

Community Players of Salisbury  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
December

Board Members Present: Matt Bogdan, Presiding, Matt Bogdan, Kate Adkins, Sharon Benchoff, Lynne Bratten, Cass Dasher, Kyle Hayes, Ken Johnson, Darrell Mullins, Rusty Mumford, Kel Nagel, Shelbie Thompson

Members Present: Brenda Allen, David Allen, Bonnie Bosies, Pete Cuesta, Melissa Dasher, Debby Nagel, Matt Munday

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Approval of the Minutes:

President's Report: As Tom Robinson, President, was not able to attend this meeting, he sent the report below:

Thank you to Vice President Matt Bogdan for filling in for me at this month's meeting. A few things from me:

1. The paving of the parking lot is finished. The silt fence should be removed soon – just waiting for the final approval from the State of Maryland. The drainage problem is being worked on.
2. All the date for Rumors at WorWic have been finally approved.
3. The request for dates for Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike has been submitted again to our new contact person at WorWic. Waiting on final approval.
4. Thank you to everyone who gives so much time and dedication to Community Players.
5. Treasurer Charlie Linton could not be there this month. He reports that everything is paid and we still have money in the bank.
6. Hoping for a couple of large donations in 2024 so we can pay off the loan from Farmers Bank.

The President's Report, since it included an update on our facility, lead to the following:

1. Flooding continues to be a concern.
  - a. Rusty Mumford reported that there was standing water in all of the room in the front of the facility.
  - b. We will need to pull up the carpet and clean it or we will lose costumes.
  - c. Matt Bogdan asked for volunteers to help with that situation.
  - d. Perhaps hire a professional for the task.
  - e. Pete Cuesta questioned whether or not the process of removing gravel contributed to the problem.
  - f. Ken Johnson suggested we notify our insurance company about the situation.
2. We need to make sure Tom Robinson is apprised of the situation.

Approval of the Minutes: Rusty Mumford/Lynne Bratten moved to approve the minutes of the November meeting as distributed. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was approved as distributed. As Charlie Linton was not able to attend the meeting, anyone with questions on the report should contact him.

## Committee Reports:

Facilities: The following issues were discussed:

1. We need a light by the main door of the rehearsal space. Ideally the opening/closing of that door would trigger the light to come on. We will have to hire an electrician. Kel Nagel/Kate Adkins moved to seek an estimate from an electrician. Motion passed.
2. There are still issues with the kitchen sink. We need to check with Ken Johnson about that.
3. We need to replace the exterior sign. The person who did it before is willing to do it again, for free. Ken Johnson or Tom Robinson should coordinate that task.

Building: No report submitted.

Fundraising: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. The fundraising committee met on November 19, 2023, and discussed the previous 2023 fundraisers, which included Trivia Nights, 50/50 raffles, Old-Time Radio show, Jammin' in July at Kylan Barn, the 86th Season, Appreciation Celebration, Paths to Freedom, and Poe's Tales of Horror. Overall, we found these to be very successful fundraisers.
2. The November fundraiser was Giving Tuesday, held November 28. As of this report, there are no details regarding this event.
3. December's fundraiser is an Old-Time Radio Christmas show, featuring the radio plays Miracle on 34th Street and A Christmas Carol. Matt Bogdan is coordinating the performance. Cast has been selected and rehearsals are underway. Performances will be held at the Players Playhouse on Nutters Cross Road on Saturday, December 16, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 17, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10. We have two sponsors at \$200 each for the show: The Bank of Delmarva and Ernie Matthews, in memory of his wife Elizabeth. We also have a \$50 ad from The Country House. Also, we will be performing Miracle on 34th Street (but not A Christmas Carol) in Snow Hill at the old firehouse on Greene Street on Friday, December 15, at 7 p.m. Free admission but donations accepted.
4. We discussed 2024 fundraisers.
  - January: Nothing scheduled as of yet
  - February: Matt Bogdan is working on a Harlem Renaissance production with a tentative performance date February 16-18 and February 23-25.
  - March: A Movie Night is tentatively scheduled. No specific date is established.
  - April: A Comedy night is tentatively scheduled. No specific date is established.
  - May: A Kids' show is tentatively scheduled. No specific date is established.
  - June: Nothing scheduled as of yet.
  - July: Rusty Mumford and perhaps Shelbie Thompson are working on A New Directors' One Act Play showcase. No set date established.
  - August: Matt Bogdan is working on a One-Act Play Festival in which various community theater organization present one-act plays.
  - No other fundraisers for September through December were discussed.
5. We discussed 50/50 raffles, and we recommend that 50/50 raffles should be held at all main show performances.
6. We discussed getting restaurants to cooperate with Players in doing dinner theaters. Kel Nagel was going to look into the local restaurant association to see if this is viable.
7. The next fundraising meeting will be held on January 14 at 2 p.m., during which the Capital Campaign will be discussed.

