BELLOWS FALLS OPERA HOUSE POLICY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 13, 2019
6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Flat Iron Exchange, 51 Village Square, Bellows Falls, VT

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 6:04pm, with Hunter, Rowley, Sheehy, Hammond, Saurer present. Guest Rebecca Gagnon of Connecticut River Transit was also present. Member Leroy Watson was absent.

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

Approve Minutes of February 13, 2019
Motion by Saurer to accept with changes as indicated in minutes attached (bold for changes, replacing strikethroughs), Rowley 2nd. Voted unanimously.

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

Agenda Items
ITEMS 2, 4 and 5 were combined, as all centered around possible additional screenings of Classic Films.

Chr. Hunter outlined the current situation: The terms negotiated with the studios for Classic Films generally stipulate that the studio must be paid a flat fee (usually $250-350) vs 35% of ticket sales, but would allow for additional screenings within a few days of the Wednesday showing.

It has been suggested to the committee that a matinee showing of each Classic Film would appeal to the elder community, a constituency with limited social and entertainment options. Committee member Sheehy has investigated the feasibility of involving CT River Transit and the residents of three assisted-living facilities in a 15-mile radius.

Sheehy reported that while all facilities like the idea of the entertainment option, none are willing to provide transport for their residents or are willing to guarantee hard numbers of attendees.

Gagnon said that CT River Transit would very much like to be involved in providing transport to elders within approximately a one-mile radius of the BFOH at no cost to the elders or the BFOH. They would initially assign one volunteer driver to the task of transport. In exchange for this service, CT River Transit would be listed as co-presenter of the Classic Film matinee.

Theater Manager Angers was not present, but had submitted answers to the committee regarding additional Classic Film screenings as follows:

“In terms of cost, as long as the studio allows us to show the movie more than once for the flat fee (x dollars vs. 35%) then, yes, basically we only have employee cost which would be 2 concession and 1 ticket
seller/projectionist(me). If I am not available to work then we would add the cost of a manager to sell tickets/operate the projector.

In terms of hours, that will depend upon the length of the movie and how busy we are selling concessions, restocking the concession stand and cleaning the area, but I think 2.5 to 3 hours per concession employee is a reasonable estimate.

All non-manager employees are paid minimum wage, my managers make one or two dollars an hour more than minimum.

I would want the theater cleaned after the show, approximately 1 hour of manager time.

My low-end cost estimate for an additional show is $75 and my high-end cost estimate is $142 (high-end estimate includes 4 hours of substitute manager pay – 4 hours comprised of 3 hours set-up and show and 1 hours finish clean-up)"

The Committee discussed the highly-experimental nature of trying an additional showing, and the need to control costs as much as possible. After much back and forth, the committee decided to recommend as follows:

- If costs can be kept to a minimum, the matinee can start adding to the BFOH bottom line at 15 to 20 paid ($5.00 ticket).
- Show the matinee on the same day as Classic Film Wednesday (generally 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month), with a suggested start time of 3:00 pm.
- Concession sales will likely be minimal, thus personnel costs can be held to 1 concession seller/sweeper, and one ticket seller/projectionist. The concessionaire would clock 3 to 4 additional hours ($30-40). The ticket seller/projectionist would usually be Theater Manager Angers, who is a salaried employee already on duty during that time. When he is not available, the labor cost would be roughly $40-60. Thus the additional cost should average out at something like $60/showing over the course of the year. Break even, therefore, would be around 12-15 tickets per show.
- Because the audience is expected to be both sparse and elderly, cleaning of the theater after the show will most likely be minimal. If after-school students start attending and consequently the audiences are larger and more trash is generated, additional staff can be considered at that time.

It was agreed that Chr. Hunter would draft a letter with this recommendation, and send it to Theater Manager Angers, Town Manager Harrison and the Selectboard. Moved by Saurer, 2nd by Sheehy. Voted unanimously.

ITEM 1 - Questions for Area Cinema Manager: This is a project helmed by committee member Watson who was not present, it was carried over to the next meeting.
ITEM 3 - Point of Sale System carried over for future discussion.

