

Community Players of Salisbury
Monthly Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2024

Board Members Present: Tom Robinson, Presiding, Kate Adkins, Matt Bogdan, Sharon Benchoff, Lynne Bratten, Bobbie Calloway, Cass Dasher, Robin Finley, Kyle Hayes, Ken Johnson, Charlie Linton, Darrell Mullins, Rusty Mumford, Kel Nagel, Shelbie Thompson

Other Attendees: David Allen, Bonnie Bosies, Tony Broadbent, Melissa Dasher, Sherri Hynes, Betsy Metzger, Debby Nagel, Josh Smith, Jorge Vargas

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

Approval of the Minutes: Sharon Benchoff/Rusty Mumford moved to approve the minutes of the January 3 as distributed. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The January 3 Treasurer's Report was approved as distributed.

President's Report: Tom Robinson thanked everyone involved with the production of "Rumors." He received positive comments from his friends at Christ United Methodist Church who saw the production.

Committee Reports:

Facilities Management: Reports/Discussion were as follows:

1. Questions were asked about moving items back to their original rooms now that the flooding/flooring repairs have been completed. They will be returned room by room once the baseboards have been installed. Plan to help on Saturdays or Sundays if you can.
2. Concerns were raised regarding the quality of drinking water. Rusty Mumford volunteered to research the issue.

Fundraising: Matt Bogdan reported that the Fundraising Committee met on January 16, 2024 and discussed the following:

1. The holding of a 50/50 raffle at Rumors (which we did). Our intentions are to hold 50/50 raffles at all shows throughout the year.
2. The Harlem Renaissance: A Celebration of the Arts, which was to held in February, has been postponed and is tentatively moved to March 22-24. The special production needs board approval. The board should have received the script and the submission form prior to this meeting.
3. A Movie Night as a fundraiser is still planned for March, but we need someone to coordinate it.
4. A Comedy Night as a fundraiser is still planned for April, but we need someone to coordinate it.
5. A Kids' Show as a fundraiser is still planned for May, but we need someone to coordinate it.
6. A Guest Bartender Competition will be the fundraiser in June with Shelbie Thompson as the coordinator. It will be held on June 6 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Brew River in Salisbury. It is part of their annual Guest Bartender Competition. The group with the highest Sales will receive a \$2000 grand prize after the completion of the competition.
7. A New Director's One-Act Play Showcase is still planned for July. Rusty Mumford is the coordinator. No specific dates have been set, but it will not interfere with the Children's Theater Workshop.
8. The One-Act Play Festival involving local community theaters has been postponed to August of 2025. A grant application has been written to help pay for the festival. Instead, Ann Northam has a special production she would like to present on Friday, August 9, at the Players Playhouse, as well as Saturday,

August 10, at the Snow Hill Firehouse, and Sunday, August 11, at the MAC Center in Salisbury. Board members should have received the script and submission form for the show. Potential profit is \$2000.

9. An Eastern Shore Heritage project is still planned for the September fundraiser with Matt Bogdan as the coordinator.
10. The Edgar Allan Poe show with Matt Bogdan as the coordinator will return again as the fundraiser in October. A production at the Snow Hill Firehouse will be held on October 19 at 7 p.m. Other performances at other venues, including Poplar Hill Mansion and the Players Playhouse, will be scheduled.
11. November's fundraiser will be the Giving Tuesday campaign. Our hope is that more time and effort will go toward this fundraiser this year than in the past year.
12. The December fundraiser is tentative. Pete Cuesta wants to produce and direct a Christmas show entitled "A Gift to Remember" in December. He also wants to produce and direct a show entitled "Edwin Booth" some time this year. More details on these potential productions will come at a later date.
13. The Capital Campaign was discussed, and committee members felt that a professional campaign specialist is needed to run the campaign. Kel Nagel was going to speak to Veronique and Memo Diriker as possible coordinators of the Capital Campaign.
14. Bordeleau Vineyards and Winery is interested in our performing a murder mystery at their establishment. Zach Werner made Matt Bogdan aware of this interest. More details will follow.