Grants: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. Began application for Google Ad grants.
2. Requested donation from Farmers and Planters Too.
3. Requested donation from Verizon.
4. Applied for Sony Corporation of America grant.
5. Began application for Nora Roberts Foundation.
6. Submitted application to Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) for Grants for Organization (Off-Year).
7. Applied to be a panelist for MSAC to review and score applications. If accepted, it would be beneficial in learning more about what MSAC requires in the grant applications.
8. Attended on on-line webinar regarding ArtsHERE, a new grant program launched by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Statement of interest is due January 19, 2024. Although MSAC is not involved in the running of this program, they did make me aware of this new initiative from NEA.
9. Registered for a Responsive Nonprofit Summit in 2024 (dates tbd). The summit focuses on how to be a more responsive fundraiser who caters to the needs of donors. It is a free three-day event that takes place exclusively online with 75 speakers and 36 sessions.
10. Submitted a letter of inquiry to the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust for a capital grant.
11. I contacted MASC regarding a grant so that we could hire an architect. They said that such a request would fall under the Arts Capital grant, which will be available next year. There is a webinar on December 12 from 1-2 that I will be attending online for information about the Arts Capital grant. After applying, the notification of acceptance will occur by May 2024. Spending can start after July 1. The program cannot support any work begun or costs incurred before July 1. I assume that we will be hiring an architect before July 1, and, given that, the grant application can still go forward with our asking for funds for various renovations.

Membership: Nothing to report.

Hospitality: Rusty Mumford reported that we continue to be hospitable; refreshments will be available after the meeting.

Social Media: Kate Adkins reported as follows:

1. There are some issues with our website. Links need to be updated. David Allen asked for screen shots so that he can work on the issues.
2. The website needs an overhaul. That will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Season Tickets/Box Office: Rusty Mumford and Darrell Mullins reported as follows:

1. So far we have sold 10 season tickets.
2. Not having specific performance dates is part of the problem.
3. At one point we were supposed to use Mail Movers with our list of 6,000. The cost would be \$2,800. Does anyone know why we did not do that?
4. Pete Cuesta, director of our most recent production of "Pippin," asked us to consider what we are not doing that might increase ticket sales. That led into a discussion of publicity. The Recording Secretary will include those comments in the publicity committee report.
5. Reserved seating for "Pippin" worked very well.

Patrons: Kel Nagel reported that we have 2-3 new patrons.

Historical: No Report Submitted-NOTE: The Recording Secretary only recently discovered that he had the wrong email address for the Historical Committee Chair. Thus, the Chair did not receive requests for reports. That mistake has been corrected.

