

THE Mansfield

Center for the Performing Arts ADVISORY BOARD

Friday, June 28, 2013
Ryan Room at the Great Falls Civic Center
Call to Order: 12:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Advisory Board Members Present: Carl Donovan, Sue Ferrin, Larry Gomoll, Keern Haslem, Kim Thiel Schaaf

Advisory Board Members Absent: Joe Fontana, Mary Sheehy Moe

City Staff Present: Patty Rearden, Park and Rec Deputy Director; Mark Willmarth, Training and Development Coordinator; and Dona Hughes, Events Supervisor

INTRODUCTIONS

None necessary

OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes

Keern Haslem moved to approve the May minutes as written. Larry Gomoll seconded the motion and Board members present unanimously approved the May 2013 minutes as written.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Mansfield's Budget cut \$100,000 in City General Fund Support

Mark Willmarth recapped the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts Advisory Board's purpose "... is to advise the City Commission and City Manager on matters related to the successful operation of Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts including the use of the Theater, Convention Center, and meeting rooms as well as common areas and facility aesthetics." Mark encouraged the Board to get creative in addressing the new fiscal challenges. What could we do? What impact does it have on the public that we serve?

Discussion:

1. Privatize via a non-profit or for-profit entity (i.e. SMG/Fairgrounds, Veolia/Waste Water Treatment Plant)
 - o Issues:
 - Union contracts
 - Rental fees would go up a significant amount making it difficult for the facility to compete for business
 - For-profit company is only interested in the profit centers (would mine the "gold" and leave the "dregs")
 - Deferred facility maintenance deficit would rise (no ownership/commitment to the facility)
 - Company may choose not to take over all areas limiting the public's access to services
 - Civic Center is still the seat of City government
 - Non-profit would have the same difficulty finding operational support as the City.
2. What does it take to meet the fiscal challenge
 - o More events?
 - o Less events?
 - o Raise fees

- We currently make about \$175,000 in rent (Post meeting note: to raise an additional \$100,000 through rental fees alone, fees would need to be increased by 57 %.)
 - Consideration: loss of business through fee increases may end up with less revenue earned
 - Consideration: majority of use of facility is by non-profit organizations. Tax support dollars are given back to the community through those organizations' services.
 - What will the market bear?
 - What's the point of raising fees if the renter is unable to afford the fee or the presenter is unable to make money as well?
 - Who is our competition?
 - Missouri Room competes with Family Living Center/ExpoPark, banquet room at the Airport, Convention Center at the Holiday Inn, banquet room at the Hampton
 - Restructure the fees:
 - Currently the rooms are at a flat rate. Missouri, Gibson, Ryan and Rainbow room rent from 7 am to 12:30 am. Convention Center rents from 7 am to 2 am.
 - Option - charge by the hour rather than to day
 - Could increase need for events laborers if the multiple events of ;the day require a changes in set up
 - Keep flat rates, but set them for 8 hours of continuous access with fee increases as hours of access increase (Not only increase in revenues, but decrease in on-call labor costs)
 - Theater is set on percentage of ticket sales gross with a minimum of \$950 and a maximum of \$4,335. The fee includes ticketing service.
 - Is the inclusion of ticketing service paying for itself?
 - Larry Gomoll likes the ticketing service.
 - Leave the rent based on a percentage and increase the minimum and maximum fee base.
 - What's the philosophical reason the City got into this gig?
 - Fundraising for facility improvements
 - There could be potential trust issues if the Facility & Equipment Surcharge fees - that were initiated with the purpose to invest in small facility capital improvements and equipment purchase - are used to pay operational costs of the building.
 - Possible solution is to put on hold the Facility & Equipment Surcharge fee and raise rent so that the financial impact on the renter, event attendee/ticket purchaser, etc. is lessen.
 - Reinstate Facility & Equipment Surcharge when things turn around
- 3. Need to create a timeline:
 - Proposal for fee increases to City Manager and then off Commission as soon as possible
 - Honor current contracts and cut new ones with new fees
 - Proposal for cuts in services and therefore savings in expenses (i.e. no longer rent Convention Center, etc)
 - Raise rent through a graduated schedule
 - If we close room(s), what is the long term effect?
 - What's the economic impact on the community through loss of tourism and events traffic in town?
 - How long would it take to reestablish the business lost through closing the room(s)?
- 4. Can we decrease the \$45,579 custodial cost for the Mansfield Theater?
 - Issue: volunteer ushers pick up the garbage on the floor in the Theater house and the stage hands mop the stage floor. Why are the custodial fees so high?
 - Background: cost is based on square footage of each room. However, The Mansfield receives consideration, in that, the event spaces are not occupied 251 days a year like the offices are.

The Mansfield occupies a little less than 58% of the Civic Center, but is charged for a little less than 30% of the Civic Center expenses. The custodial costs are also high due to the cut in custodial services in the Convention Center, but no credit for providing our own custodial services. On the other hand, The Mansfield may be getting a deal on energy costs using this formula.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Public Comment)

No petitions or communication were presented.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board and no quorum, meeting was informally adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Mary Sheehy Moe, Chairman

Action Items Pending

1. Dona to play with fee increases (Could we balance if each fee were raised by \$200?)
2. Dona to further break down box office costs and net loss (Theater fees include box office.)
3. Dona to look for a ticket system report that indicates what hours are the busiest for the box office
4. Dona to invite Carolyn Valacich, Executive Director of the Great Falls Symphony
5. Long range: Dona to contact City Engineer re: selection of architectural firm
6. Long range: Dona to set up a meeting with Clint Jackson to walk Mansfield Theater and Clint to shoot dimensions for floor plan