



**CHARLES IVES AUTHORITY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**  
A Nonprofit Organization

Minutes Board of Directors Meeting, May 20, 2015

To: Mayor Mark D. Boughton and Members of the Charles Ives Authority for the Performing Arts Board of Directors

Re: Minutes of the Ives Authority Board of Directors meeting held May 20, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. The members were recorded as:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sherri Hill, Frank Herbert, Tanya Wulff Truax, Gina Marcus, Fernando Jimenez

ALSO PRESENT: Phyllis Cortese, Executive Director; Sophia Vournazos, Office Manager

INTERIM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Frank Herbert

- Frank thanked everybody for a great first event - the Brews & BBQ Festival. He said there were thick crowds and everybody seemed to be having a great time. The facility is looking better than it has in some time, and even Dick and Eric from RKE commented on how respectable the upper areas of the pavilion looked compared to prior years when they came to remove RKE equipment from the site.
- Frank said we still have some work to do in dealing with large crowds in the future and we are continuing to search for ways to cut costs, including purchasing walkie talkies, using Frank's golf cart and coolers lent by Gina.
- Frank specifically thanked Phyllis and Sophia for pulling off the Beer Fest event.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: After motion by Gina Marcus seconded by Fernando Jimenez, the minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously approved.

- After approval of the minutes, Phyllis indicated that she wanted to make a comment on the minutes because after the April board meeting, we did not reconvene and inform Phyllis and Sophia about the board's discussion relative to salary increases and/or bonuses for staff. She wanted to know who will be conducting research and what the time frame will be to report back on the results.

- Frank responded that we need to see what is necessary in terms of what we are committed to, but that Ives is not in a position at this time to do anything for retroactive or current bonuses. He indicated that we will run out of money in August and the board cannot make a commitment that it can't cover right now, because that would be disingenuous. He said we need to suspend discussion of raises or bonuses until we are back in the black, and he does not believe in good conscience that the board can promise anything right now.
- Frank stated that we need to find sponsors and promoters to bring events, and then we can re-start the discussion process.
- Tanya suggested that the board needs to consult with an HR professional about Phyllis' contract, job description, etc. Frank agreed, stating we need to build in annual reviews and a compensation schedule. Tanya will consult with Newtown Savings Bank's HR staff to see if they can suggest an HR professional who may be able to join the board.
- Frank then put the discussion to rest.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT: Phyllis Cortese

- Phyllis discussed the outcome from the Brews & BBQ Festival, stating it was one of our best days and that Townsquare Media was very happy.
- Frank asked Phyllis to make sure to add clean-up costs to the Townsquare settlement sheets, and a discussion ensued about how to determine costs for use of the port-o-potties. It was determined that the cost is just under \$20/unit per event. He said we should ask the mayor about putting permanent bathrooms on the city-owned portion of the property, because the portable bathroom rentals are extremely expensive.
- Frank stated that we need to be able to ensure that we cover our costs and Phyllis explained that increasing the park rental fee might price us out of the market. Frank held firm that we must pass along the port-o-potty costs to event organizers.
- Phyllis brought up some discontent she is hearing from event organizers about the parking costs and Frank said he believes we will find a way to make the situation work so that it is reasonable for everyone.
- Sherri mentioned that she had received a complaint via social media about handicapped patrons being diverted to park in the Centennial Garage, which was problematic for them. A discussion ensued about orange cones and signage to make sure adequate spaces are reserved for handicapped parking and how that will be policed. We will resolve this issue better at future events.

- Phyllis spoke about the two WCSU marketing interns and how involved Adriana and Melissa already are in setting up social media accounts and assisting in the office.
- Phyllis provided an update on the sponsorship with Tri-State Ford and explained the virtual activation that will be set up during the Reggae Festival.
- Relative to the jumbotron, Frank said we can purchase a large screen or build one at very little cost. He said a projector is already available to us.
- Phyllis and Tanya discussed the redesigned digital program being prepared by Jantris Marketing, and the costs associated with it.
- Tanya indicated she had a meeting with Tom Marks at Leverage and he is willing to run a strategic planning session for Ives in the fall in exchange for a sponsorship at a level to be determined.
- Phyllis said she met with RKE and it was a good conversation. They understand the financial situation. The WCSU lights from Berkshire Theatre have been hung and installed, and Phyllis expressed her appreciation to Frank for facilitating that.
- Phyllis raised the question of messaging to the media and public about this year's season. Frank proposed stating that this is a transitional time for Ives. We have less funding, a late start and are looking for new partners. This is a time of opportunity. We are continuing to pursue celebrity concerts, but we are actively embracing the festival model.
- Phyllis indicated she is still working on promoter prospects. She named several and explained their status in the process of discussions.
- Phyllis reviewed confirmations and holds and asked Frank about the possibility of staging "Smokey Joe's Café" at Ives. Frank said the majority of the student actors from the campus production have moved on to other projects, but he can hold auditions and see if a cast can be put together.
- Phyllis and Fernando explained the Intake Youth Ensemble and the possibility of bringing this native Latin American music school together with the Ives Orchestra for one or two performances. This is in conjunction with the Be Foundation and possibly the Danbury Schools and WCSU. There would be a fee involved in this partnership, and Fernando expressed that he would love to do it, but is concerned about the costs. The question was raised about obtaining funds from the Cultural Commission or the mayor's office. Frank indicated we should apply for a Cultural Commission grant ASAP.

- Potential new board member prospects were discussed and Frank said the resumes were strong and he would be happy to meet them. Sherri's concerns about one of the prospects were raised and discussed. There was consensus that Brett needs to be made a permanent board member and that perhaps it would be helpful to complete the previously distributed board matrix to seek potential board members in areas where our current board composition is lacking.
- It was agreed that we should schedule an informal meet-and-greet with the prospective candidates on the Ives stage in early June.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Sophia Vournazos, Office Manager

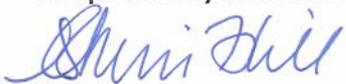
- Sophia reviewed the balance sheet and answered questions about line items.
- A discussion ensued about the value of owning vs. renting equipment and the cost-savings that could be had in the long run. Frank said he knows of a used golf cart we could obtain and the board asked that he find out more information, since he has more knowledge of golf carts.
- Sophia proposed changing to a calendar year rather than a fiscal year format for financials, since the current format causes some confusion when there are line items from last year's season adjacent to items for this year's season.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: After motion by Gina Marcus, seconded by Fernando Jimenez, the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

After motion by Sherri Hill, seconded by Frank Herbert, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be in early June, possibly the 4<sup>th</sup> or the 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 or 6 p.m. on the Ives stage, to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri Hill, Secretary