

MINUTES OF
VILLAGE OF SKOKIE
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER BOARD
Monday, September 13, 7:00 P.M.

A *REGULAR MEETING* OF the Performing Arts Center Board was held at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, Illinois, on Monday, September 13, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER: The Regular Meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Terrence Guolee; Steve Franklin; Barbara Reeder; Rene Roy; Andrea Siegel; Ann Tennes (Village staff liaison)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Janis Fine; Dan Kelch; Barry Layfer; Norm Rosen (ex-officio)

OTHERS PRESENT: General Manager Michael Pauken; Director of Marketing David Vish

OPERATIONS REPORT:

Pauken reported that the Center's technical director of 25 years, Frank Rose, retired from the theater business in July. Like many people who were laid off during the pandemic, he took the time to explore other career opportunities. The Center's new technical director is Jake Reich, who has been the primary audio technician for nearly 20 years. Remaining staff continues to be under strain due to thinner ranks, busy and ever-changing event schedule and COVID-related stress.

Ann Tennes provided a brief update on the Village's new facility management and programming agreements with PFM.

Pauken stated that the Center had some potentially lucrative Russian and Polish rentals for this fall that all went away due to the continuing COVID pandemic. Inquiries from these promoters and others for 2022 continue to come in. Pauken said if we can get past this pandemic, the late winter/spring/summer of next year should be decent.

Pauken worked with Ann Tennes and NSCPA Foundation chair Al Rigoni on a \$280,000 grant request to the Rice Foundation to fund the rehabilitation of the entrance areas to the Center.

In recent weeks Pauken said they have secured a sponsorship of the 2021-22 Feature Series by Wintrust Community Banks and renewals of the trade-deal sponsorships with the Doubletree Hotel and Jameson's Charhouse. These trade deals are very helpful in meeting the hospitality needs of visiting artists. Meanwhile, more than \$1,500 in online donations have come in in conjunction with the sales of tickets to summer concerts and Feature Series performances.

RESIDENT COMPANIES:

A new lease with Northlight Theatre has been agreed to and should be executed in the next few weeks. It is a three-year agreement. Meanwhile, Northlight has purchased the property in Evanston where they plan to build their new home and has stated publicly that they have raised half the \$25 million necessary for the project. Northlight begins performances at the Center on September 23.

Music Theater Works' first full production at the North Shore Center was the musical *Mamma Mia!*, which concluded a two-week run in the main hall on August 29. Given the COVID surge, sales were okay, but not great. In normal times, there probably would have been multiple sold-out shows and a third week of performances. Next up is *Ragtime* (October/November) and *Billy Elliot* (December).

COVID-19 UPDATE:

Pauken said the Center reinstated a face mask requirement for public events in the building on July 30. It became a state/county/city requirement in subsequent weeks. The Center has joined a consortium of nearly all Chicago area theaters and music venues to require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test for event entry beginning September 1 and continuing through December.

A professionally conducted market research survey that was been done on behalf of a group of performing arts organizations in Chicago in (mid-July) showed that 97% of the typical attendees to live performances in Chicago are fully vaccinated. In spite of the high vaccination rate, however, about 40% of respondents to the survey said they would not attend a performance WITHOUT a face mask requirement for all attendees versus 10% who said they would not attend WITH a face mask requirement.

PROGRAMMING/MARKETING:

Pauken reported that the Center's outdoor summer concert series concluded on August 7. There were a total of 31 performances, including rental presentations by Music Theater Works Ensemble Espanol and a private fundraiser for a children's charity, though several performances had to be moved inside due to inclement weather. Pauken explained that sales were more sluggish this year than last due to the competition from travel and other activities in the reopened economy, but we still attracted more than 6,000 people and netted about \$69,000 for the Center including grant support from the Rice Foundation and ancillary event revenues.

Director of Marketing David Vish reported on ticket sales and marketing plans for upcoming Feature Series presentations.

FINANCIALS:

The year-to-date net income from operations as of July 31, 2021 was \$73,981, which is \$229,345 better than budget. This includes \$155,000 in forgiven payroll protection plan loans obtained in the previous fiscal year.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Steve Franklin hoped that all PAC members will attend the NSCPA Foundation Benefit event with the Rocket Man Show on November 13.

ADJOURNMENT:

Barbara Reeder made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Rene Roy. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:03 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 12, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Pauken