Grants: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. Players (the grantee) received a grant amount of \$25,000 from the Jack P. and Anne R. Smith Foundation (grantor) for \$25,000, specifically to be used for the new theater space.
2. The final reports to Beach to Bay Heritage Area (BBHA) and Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore (CFES) were submitted and accepted. This resulted in Beach to Bay Heritage Area sending us \$1500 (the remaining amount of the \$3000 grant). We already received the full grant funds of \$2,375 from CFES. These grants enabled Players to perform *Paths to Freedom: The Underground Railroad on Maryland's Eastern Shore* (with scenes from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*).
3. Lauren Ansted, program officer at CFES, reported that CFES reviewed my FY24 Community Needs Letter of Inquiry and invited me to submit a full application. I have been working on the full application, which is due February 18. Thanks go to Charlie Linton and Tom Robinson for providing me key information needed in the application. The grant is for \$10,000 and asks for funding needed in transforming our rehearsal space into a performing arts theater. Awards will be announced in April 2024.
4. Much work has been done on the Arts Capital Campaign grant application for the Maryland State Arts Council. Again, thanks go to Charlie Linton and Tom Robinson for providing me key information needed in the application. Also, thanks to Tony Broadbent for providing quotes on various equipment. And thanks to Mayor Taylor for providing a letter of support for our project. I am expecting a letter of support from Senator Carozza very soon. Players is asking for \$239,601 for equipment that will help us transform our rehearsal space into a performance arts theater. Equipment includes portable audience risers (\$52,204), lighting equipment (\$43,058), portable seating (\$38,250), portable stage platforms (\$35,975), sound equipment (\$23,396), portable stage curtains and hardware (\$17,780), Gutter Guard installation (\$7,995), acoustic panels (\$7,850), fire door to dressing rooms (\$6,435), floor polisher (\$3,999), portable concession equipment (\$1,515), and portable concession stand (\$1,144). No matching funds are needed. Full application is due on February 16. If we receive these funds, we can start purchasing and installing equipment July 1.
5. **Note: As of 2/7, the portable seating quote of \$38,250 is a verbal estimate. I have written estimates for all other items except for seating.**
6. A Letter of Interest was submitted to Beach to Bay Heritage Area for a grant in which they would help with the funding of the renovation of our building. We can ask for up to \$100,000, so I asked for that. If we do receive these funds, we would have to match them, 1:1, in-kind or cash or any combination of the two.
7. A Letter of Interest was submitted to ArtsHERE for a grant of \$75,000 to fund next year's one-act play festival.

8. Application was submitted to Coastal Association of Realtors asking for \$1000 to go toward the Children Theater's Workshop to be held in July 2024.
9. This is Players' year to apply for an Operating Grant on a two-year cycle from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (SWAC). The deadline for application is June 7, 2024. Awards can range

Debby Nagel asked Sharon Benchhoff to write a thank-you letter, as she did so well for the Giving Tuesday Donors, for the generous grant from the Smith Foundation.

Membership: Nothing to Report

Hospitality: Hospitality events are suspended until we return our space to order now that the flooring repairs have been completed.

Social Media: Kate Adkins reported as follows:

1. Continuing to post and promote upcoming events on facebook and instagram.
2. Planning to make some introduction to the Players building once everything is returned to their normal environment.
3. Continue to Like , Comment, Share.
4. I just received the following on our Facebook,
5. "Hi there, I was wondering if Community Players was planning to have a week of theater camp again this summer? My daughter had a wonderful experience last year, and now we're trying to schedule our family summer vacation. She doesn't want to miss it if possible so if you already have a week set aside, please let me know. Thank you!!"
6. Last I heard we definitely wanted to do a summer camp again but we were not able to confirm the schedule and staffing. Whatever the decision, we should make that information available (email / social media)

Season Tickets/Box Office:

1. Rusty Mumford reported that there were a few snags in the reserved seating diagram for "Rumors." Corrections have been made as a result.
2. Kel Nagel asked when we will start selling tickets to "Kiss Me Kate." Rusty Mumford replied that we cannot do so until we start selling tickets for "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike," as it would possibly confuse people who can buy tickets to our fourth show but not for our third show. Once we get approved dates from Wor-Wic regarding "Vanya..." then we can start selling "Kiss Me Kate" tickets.

Patrons:

1. Kel Nagel reported that we have fewer Patrons this season.
2. Lynne Bratten suggested that we send a sympathy card to the family of _____

Historical: Nothing to Report

Concessions: Nothing to Report

Program/Program Ads: Tom Robinson reported as follows:

1. He is looking for more advertisers for the "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike."
2. Sharon Benchhoff suggested that we provide a free ad for "Pinnacle" given their donation to us.

