

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Northwest Indiana Excellence in Theatre Foundation
March 8, 2020
Meeting held at the home of Luke Bouman, Valparaiso

6:30 pm Board Meeting

Call to order, 6:40 p.m.

Attendance; A. Heid, M. Reister, J. Riddle, B. Jascoviak, J. Jascoviak, K. Rasala, B. Leonard-White, P. Glennie, L. Bouman, A. Clough

Minutes from February 2020 **motion** L. Bauman 2nd A. Clough; approved

Finances

- Current Accounts Total Balance 4,714.15, from balance sheet
- Grant payment for Park Plays (2,250)
- **Motion** to accept report subject to review and audit; motion J. Jascoviak, 2nd L. Bouman

President report

IAC grant submitted for festival

- Festival would need to take place before June 31st, 2021

Code of Ethics

- Article C2 has been rephrased to include "ethnicity"
- Discussion of addition of sexual orientation as well
- Further discussion/changes to be discussed at April meeting after review of J. Riddle, L. Bouman

Old Business

Miscast fundraiser

- Discussion centered around moving from interior venue to outside venue

New Business

Gala

- Decision to use Porter County Expo Center for Gala Oct 24, 2020 Saturday
 - Also considered Old town Banquet - max 200-could sell out. Without CTG may not top 200 attendees. Others considered Great Oaks, VUCA (max 160) Duneland Falls

- Fiscal sponsorship for theaters who do not have 501c3 status yet. Provide up to 1 year with 10% fee and contract
 - **Motion** to add to our policy fiscal sponsorship of a theater while they are acquiring their 501c3 not-for-profit status; motion L. Bauman 2nd A. Clough. Motion carry. Jerry abstain (1).
- **Motion** J. Jaskoviak, L. Bauman 2nd to apply for a line of credit with \$2000 limit. Discussion to obtain a credit card vs line of credit-pros, cons, interest rates. Motion carry
 - Note: Debit card limit is \$500/day. ATM limit \$1000/transaction
- Discussion of individual member fee vs becoming a member by being a donor
- Fundraising Committee to work on member/donor development
- Audience development events (grants) are being planned by: LCTG, ImProductions, Seedlings, 4th Street, RPAC, Gary Shakespeare
- Open Forum – Coronavirus situation-suggest that we provide guidance for member theaters. Becky will send.
- Also, how can we help with hopeful entertainment, give hopeful messages? You Tube live, FB Live. Can we broadcast? Need ASCAP royalty fees? COPA laws?

NEXT MEETING APRIL 19 AT LCTG OR Boys and Girls Club

May 17 – RPAC Portage

Minutes Submitted by B. Leonard-White & M. Reister

APPENDIX -- CURRENT WORDING ON CODE OF ETHICS

Section 6 Code of Ethics

A. The purpose of the Code of Ethics of the Northwest Indiana Excellence in Theatre Foundation (NIETF) is to serve as a guide to ethical conduct for members. NIETF members include the Board of Directors, Viewing members, committee members, and member theatres, all of whom are referred to as NIETF members.

B. NIETF members' responsibilities to the theatre community include the following:

1. To conduct all activities with honesty, integrity, respect, fairness, and good faith,
2. To respect the laws,
3. To disallow the exploitation of professional relationships for personal gain,

4. To use this Code to further the interests of Theatre and not for selfish reasons,
5. To refrain from participating in any activity that demeans the credibility and dignity of Theatre,
6. To avoid practicing or facilitating discrimination and prevent discriminatory organizational practices,
7. To be truthful in all forms of activities and avoid disseminating information that is false, misleading, or deceptive,
8. To refrain from using authority or information to intentionally affect NIETF or any member thereof in an adverse way,
9. To participate in activities that benefit and enhance the quality of community theatre life.

C. NIETF members' responsibilities to performers and other volunteers include the following:

1. working to create a working environment conducive to ethical performer conduct and behavior,
2. working to ensure a working environment that is free from harassment, sexual and otherwise, coercion of any kind, especially to perform illegal or unethical acts, and discrimination on the basis of race, creed, ethnic background, sex, age, or disability.

Viewer Meeting & Meeting of the Board of Directors
Northwest Indiana Excellence in Theatre Foundation
April 16, 2020 6:30 PM
Meeting Conducted via Zoom Virtual Conferencing

Board Attendance: M. Byerly, A. Heid, M. Reister, J. Riddle, B. Jascoviak, J. Jascoviak, K. Rasala, B. Leonard-White, P. Glennie, L. Bouman, A. Clough, A. Lowe

Viewer Attendance (not already noted in Board Attendance) : Amy Johnson-Sobek, Andy Leahy, Donna Rowland, Steve Rohe, Kay Wagman

Primary purpose of called meeting was to survey options and opinions of the viewers re: viewing season status in light of COVID-19 delays and cancellations of productions.