Concessions: Brenda Allen reported that the committee is on break until after the New Year. She wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Program/Program Ads: Nothing to Report

Publicity: Influenced by the discussion of low season-ticket sales, the following issues were discussed:

1. Is the cost of using the Mail Movers worth it? Will it increase ticket sales?
2. Debby Nagel reported as follows:
  - a. shared newspaper clippings that promoted "Pippin."
  - b. she will work on a comprehensive publicity plan.
  - c. Sherri Trader-Hynes has decided not to use billboards for "Rumors." That will save us \$1,000.
3. Shelbie Thompson commented that we might be able to use those savings for other, more effective, publicity efforts.
4. Melissa Dasher stated that Mail Movers will vet our mailing list for \$250.
5. David Allen asked Matt Bogdan if there might be a grant to cover the Mail Movers cost. Matt Bogdan said he will look into that if the Boards wants him to do so.
6. Shelbie Thompson commented that we could target theatre lovers on Social Media for a cost.
7. Brenda Allen suggested that we should at least pay Mail Movers to vet the list.
8. Lynne Bratten asked if we could buy a mailing list from SWAC and ask LSPAC for their list.
9. Kel Nagel commented that we could reach out again to Stephen Adams, a Marketing Professor at Salisbury University, who once helped us with a marketing survey (a student project).
10. Rusty Mumford proposed that we establish a committee to develop a publicity/marketing plan. Kel Nagel supported that idea. Cass Dasher commented that we already have a publicity committee. Shelbie Thompson commented that the publicity committee should not be a committee of one and perhaps we should consider combining social media and publicity into one committee.
11. Sharon Benchoff/Kel Nagel moved that we go with the Mail Movers service to vet our list.
  - a. Cass Dasher asked if we have research on this issue.
  - b. Melissa Dasher commented that it's now December; we need quick action.
  - c. Darrell Mullins commented that we've done surveys in the past about where audience members hear about us. The results were even on all approaches. Shelbie Thompson replied that the question of "Where did you hear about us" is not a valid survey question.
  - d. Pete Cuesta commented that we have to do something different.

Motion passed, 6 to 4

Rusty Mumford/Kel Nagel moved to form a marketing committee that will focus on issues not addressed by the current publicity chair. Rusty Mumford is willing to chair the committee; Kel Nagel, Kate Adkins and Shelbie Thompson volunteered to be on it. Motion passed.

Nominating: Nothing to report.

Production: Matt Bogdan reported that anyone interested in submitting a show for next season should contact him.

Scholarship: Lynne Bratten reported that scholarship info will be distributed after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year to guidance personnel, supervisors and theatre teachers.

Lifetime Achievement: Nothing to Report

House: Nothing to Report

## Old Business

“Pippin:” Kyle Hayes reported as follows:

1. Many of the cast and crew expressed concern about the video quality of the DVD and found it to be a disappointing memento.
2. Can we work on a better option?
3. He acknowledged the potential legal issues with taking a digital approach.
4. Hoping for continued discussion of this issue.

## New Business

“Rumors:” Rusty Mumford, for Sherrie Trader Hynes, reported as follows:

1. Act 1 is blocked.
2. The cast is great.

Shelbie Thompson commented that we need to clarify production dates. She has seen different dates publicized.

Giving Tuesday: Sharon Benchoff reported as follows:

1. Donations were down:
  - a. In 2021 we had 24 donors that resulted in \$1,577.96
  - b. In 2022 we had 25 donors that resulted in \$3,339.98
  - c. In 2023 we had 19 donors that resulted in 2,299.00
2. 8 out of 15 Board Members contributed
3. She is seeking ideas on how to get more donors.

Shelbie Thompson suggested that the Marketing/Fundraising Committee might be able to help.

Kel Nagel suggested that perhaps the event, sponsored by The Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, has grown, perhaps having more organizations seeking donors. Shelbie Thompson replied that that was not the case.

Performance Space:

1. Kel Nagel reported that we should have proposals from architects by Mid-January.
2. Matt Bogdan will see if there are relevant grant opportunities for the project.

## Other New Business

Children’s Theatre Camp:

1. Debby Nagel asked if there was a plan to have a Children’s Theatre Camp this summer.
2. Melissa Dasher commented that a number of those involved last summer may not be available.
3. Cass Dasher expressed interest in continuing with the program.
4. Kyle Hayes suggested we offer compensation to those involved.
5. Matt Bogdan commented that there is grant money available and will work on it.
6. Cass Dasher/Rusty Mumford moved that we continue the program for the Summer of 2023. Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:21 pm.