Publicity: Debby Nagel reported as follows:

1. 50-yard signs and 2 banners were ordered and placed to advertise “Rumors.” The director decided to forego billboards, thus saving \$900. Attendance was excellent with two performances “sold out,” and the evening performances well attended.
2. As the Director of “Rumors” opted to not to have billboards, from now on that decision will be made by production directors.
3. Kel Nagel was able to get two articles published in the news media; one in the Salisbury Independent and one in the Daily Times. Kate Adkins continually promoted the show on social media. Mike Murphy and Heather Oland were featured on Delmarva Life. I believe this combination was very successful and proves that the expense of billboards is overrated.
4. I would like to continue the above strategy, adding another 10 yard signs to our campaign.
5. I will communicate with Sharon Benchoff concerning the artwork for her upcoming show. It is the prerogative of the director as to whether to use billboards.

Lynne Bratten suggested we publicize on the “Next Door Neighbor” website.

Nominating: Sharon Benchoff reported as follows:

It is time for all members to begin to think if you would like to run for the Board of Directors. Or, if you know someone who you think would contribute to the running of Players, then please think about nominating them. If you have questions of what a Board position entails, please contact me. Nominations are presented at the May meeting and voting happen at the June meeting. More information will be shared at the March meeting.

Production: Matt Bogdan reported as follows:

1. The production committee consists of the following: Matt Bogdan (chairperson), Sharon Benchoff, Holly Bruce, Jason Bruce, Dory Hayman, Mike Murphy, Heather Oland, Shelbie Thompson, and John Wixted. Since the last board meeting, Melissa Dasher withdrew from the committee due to a conflict of interest. Sharon Benchoff replaced Melissa Dasher on the committee.
2. The committee has met on three occasions and discussed the following shows submitted for the 2024-25 season:
 - a. “Cabaret” (directed by Matt Hatfield)
 - b. “Guys and Dolls” (directed by Sherri Trader Hynes)
 - c. “Young Frankenstein” (directed by Sherri Trader Hynes)
 - d. “Is He Dead?” (directed by Kel Nagel)
 - e. “The Importance of Being Earnest” (directed by Cass Dasher)
 - f. “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” (directed by Rusty Mumford)
 - g. “I Hate Hamlet” (directed by Darrell Mullins)
 - h. “The Laramie Project” (directed by Cass Dasher)
 - i. “Night, Mother” (directed by Darrell Mullins).
3. The committee will meet on Thursday, February 8, at 7 p.m. to discuss the following:
 - a. Murder on the Nile (directed by Rusty Mumford)
 - b. The Weir (directed by Matt Hatfield)
 - c. A Few Good Men (directed by Pete Cuesta).
4. Two shows that were submitted by Carole Willette have no directors, so they have been withdrawn and will not be discussed. Those shows were Bad Year for Tomatoes and Tony and Tina's Wedding.
5. The Director’s Pitch meeting will be held on Thursday, February 15, at 6:30 p.m. All board members are invited to attend.

6. The committee will meet on Sunday, February 18, at noon for a final discussion of the shows and generate recommendations to the board.
7. The committee's chairperson will submit show recommendations for the 2024-25 season to the board at the board meeting on Wednesday, March 6.
8. The board will vote on the 2024-25 season at the board meeting on April 3.

Scholarship: Lynne Bratten reported that scholarship materials have been distributed and information was published in the newsletter. As of this writing, one completed application has been received.

Lifetime Achievement: Nothing to Report

House: Betsy Metzger reported that she will be sending out requests for "Rumors" ushers.

Old Business

"Rumors" Final Update

1. Great Job
2. Amazing Strike
3. Rusty Mumford reported the following ticket sales numbers:
 - a. Friday, January 26: 110
 - b. Saturday, January 27 Matinee: 210
 - c. Saturday January 27 Evening: 119
 - d. Friday, February 2: 188
 - e. Saturday, February 3: 216
4. Rusty Mumford reported that we did re-sell some seats on a cash/check basis so as not to go into the ticket system, release those seats, and then sell them.
5. Rusty Mumford reported total ticket revenue to be approximately \$14,000.
6. Rusty Mumford reported that he will make sure a clear "Late Arrival Ticket Policy" is communicated to ticket buyers.

"Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" Update.

