what they are doing that is so successful, what is their model that's working and how does the ETH mimic that. It was determined that the ETH has the right structure, building and assets, but what is missing is the non-profit to help make it work. Ms. Guman and Ms. Torres met with Newtown resident Blake Joblin and his father Brad Joblin who are both experienced in the theater industry. Both have work with the Ridgefield Country Playhouse, Brad as a Board member and Blake is the head sound engineer. After the group toured the Edmond Town Hall, conversations returned to the fact that a non-profit organization was necessary to get the live performances. Ms. Guman highlighted the success at The Palace Theater in Waterbury, The Ridgefield Playhouse, and The Kate in Old Saybrook. She continued to explain that the ETH BOM is in a unique situation in that there is a group of people with extensive experience and background who are willing to help. There is an advisory team who are ready to join the Board that would consist of:

- *Brad Joblin* - Experience include: entertainment industry executive, TV music producer, former Board member of the Ridgefield Country Playhouse, Vice Chair for New Haven Center for performing arts, and team member of relaunch of College Street Music Hall.
- *Joshua Weinshank* – He is a senior partner at Cramer & Anderson Attorneys at Law, and former Ridgefield Playhouse Board Member. He is willing to do pro bono work to create by-laws, register the non-profit and be an active participant on the Board. Has extensive experience with other non-profits.
- *Richard Popilowski* – Chief Development Officer at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of CT and Western Mass. He has offered to advise in recruiting a Director of Development and structuring the development fund raising effort.

Ms. Guman told the Board that the non-profit status would give the Board an opportunity to receive tax-deductible donations, grants, and sponsorships which can provide the funds needed to allow the theater to present the highest level of music and cultural arts to the community. She noted that the Town of Ridgefield sees significant increases to their local restaurants and businesses whenever they have a show. The non-profit would act as the business entity and have the assets necessary to book and present live events in the theater, which means the non-profit would take on all the risks so the Board of Managers and that budget no longer have to. Mr. Rosenthal asked if the theater would be released to the non-profit who would manage it. Ms. Guman said yes, and explained that is exactly how the Ridgefield Playhouse is set-up. The group discussed the risks and liabilities that would be taken on by the non-profit, how and when it could be established, and how revenue would be shared which is necessary to manage the building. Ms. Guman informed members that she would act on both boards. Ms. Guman asked



if the Board needed to understand a level of detail before they can agree to create the non-profit. Mr. Rosenthal said that he felt they could move ahead with creating the non-profit, but before leasing the theater he wants to have a better understanding. Mr. Kouassi also said he felt they can begin the creation of the new non-profit but need to understand the financials. He then asked what the timeframe would be for creating the non-profit and bylaws. The group then discussed the process to create a non-profit and Ms. Guman said it sounded if it was possible to have it established by the end of the year. Mr. Rosenthal stressed that there must be some revenue sharing. Ms. Hall said that the Board should review any documentation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State. Mr. Rosenthal agreed. The group all agreed that the creation of the non-profit is a great idea. Ms. Guman told members that she will invite the people who are interested in participating in the non-profit to the August meeting to do a presentation.

Newtown Arts Festival:

Board Participation - Days/Hours:

Saturday, September 18th 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sunday, September 19th 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Ms. Guman told the Board that the ETH has a booth at the Arts Festival and said they need members to participate if they are available. She asked members to send their availability to Ms. Torres. Ms. Torres recommended breaking it out into 2-hour time slots.

Ms. Torres reminded members of the ETH Motown Concert on Friday night. Mr. Kouassi asked about promotion of the concert. Ms. Torres explained that this concert was marketed in their eBlast, in newspapers, social media and radio ads.

Comments from Board Members:

Ms. Guman thanked Ms. Wiedemann for returning to the Board and is sad to see her go. Ms. Wiedemann was Vice Chair on the Board when she started. Ms. Guman said she will be missed and thanked her for all of her work in Newtown that went well beyond the ETH. Ms. Wiedemann said it was her pleasure. Mr. Rosenthal thanked her for all of her volunteering and all of her support when he was the First Selectman. Ms. Hall thanked Ms. Wiedemann.

Executive Session:

Mr. Rosenthal motioned to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing a potential tenant and to review staff performance. Ms. Wiedemann seconded.

Ms. Hall moved to amend the motion to invite Ms. Torres into the executive session. Mrs. Smith seconded. All in favor.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 8:06 p.m.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 8:56 p.m.



