
Friends of Platteville Municipal Auditorium Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Dick Davies, Summer Hamille, Brian Kerians, JoAnne Schlicher, Patrice Steiner, Kerry McCabe, Celeste Moore, Phil Mrozinski, Jeremy Patnaude, Cheryl Schmieder, Mike Willis

Date: 07/06/11

Time: 7:00 (Wednesday)

Place: Council Chambers

Last Meeting Date: 06/13/11

Next Meeting Date: 08/03/11

Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 13th Meeting

Motion: Patrice Steiner

Second: JoAnne Schlicher

Passed

Public Relations Officer volunteer

JoAnne Schlicher, who wrote the press releases for the seat sale, has graciously consented to become our PR Officer. She will be assisted by Patrice Steiner, who has many media contacts.

Publicity plans

So far as publicity **plans** are concerned, Patrice Steiner has contacted WISC-TV (Channel 3) in Madison. They have expressed an interest in doing a story on the auditorium "closer to the time". JoAnne Schlicher is going to be writing a press release on the final arrangements for the seat sale this week, complete with photos, with the idea of developing a series of articles as the renovations progress. State Theaters has a bunch of fundraisers going on and Jeremy Patnaude is going to get a list to Celeste Moore of those events for publicizing on the website. Celeste will forward the list to JoAnne.

Jeremy Patnaude introduced one of two State Theaters LLC **interns** who will be assisting us with aspects of publicity. He brought with him Brian Kerians, who will assist with writing press releases and writing blurbs for the website. Brian said he has already started researching history of the auditorium at the university. The hope is that he can team with Marilyn Gottschalk to check internet sources that Marilyn would rather not do herself. This was the role Celeste Moore was originally going to handle. Jeremy has another intern who will help with promoting our Facebook page and getting it better organized.

Floor plugs for electrical access

Dick Davies checked into costs of plugging the holes in the auditorium floor. They give access to a live electrical line that supplied current for the old aisle lights. Jeremy Patnaude said that they were unlikely to align with the new rows. He also said the theatres State Theaters has renovated hasn't bothered to cover similar holes. Concern was expressed about leaving a live electrical line vulnerable to wet floor mops and little kids with a penchant for sticking things into openings. It was felt the power should be cut off via the circuit breaker for greater safety. The option of going with brass (expensive) and plastic (cheap) plugs was discussed, as was the need to plug them immediately or at a later date..

JoAnne Schlicher moved to plug the openings with brass plugs for \$250. Celeste Moore seconded. The motion passed.

Status of auditorium seating/sale of old seats

All of the auditorium seats have been unbolted from the floor. There are different combinations of seats joined together and ranked toward the back of the auditorium. We sold approximately 135 of the 352 seats and raised \$884.00. It was noted that Kathy Kopp set aside three sets. She intended to pay

and pick them up later. The Dubuque Grand Opera House wanted to buy two sets of four for their summer production of 'Singing in the Rain'.

Amongst the donations is a check for \$139.00 from the Platteville School District, raised by high school students involved in the **Pops Concert** under choir director Amelia Armstrong. The students recognize the need to maintain the auditorium as a useable space. They collected the money as a free will donation to give back to their community.

Additionally, we received a number of donations above and beyond the cost of the chairs. An accounting of the monies received in the fundraiser will be submitted separately.

We would like to **thank** all of those who generously donated time and money to this event. Mike Willis, Dick Davies and Mike Schmieder did the strenuous physical work. According to Mike Willis, approximately 100 combined hours of labor was also put into this effort. There will be more labor hours to add to the total when the seats are dismantled and the iron loaded for scrap.

Jeremy Patnaude is going to get estimates on **cost** of the seats themselves and the installation from State Theatres LLC. Together with the volunteer work hours, we will have a value figure for the city manager.

Moving forward, with the installer possibly starting the week of July 18th, July 16th was set as the date to offer people a **last chance** at purchasing chairs. We'll **dismantle** the chairs for scrap iron at the same time, since it will take a while. The day will start at 10:00am, lasting until we're done, probably around 4:00pm. Those people coming to help need to bring a flat head screwdriver.

JoAnne Schlicher will write a press release. Celeste Moore will place blurbs on the website.

Fund raisers

State Theatres has several ongoing fund raisers coming up. There is a **card** that patrons may present to Take 2 Restaurant wait staff that will direct 10% of the bill to the theatre renovation. Additionally, July will see both **brat sales** and **root beer float sales** at various businesses. Cheryl asked Jeremy Patnaude if any assistance from the Friends was needed. Jeremy said it would be much appreciated. He will send information on location and times to Celeste, who will then forward it to JoAnne Schlicher for publicity purposes.