1. Sharon Benchoff reported as follows:
 - a. Auditions were held on February 4-6
 - b. Callbacks will take place on February 8
 - c. Cast will be announced by the end of this week.
2. Tom Robinson reported that we still do not have date confirmation from Wor-Wic.

Parking Lot and Gutters

1. Tom Robinson reported that gutters are all clean and cut back.
2. David Allen reported that the orange is from Comcast

Performance Space

1. David Allen commented that we need information regarding a fire door.
2. Matt Bogdan reported that the fire door will be part of a grant application.
3. Front area floors look great.
4. Sharon Benchoff asked if we had information on how to care for the new floors.
5. Kel Nagel as created a "Wish List" for our space. That file is attached.

Other Old Business

1. Shelbie Thompson asked if there was any movement on the Children's Summer Theatre Camp.
2. Shelbie Thompson commented that the flyer for the Bordeleau Chili Cook-Off did not list a participating charity. If we want to participate, the event takes place on March 30.

New Business

Tickets Donation to Community Foundation

1. Shelbie Thompson/Charlie Linton moved that we donate two tickets to "Kiss Me Kate" to be used as a door prize for an upcoming Community Foundation event. Motion passed.
2. On a related note, Tom Robinson asked approval for two tickets to "Kiss Me Kate" as a door prize for the Emily Norman fundraiser to benefit her children's college fund. Rusty Mumford/Cass Dasher moved to approve. Motion passed.

Chef for Habitat

1. Rusty Mumford/Sharon Benchoff moved that we donate a gift set in a Community Players Canvas Tote to the Chef for Habitat event. The basket will have the following items:
 - a. 2 Season Tickets For the 2024-2025 Season
 - b. 4 CPOS Wine Glasses
2. Motion passed.

Harlem Renaissance.

1. Matt Bogdan reported that he wants to push the production to March or April.
2. He will coordinate with Sharon Benchoff so as not to interfere with rehearsals for "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike."
 - a. Discussion was as follows:
 - b. Cass Dasher expressed concern about having adequate time, especially for a March date.
 - c. Robin Finley suggested that we consider waiting until next February so that it could be a part of Black History Month.
 - d. Cass Dasher suggested that perhaps it could be a "reading" this year with a full production for next year.
3. Matt Bogdan/Rusty Mumford moved that the production be scheduled for late April of this year. Motion Passed.

The Lighter Side of Aging

1. Ann Northam had proposed this production as a fundraiser but has decided to wait until next year.
2. This led to a discussion of fundraisers in general during which the following comments were made:
 - a. Matt Bogdan reported that the 50-50 raffle during the run of "Rumors" raised \$800
 - b. Matt Bogdan encouraged more members to step up to be involved in fundraisers.
 - c. Rusty Mumford commented that potential new directors who might participate in the "First-Time Directors Showcase" might want to get involved.
 - d. Matt Bogdan suggested we consider incorporating special productions into the work of the Fundraising Committee.
 - e. Those who have submitted for the next main season might consider doing their show as a fundraiser.

Other New Business

1. Tom Robinson asked us not to print in color on our new machine if black and white will suffice.

2. Tom Robinson stated that nearby residents heard our alarm going off. It appears that it was the result of a smoke alarm that had been discarded. It may have happened while the company working on our new floors were here.
3. Matt Bogdan commented that we should do the Children's Theatre Workshop again this summer. He is willing to step up to direct it. Cass Dasher and Rusty Mumford offered to assist.
4. David Allen suggested that we purchase more wireless microphones. Matt Bogdan/Rusty Mumford moved that we approve up to \$400 for the purchase of new microphones. Motion Passed.
5. Sharon Benchoff stated that set construction for "Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike" will begin on this Saturday.
6. Kel Nagel suggested we begin a capital campaign with a wish list of items. The "Wish List" referenced during the discussion of our performance space can be the start of that.
7. Debby Nagel commented that there was a new face among us, Jorge Vargas. Jorge was encouraged to get involved with us.
8. Bobbie Calloway commented that the water from the utility sink that we use for paint brushes has a bad odor.
9. David Allen commented that we have rental fire extinguishers.
10. Cass Dasher asked if we should replace smoke detectors. The location for their placement is uncertain. Ken Johnson will investigate.
11. The March and April meetings will begin at 6:30 pm

Meeting Adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Mullins

Darrell Mullins

Recording Secretary

Community Players of Salisbury