

CITY OF  
**GREAT FALLS**  
*Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts*  
**ADVISORY BOARD**

Friday, October 21, 2011  
Great Falls Civic Center, Rainbow Room  
Call to Order: 12:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Advisory Board Members Present: Carl Donovan, Shelly Marra, Mary Moe, Rick Tryon,  
Advisory Board Members Absent: Sue Ferrin, Joe Fontana, Jennifer Fritz  
City Staff Present: Dona Hughes, Events Supervisor; Jenn Reichelt, Deputy City Director

**INTRODUCTIONS**

None necessary

**Minutes**

Rick Tryon moved, Shelly Marra seconded and the Advisory Board approved the minutes for June 17, 2011 as written. No meetings were held July, August and September.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Marketing, Public Relations & Community Outreach: Jenn Reichelt, Presenter**

**Public Relations and Community Outreach**

Since there is no true marketing budget in place for 2012, the marketing plan focuses on public relations and community outreach. Name recognition, PR in the media and working with community partners to promote the facility and sell more tickets. The plan contains no regular ad placement or marketing buys.

The target market is regionally with the inclusion of Canada. Jen Fritz created a media list that will be a great tool in getting the word out on events. The City is a member of the Great Falls Area Lodging Association (Dona attends), Great Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau (GFCVB) (Mary Moe and Patty Rearden attends), and GFCVB Convention and Events Committee (Dona attends). Restaurateurs in Great Falls have no formal organization like the lodging association. A strategy is to include the restaurateurs by a regular emailing of the calendar of events. Dona will get a contact list from Planning/CD of licensed restaurateurs.

PR will include talking more about when tickets go on-sale and what's happening emphasizing that the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts at the Civic Center is an active venue in the community. Press releases will be going out on a more regular schedule. Dona and staff will create evergreen stories that will be a tool of keeping The Mansfield at the forefront of the public's mind. Evergreen stories may be organized quarterly – Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. Sample stories may be pitched to the media. Topics may include the history, improvements and samples of events. Advisory Board input on other story ideas will be sought. Art Taft's early morning program on KRTV would be good exposure for name recognition. Rick Tryon is a regular host on NPR/KGPR and volunteered to take on the task of doing something once a month. First one up will be an interview by Rick with Carl Donovan. Topics may include the importance of bringing in community events, the facility and comfort of audience - the new climate control in the Theater, and other improvements made.

Community outreach plan includes guest speaker at clubs such as the Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Ad Club and Optimist Club. The road show would include a 10 minute power point. We could also look at inviting the clubs to the Civic Center and hosting one of their monthly meetings on stage. Mary Moe has already shared the marketing plan with GFCVB and TBID. Karen Venetz of the TBID responded very



favorably to our plan. We could reinstate school tours, providing their schedule would allow. Great Falls Symphony and Youth Orchestra continue with presenting two to three school performances a year.

Working with our tourism partners, we may create FAM (familiarization tours for travel writers) or participate in FAM tour planning assuring that The Mansfield as a stop and not overlooked. Jen Fritz, Dona Hughes and Mary Moe are all working with tourism partners.

Carl reported that Great Falls Community Concert Association's presentation of Tribute to Frankie Valli and Broadway was very complimentary of our theater. They commented that it is a great venue, loved the sound, the stage and our audience. This could be a story idea to pitch.

Jenn Reichelt and Jen Fritz will assist in building relationships, pictures and stories. Carl Donovan will start getting quotes from Great Falls Community Concert Association's guest artists and request photo ops. Dona Hughes and staff will gather quotes from the Broadway series guest artists and other national tours. Dona and staff have photos of event rooms set ups, but no very little of the actual events. They will work on obtaining those for past customers/events and model releases if anyone is identifiable. One story idea that The Mansfield staff is working on is the transformation of the facility from an empty space to a full event or performance set up.

### **Marketing**

A crucial marketing need is a "take-away" piece such as a rack card or brochure. It is recommended that funds be found within this year's budget to dedicate to the creation and production a piece. A rack card could be affordable and could utilize both the front and back. Another recommended expenditure is the creation of an electronic template for the calendar of events. These two pieces should be married to The Mansfield's look or family.

### **Messaging**

Consistent messaging is another goal. It is recommended that the term "Mansfield" is used consistently, i.e. Mansfield Box Office, Mansfield Convention Center, Mansfield Theater, and The Mansfield at the Civic Center. The Civic Center is the locator. The Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts is the organization. The identifier as a Performing Arts Center (PAC) helps to draw the regional and national promoters and agencies. The Mansfield at the Civic Center is the abbreviated identifier.