Discussions were rooted in matters presented in recent decisions by professional theatre leagues (TONY awards cancellation) and social distancing protocols being presented by medical and artistic organizations (CDC, National Association of Teachers of Singing, Society for the Preservation of Barbershop Singing)

Options presented for discussion:

- Merge the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 Viewing seasons
 - Retain the same stable of viewers with their consent
 - Allows theatres to re-arrange, re-schedule seasons freely, re-mount productions as needed
 - Hold a single awards gala next fall with a possibly expanded slate, if necessary, to cover productions
- Immediately end the 2019-2020 season
 - Give virtual awards based upon votes for the productions that have already been completed
 - Hold a virtual awards ceremony to recognize the excellence of productions already mounted this year
 - Cancel scheduled October 2020 Gala
 - Hold elections as scheduled for new viewers and hope that the cycle rights itself for a new season
 - Hold Gala in October 2021 with a video tribute to productions in truncated season and a listing of the shows that were recognized in the virtual ceremony
- Present no awards at all for the 2019-2020 Season

- Re-set with vote for new viewers for the next season
- Treat the current season as a wash
- Provide some sort of recognition that the productions happened, but have no awards or competition, as there may not be enough completed productions in the season to fully fill out each category

Concerns raised in discussions from Viewers & Board

- Are current viewers willing to stay for a longer term?
 - Most present said that they are, given the unforeseen circumstances, even if they had initially only planned on serving a single year
- How would theatres react if they were told that the current season, though shortened, would now no longer count towards an awards cycle?
 - Many anticipated negative backlash
 - Note was made that there may be a shortage of number of completed productions to fully fill current categories
 - Percentages of viewers seeing each production?
 - Talks of remounting many shows in the future; some were open, but were only able to play one weekend, or even only a single performance, before the state shutdown of public venues -- certainly impacting number of people able to view
- TONY Awards has been postponed; Broadway season has been suspended until at least July, may be suspended further
 - Preview productions have been suspended indefinitely, may not re-open this year
- Studies have compared projection from performers trained to project from the stage (singers and actors both) to “sustained coughing” and an exposure danger 15x the range of normal speaking, normal social distancing
- Board had proposed restructuring awards system, awards gala and moving in the direction of a fundraiser gala for the 30th year (2021); that process may not happen if we choose to merge seasons, continue with things in the same manner as in the past
 - Original plan was to perhaps have two separate events, with the awards event being the smaller of the two, in an attempt to shift more towards a focus on emphasizing and supporting excellence through education and financial support
 - Awards would still be present, important, but not the perceived focus of the organization and its activities
 - This vision may become even more important in light of challenges

encountered by our member theatres due to COVID-19, but the shift in focus of NIETF-sponsored productions (i.e. Gala) might be difficult to accomplish -- for the same reasons that the theatres are struggling (audience issues, willingness for people to participate in group activities)

- How will the public feel about potentially returning to venues? To larger events, specialized events (i.e. Gala -- how could this impact attendance, even if we were allowed to hold this year)
 - National surveys have been made that show a general reluctance, even after things re-open; slow return to normal could impact greatly the number of productions and events put on in our community
 - No locally-focused survey as yet, even for Chicago Metro area; Becky to assemble a survey document and distribute the link, in order to get a pulse on our local audience

NIETF Board Meeting convened official 7:48 pm

- **Motion** to merge the 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 seasons, holding one viewing season for both, and retaining all current viewers able to continue service, in order to maintain continuity of evaluation. Motion J. Riddle, 2nd K. Rasala. **Motion tabled until next meeting.**
- **Motion** to cancel the 2020 Gala and any live event scheduled for October 2020. Motion M. Byerly, 2nd P. Glennie. Motion Withdrawn.
- **Motion** to cancel the 2020 Gala. Motion P. Glennie , 2nd M. Byerly. Approved.
 - Holding the reservation at the Expo Center can stay in place currently without any penalty
 - Investigate the costs of cancellation, more detailed cancellation policy

Conference call completed 8:40 PM

Next Scheduled Meeting, via Zoom Conference Call: Sunday, May 17 @ 6:30 PM

Minutes submitted by Matthew Byerly, Secretary