Other Items
Chr. Hunter asked if David Stern had yet been appointed to the committee by Selectboard. Hammond said she wasn’t sure, but many appointments are scheduled for next Selectboard meeting, and he would be in that.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting
- Committee members are asked to print out and familiarize themselves with the downloadable documents on the BFOH page of the rockbf.org website.
- Senior matinee of Classic Film / Coordinate with the Current - progress report
- Chad Free Q&A about Springfield/Keene movie operations (Leroy Watson)
Lower Theater feasibility - how to go about calculating renovation expenses?
Next meeting scheduled for Wed. April 10, 6 pm, at Flat Iron Exchange.

Other Business
None

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

BELLOWS FALLS OPERA HOUSE POLICY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Rockingham Town Hall – Lower Theater

APPROVED MINUTES

Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 6:06 pm, with Hunter, Rowley, Saurer, Sheehy, Hammond and Town Manager Harrison present.

Additions to the Agenda for Routine Administrative Matters and/or Pressing Matters that will require ratification at a future meeting - None
Approve Minutes of February, 13, 2019 with the last 2 and a half lines removed. Motion by Saurer to accept, Hammond seconded. Voted unanimously.

It was noted that Agenda Items 1, 2, 5, and part of 6 were unable to be discussed due to Mr. Watson and Mr. Angers and Ms. Gagnon being absent. These items will be included in the next meeting.

On Item 3, Town Manager Harrison stated that the town is in the exploratory stages to implement a Point of Sale (POS) system. Hunter asked that the board be kept apprised of the process.

On Item 4, Sheehy informed the board that she had reached out to Senior Solutions, and various local residential Assisted Living Facilities. In speaking to the manager of one facility it was learned that there is interest in having the residents attend matinee showings of Classic Films, Hunter asked Sheehy to see if Assistant / Residential Homes were interested in CF, would they be willing to pay a set monthly fee to the Town of Rockingham for all of their residents to attend. Sheehy replied that transportation seemed to be the sticking point for three of the residential homes she spoke with but will continue to investigate.

Regarding the Lower Theater, Town Manager Harrison provided an update on the large flat screen television, that it would be mounted in such a way to be at a proper viewing height as well as being able to be swiveled out of the way when not in use.

The Committee reviewed the Excel Spreadsheets that Saurer created for all BFOH events from 2018 as well as the BFOH Settlement Settlements from January 20, 2012 – February, 2019. It was noted that some of the data was not complete and that forms for renting the theatre need to be improved upon. Saurer stated that 2018 was the best year running, Town Manager Harrison stated that 2 live shows two extended theatrical productions per year would be beneficial and that the spreadsheets are great information to have. Hunter noted that the per capita concession sales for live events was lower than those for
movie showings is lower. There were discussions on whether or not catering for live events is something to be looked into for future events and whether or not the BFOH would be able to get a percentage of sales.

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

Other business – Hunter told the committee that Thomasena Coates has submitted her resignation Letter to the board and that David Stern has indicated his desire to join the committee. The Committee was in agreement that having Stern join the committee would be a great thing. Hunter said Stern will be asked to submit his letter of interest in joining the committee, but noted that Stern would not be able to attend committee meetings until after the MSA production of Chicago has finished its run at the BFOH. Sheehy asked that this meeting’s Agenda be carried over to the next meeting since Watson and Angers were unable to attend this meeting.

Town Manager Harrison brought up that it seems that some entities got free passes to use the theatre and others have not. Hunter stated that the BFOH Committee has stated that any entity using the theatre must pay the rental fees. Sheehy noted that the rental forms need to be streamlined and made clearer for potential renters. Hunter also noted that he was aware of an entity that didn’t pay any fee for use and he had objected to that vehemently. Sheehy and Rowley mentioned that the role of a Town Representative and fees associated with that role must be determined.

Next BFOH Meeting to be February March 13, 2018 2019 at 6 pm in the Lower Theatre. Motion to adjourn made by Hammond and seconded by Rowley at 6:50 pm.