The need for more **signage** was also identified. The Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts is located inside the Civic Center. Signage on the front of the building is recommended. With the reconstruction or renovation of the outside of the building, it would be the perfect opportunity to add signage. Use of banners was also identified. Sign code could be an impediment. Dona Hughes will work with Planning/CD to identify what may be done within code. It was noted in the Board's person to person survey that the name recognition of Mansfield was not there.

### **Partnerships: Restaurants and Lodging**

**Partnering with restaurants** and packaging entertainment with preshow dinner or post-show drinks, dessert or appetizers is another strategy identified. Can we encourage the establishments to stay open longer?

**Partnering with lodging facilities** to provide free shuttle service to and from the Civic Center as well as packages that combine overnight stays with The Mansfield entertainment offerings. There has been interest expressed by several properties including the Holiday Inn, the Crystal Inn, the Hilton Garden Inn and the Hampton Inn. In the past, The Mansfield partnered with the Best Western Heritage Inn through a sponsorship plan.

### **Logo**

A simple revamping of the logo was also identified. With the current logo, the City of Great Falls is recognized before The Mansfield. It is recommended to remove the "City of Great Falls" from the Mansfield logos. Could Roland Taylor, graphics designer for the current logo application, incorporate other



creative or design elements in the logo? Perhaps another meeting could be held for logo discussion. Currently, The Mansfield should phase out, but continue to use existing ticket stock, letterhead, business cards, etc. Do not toss any of it.

It was noted that the revisions of the logo(s) does not need Commission action and that Advisory Board approval will suffice. It was also noted that in 2002 the city Commission approved the naming of the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts.

#### **Marketing/PR Task List:**

- 1. Implement the marketing/PR plan**
- 2. At the next meeting, look at action items and assignments. What makes sense for the staff to take on certain action items and what makes sense for the Advisory Board members to take on certain action items. – identify who has what community ties for the outreach plan.**

Chairman, Carl Donovan, commended the Marketing Committee for all their hard work and ideas. Good job!

#### **Preferred Caterers Program**

Dona Hughes presented a revised draft of the Preferred Caterers Program. Discussion centered around Request for Proposals approach, which would provide for exclusivity for as set number of caterers, as opposed to leaving the program open to all that are willing to comply with the requirements. Points discussed on the RFP approach:

- Positive - Quality control (service, food, and clean up)
- Positive - Eliminate the need for continual training of new caterers
- Positive - motivation for the cater to participate in the program
- Positive – proper insurance is in place for the year
- Procedure – Advisory Board would choose those they feel are worthy
- Noted – we already have an RFP system in place for theater lobby concessionaire
- Noted - MSU COT chose to do an RFP and select one caterer for their facilities

Points discussed on the open caterers program approach:

- Events planners may choose or continue with their own preferred caterer as long as they sign up for the program
- More inclusive of the community businesses
- Leaves it open to new caterers, but they would need to prove themselves
- Need for staff to continually train, obtain insurance, etc.

General discussion on Preferred Caterers Program:

- Essentially the caterer will pass the costs on the event producers raising their costs. Rental fee increase vs. caterers program.
- Caterers are stakeholders in the facility. They gain by not having the overhead costs of a maintaining large meeting spaces
- Caterers also gain by direct referral of business especially in conferences and meetings planning

Discussion of Preferred Caters Program draft:

- Perhaps replace the use of “preferred” caterer with “authorized” caterer
- Rick Tryon moved, Shelly Marra seconded and Advisory Board approved to strike the annual contribution of desserts, and other food from the Preferred Caterers Program.

#### **PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Public Comment)**

Rick Tryon suggested that the Board invite any new Commission members to come to an Advisory Board meeting to see what the Board does and share what they would like to see the Board do.

**Mary Moe reminded the Advisory Board to look at the task list and see to what each Board member would like to commit.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Advisory Board Shelly Marra moved, Rick Tryon seconded and Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

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Carl Donovan, Chairman

*Rubee*  
*Rick Tryon* vice Chair

**Action Items Pending**

1. Direction for Caterers Program: amend, scrap, seek further public comment, go out for RFP, create a letter of agreement for an open plan?
2. Marketing Plan task list assignments, evergreen stories