Mr. Rosenthal move the motion to increase salaries in general by 2.5% for the building staff and an additional raise to Lauren DiMartino to bring her hourly rate from \$22 to \$24 and an additional raise to Sheila of another 2.5% to bring her to \$63,525.00. Ms. Wiedemann seconded. Unanimous vote by the Board.

Ms. Wiedemann made a motion to offer the new tenant a one-year lease as discussed in executive discussion. Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. Unanimous vote by the Board.

Adjournment:

Ms. Hall motioned to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. Ms. Wiedemann seconded. All in favor.

*A recording of the meeting can be found using the link below, or contact
Kimberly.Chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov.*

Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers 7/13/2021 meeting

ETH MANAGER'S REPORT – 13 Jul 2021 – Sheila Torres

Highlights/Issues

Finished a very busy and productive June with dance recitals every weekend. Starting July 12, Bridge Club will return and we will have them here every day Monday through Thursday. Our calendar is beginning to fill with rentals again. Have been working with Lauren on the management and marketing of the upcoming live shows and with Jen Guman on showing potential support vendors the space so that we can line up theater support. Jen has found an excellent vendor who did a very thorough inspection of our systems and provided an accurate inventory in our theater specs.

CIP – Bob Tait has sent timeline. Have been refining year 5 as previously requested. The town approves the first five years but asks to keep ten years on the document. See timeline attached. I will be resending you the CIP document I gave you back in June.

Grease Trap Leak – I have replaced the existing grease trap, which was corroded and leaking, with a brand new grease trap that is the exact model.

Bats – I spoke with bat exclusion vendor who suggested the following: what I saw could actually be chimney swifts rather than bats. They look a lot alike. Both bats and swifts are protected, so we cannot do them any harm, we would need to use exclusion techniques. He suggested I wait until the second frost in fall because what I have may be a “summer roost,” which means they come during the summer and leave in winter. If that is the case, the vendor would come when the roost has left and seal off the chimney so that they cannot reenter. This is the best way to do it to avoid having them enter the building, since they carry pathogens. It also prevents any harm to the creatures. I will contact another vendor to compare their suggestions, pricing, etc.

Ap for Lighting Application – Dave Brooker has set up some minor lighting plots on the Board that allow me to show the theater for meetings and made it possible for me to provide lighting for the library when they had their concert here due to weather.

Live Shows – I have completed the ticketing set-up for the upcoming concerts. Lauren has been helping with the creation of postcards and ads. We have been doing as much marketing as possible both print, digital and social media.

Overview

- **Grants** – Expect to hear by July 15. Our application has moved to “Under Review,” so we are hopeful.
- **ADA Bathroom** – Expect completion very soon. Will have walkthrough July 15 to create final punch list.
- **CIP Exterior Renovations Building and CIP Projects** – I met with a masonry company to assess the leaking problems related to the roof project. On first pass they recommended that we seal the brick. They believe some infiltration is happening through the bricks. Some brickwork will need to be rebuilt and repointed. When I showed the vendor the brickwork needed in back of the building he said that the cracks we see are supposed to happen in that way and that it is not unusual. We do still need to address those cracks and make the necessary repairs. The vendor also looked at the masonry work needed for the front steps, the dormer over the Alexandria Room bathroom and the slate roof and gutters. He will be getting back to Rick Spreyer with a report. Received quote but went back to vendor because some items were missing. Will follow-up this week to see where we stand.
- **Transition to eFinance** – Lauren has been using eFinance since 7/1/21. She has been asked to keep two systems through the end of August. Quickbooks allows Lauren to record and manage vendor accounts (payables) and customer accounts (receivables), so at any time she can run a report for an individual vendor or customer, since at this time eFinance does not have any customer capabilities. She will also continue using QB for vendor accounting until she is 100 percent familiar with eFinance. We are hopeful

that the process will be more efficient in the future, but for the time being there is a learning curve and eFinance may not meet our needs fully, so extra work. Will fill you in again at the next meeting.

Work Completed

- **The fire alarm system and rolling fire door have been tested.** All batteries are in good condition. One will need to be replaced in two years, so I will put it in the 22/23 budget. The other two batteries will need to be replaced in 2024, so they will need to go into the 23/24 budget year.
- **Elevator was serviced for the quarter.** Parts were ordered to replace the floor buttons because they stick.
- **Second required inspection for kitchen Ansul system was completed on 7/6.** The tank will need to be hydrotested again in **2032**.
- As requested at previous meeting, scheduled generator repair for Thursday, July 15.
- Elevator button issues have been resolved. The padding in back of the elevator keys was worn. The technicians have replaced it and the buttons are working as expected.

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