BELLOWS FALLS OPERA HOUSE POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 22, 2019
5:30 p.m.

LOCATION:
Bellows Falls Opera House Lower Theater, 7 Village Square, Bellows Falls, VT

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 5:33 pm, with Hunter, Rowley, Sheehy, Saurer, Howard, Stern present. Theater Manager Angers was also present. Member Leroy Watson was absent. Selectboard Rep/Member Hammond arrived shortly after meeting called to order.

Additions to the Agenda for Routine Administrative Matters and/or Pressing Matters that will require ratification at a future meeting
None

Approve Minutes of April 10, 2019
Motion by Rowley to accept with changes as indicated in minutes attached (bold for changes, replacing strikethroughs), Saurer 2nd. Voted unanimously.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda (3 minutes per person)
None.

Agenda Items

Manager Angers was invited to report on any matters. New floor lighting has been installed and, although some tweaks are still needed, it is much improved over old lighting. Broken seat in balcony has been restored to functionality, although fabric is torn and needs to be reupholstered.

ITEM 1: Leroy Watson - Chad Free Q&A - Watson not being present, this item was carried forward to the next meeting.

ITEM 2: Classic Film Wednesday Matinee Proposal. On 3/21/19 the Committee sent a letter to Town Manager, Theater Manager, and Selectboard (“Classic Film Matinee/Improving Cost Recovery for Classic Film Wednesday/Improving Community Outreach”). No action has been taken by any of the parties.

Theater Manager Angers reports that he has had only a general discussion with Town Mgr. Harrison that the BFOH Committee thinks there should be a trial matinee series of the Wednesday Classic Films. No specifics have been discussed. Sel Bd member Hammond reports that letter was in a packet given Select Board, but no discussion has occurred.

Hunter read portions of letter from member Watson expressing concerns with Committee letter of 3/21, specifically that he felt the Committee was implying that “older customers do not need or expect the same level of service as the rest of the customer base.” Theater Mgr Angers had proposed two concession staffers and one ticket seller/projectionist, while the Committee had counterproposed one concession seller.
Angers stated that he would want to go into a matinee with more staffing and then reduce if not needed, while the Committee would prefer to start the trial with less staffing and increase if needed.

Angers expressed concern, Howard concurring, that matinee goers parking might negatively affect BF merchants. Angers wants to discuss with merchants informally. Hunter and Saurer expressed concern that information gathered would be anecdotal and thus unverifiable. Hunter offered to swing by BFOH and familiarize Angers with Survey Monkey, a free on-line survey tool. Angers said he would appreciate that. Sheehy and Saurer pointed out that The Current had agreed to provide rides, thus minimizing potential downtown parking issues.

Angers said he would meet with Town Manager Harrison about the Matinee proposal and report on this to Committee by next meeting.

ITEM 3: Lower Theater Feasibility. Sheehy said she had met with Town Mgr Harrison who said that she (Harrison) would personally measure Lower Theater so possible renovation costs could start to be determined, but that she had not heard further. Howard suggested that plans most likely exist, and -if so- nobody needs to re-measure. By next meeting, Howard is going to investigate and see if she can find plans.

ITEM 4: Current Documents. Discussion of THEATER ADVERTISEMENT SUBMISSION FORM and CLASSIC MOVIE SPONSORSHIP FORM. Specific edits were suggested, which devolved into a general sense by the Committee that these documents should be able to be filled out, and advertising images submitted, on-line. This melded into a general discussion that seemed to favor the BFOH having a website of its own, with a more functional customer interface. Saurer indicated that while this was a project in which she is interested, her summer class for which she might be able to work on this concept had not yet started. It was agreed to hold off on further discussion until after the class gets going.

Sheehy presented a note from Alex Stradling outlining slide and video production services that FACT can provide BFOH screen advertisers.

Other Items
Stern said that, going forward, he was interested in a wide-ranging conversation about how more diverse programming might better utilize the BFOH, and help it become a greater economic driver for downtown. This evolved into a conversation involving film bookers, whether the BFOH should look into using a different booker, doing it itself, or other possible models that might be a good fit for the BFOH.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting
1. BFOH Manager’s Report
2. Classic Film Wednesday Matinee - progress report (R Angers)
3. Chad Free Q&A about Springfield/Keene movie operations (L Watson)
4. Lower Theater feasibility - plans exist? (E Howard)
5. Future Programming Options for BFOH - how to envision

Next meeting scheduled for Wed. June 19, 5:30 pm, at Flat Iron Exchange.

Other Business
None

Adjourn
Motion to adjourn made by Hammond at 6:42 pm, seconded by Saurer, and moved unanimously.