Cheryl Schmeider will contact Robin Timm of the **Driftless Market** to see about using donations from the market to help with renovations.

We discussed the need for someone actively searching and applying for **grants**. Marilyn Gottschalk had discussed getting assistance from the UW-Foundation. She also knew someone she felt could help and wanted to get in touch with them. Marilyn wasn't in attendance, so we couldn't ask her what she discovered. Kerry McCabe's sister-in-law is a grant writer, so she is another resources to contact. The Dubuque Racing Association was mentioned as a likely contributor.

Report on Cheryl Schmieder's meeting with City Manager Larry Bierke

Cheryl met with city manager Larry Bierke to discuss questions she had regarding his **position on the auditorium** and discover what sort of renovations would need to be done by the city as part of a larger project.

Larry wants to see the space used as an auditorium. It really isn't feasible to change it into offices due to the sloping floor and remodeling costs. On the other hand, he's concerned the city will pour money into an auditorium that won't get used.

The **ownership of the stage lights and sound equipment** is another issue. The city manager questions whether the equipment belongs to Platteville Community Theatre rather than the city auditorium.

The equipment was donated to PCT by Mike Willis when the company produced dinner theatre and attended AACT/Fest regularly. Both of these activities required taking lights and sound elsewhere. This wouldn't have been possible with city equipment, even if the city had it. The city gave permission to the Platteville Community Theatre to use company equipment in the auditorium and installed wiring for it.

In return for providing stage lighting, the city allowed PCT to use the space for free. There was no mention of donating the equipment to the city at any time. As further evidence of ownership, the city has never replaced the fragile burnt-out stage lights (between \$40-\$50 dollars per lamp). Maintenance was paid by PCT members.

Mike Willis is a past president of PCT, Artistic/Technical Director of Galena's roaming Main Street Players, and winning director of high school play contests with numerous ties to area drama companies. As the original buyer of the second-hand lighting equipment, PCT board member, benefactor, retired city employee, and current Friend of the PMA, Mike is in a unique position to know where the equipment was bestowed at any given point. He says it belongs to the Platteville Community Theatre.

Larry Bierke expressed concern over who would handle **insurance** if something happened to the lights and sound equipment.

Cheryl will be meeting with Larry regularly, every couple of months, to touch base and discuss city budgeting. The next meeting will be in late August, just before the budget is set. She hopes to have a budgeting plan for the auditorium by then.

Prioritization/Plan

Cheryl Schmieder reported that Larry Bierke believed **climate control** was at the top of the list for renovations. There's concern amongst the group that we wouldn't be able to touch HVAC without fixing the whole building, but it was also noted that other parts of the Municipal building have air conditioning. Why couldn't the auditorium be handled separately like those areas? One figure we heard was that it would cost over a million dollars to do HVAC on the auditorium. This estimate seems *very high* so Cheryl Schmieder is going to have Shawn Steinhoff, an engineer, take a look at it for us to give us a better idea.

Another priority is the **smoothing the stage floor** itself so it would be less hazardous as a dancing surface and wouldn't creak as people move across it during performances. The next would be a **sound system**. There is a lot of sound lost due to the poor acoustics, which was damaged when the police station was carved out of the back wall. Dick Davies said we shouldn't mike the stage right now because it would only amplify the squeaks. The current speakers would be inadequate for current films and would need to be addressed if renters wanted to show films in the space.

Setting **rental fees** is another priority which should be managed soon. We discussed rental rates for both the auditorium and the equipment.

Phil Mrozinski

Phil Mrozinski of Mineral Point Opera House attended the later half of the meeting, starting around 8:00. He arrived when participants were discussing rental fees for the auditorium and suggested we keep the fees low so that it would encourage use.

Phil had interesting comments on the renovation of the Mineral Point Opera House and the organization's unusual relationship with the city. The Opera House is "the only game in town", so people were interested in making it succeed. The city got behind the venture and rents the space to the organization for a nominal fee. The organization takes on all operating expenses. Phil emphasized the need for using grant money to receive *more* grant money. He reminded us to stay upbeat and focused on common goals.

Roundtable

We took Phil Mrozinski and Brian Kerians to the auditorium so they could see it first hand. 'Business After Hours' held onstage was suggested as a means to get area business people in to see the space and it's needs.

Officers sign By-Laws

Celeste Moore brought a copy of the By-Laws for Friends officers to endorse. All officers except Treasurer Doug Mackie were present and signed the document. Celeste will try to contact Doug to get the remaining signature.

Adjourn (at 9:45 pm)

Motion: Kerry McCabe
Second: JoAnne Schlicher
Passed.