

# THE Mansfield

*Center for the Performing Arts*

## ADVISORY BOARD

Friday, January 18, 2013  
Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center  
Call to Order: 12:08 p.m.

### ROLL CALL

Advisory Board Members Present: Carl Donovan, Sue Ferrin, Joe Fontana, Larry Gomoll, Keern Haslem, Mary Sheehy Moe

Advisory Board Members Absent: None

City Staff Present: Dona Hughes, Events Supervisor

### INTRODUCTIONS

Board welcomed new Board Member, Keern Haslem, and welcomed back Carl Donovan.

### OLD BUSINESS:

#### Minutes

Minutes for November were amended by changing item #4 to read, "Modify the logo", as the logo was not "redesigned." Sue Ferrin moved and Joe Fontana seconded to approve the November minutes with amendment and to approve the December minutes as written. Board members present unanimously approved.

#### Theater Seating Project

Mary Moe presented an outline for an information PowerPoint presentation to be given to the City Commission at a future work session. The purpose of the presentation is to seek direction from the Commission on the replacement of the audience seats in the Theater. It will also inform the Commission on other needs for the Mansfield Center for the Performing Arts and past improvements made. Board and staff set a goal to begin seat replacement three years out in order to allow time to fundraise for the project. It was also discussed that it may be necessary to break the project down in sections, i.e. main floor, loge and balcony, due to funding constraints. Currently, the Mansfield Advisory Board is penciled in for Tuesday, April 2, 2013. Meeting begins at 5:30 pm. Date could change if more pressing issue(s) come up. Board recommended holding the meeting in the Theater. Dona will present idea to Marty Basta, Park and Recreation Director, who in turn will make the request on behalf of the Board. Dona will also find out work limit for the presentation.

A task force for the Theater Seating Project was formed. The following Board Members volunteered to serve on the committee: Mary Moe; Joe Fontana; Keern Haslem; Sue Ferrin; and Larry Gomoll. Carolyn Valacich, Executive Director of the Great Falls Symphony Association, has volunteered to also serve.

#### The Board

One Board opening still needs to be filled. City Manager's office will continue to recruit.

### NEW BUSINESS:

#### Board Chairman and Vice Chairman

With Rick Tryon and Jennifer Heintz leaving the Board, Board voted Mary Moe as Chairman, and Sue Ferrin, as Vice-Chairman.

**Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2014:**

Dona reported that this is the time of year that we need to start identifying budget priorities. She cited the most pressing need for The Mansfield is reliable staff for events service and janitorial duties in the Convention Center. Planning/CD's elimination of custodial services for the Convention Center and services for all Saturdays has made it difficult to serve our customers by covering the addition 20 hours with on call labor only. Staff strongly recommends The Mansfield requests a 7 month permanent part-time position for an events labor. Mary Moe emphasized that personnel is important.

Sue Ferrin presented a marketing opportunity for The Mansfield. A new company, City Keyosks, has installed kiosks in 10 Great Falls lodging properties. The touch screen kiosk supplies the visitor with information on what to do, where to eat, etc. while staying here in Great Falls. To participate, it is \$50/month which works out to be \$5/month per lodging property.

Dona will provide the Board with the budget timeline.

**Next Meetings:**

It was recommended that the next Board meeting be cancelled or rescheduled for February 8 as Dona Hughes will be on vacation.

The task force for the Theater Seat Project will meet Friday, February 1, at 3:30 pm in the Gibson Room.

**PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Public Comment)**

No petitions or communication were presented.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, Joe Fontana moved and Carl Donovan seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Board voted unanimously to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 12:52 pm pm.

  
Mary Sheehy Moe, Chairman

**Action Items Pending**

1. Power Point Presentation for Theater Seating Project

# THE Mansfield

*Center for the Performing Arts*  
**THEATER SEAT PROJECT TASK FORCE**

Friday, February 1, 2013, 3:30 pm  
Gibson Room at the Great Falls Civic Center

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Present: Sue Ferrin, Joe Fontana, Larry Gomoll, Keern Haslem, Carolyn Valacich, Dona Hughes  
Members Absent: None

## **Introductions**

Members introduced themselves. Advisory Board Members welcomed Carolyn Valacich, Executive Director of the Great Falls Symphony Association.

## **Configuration of seating**

The challenge for the remodel is to achieve a balance - comfort vs. loss of inventory/seats. Current inventory or seating capacity is 1782.

There are two options to configuring the audience chamber:

- Keep the current configuration with 4 aisles
  - Would lose some inventory of seats as seats need to be wider and aisles need to be a little wider
  - Retains a greater inventory of aisle seats which are preferred by many
- Go to continental seating where the aisles between rows are wider, but the rows stretch from one aisle along the outside wall to the other aisle along the other outside wall.
  - Would probably lose more inventory of seats than the above option as aisles would be much wider
  - Asset: would allow much more leg space and space for people to keep their walkers with them. (With an aging population, there will be even a greater need in the near future.)
  - Disadvantage: would lose valuable inventory of seats which is crucial in retaining the performances with higher artist fees such as Broadway in Great Falls and other nationally touring acts.
  - Challenge: both the Great Falls Symphony and the Great Falls Community Concert sell seasons giving their patron the option to renew their seats. The loss of seats in prime locations will be a challenge in retaining the long-time, ticket holder whose seat has been removed due to the remodel.

Committee agreed that both options for seat configuration should be explored.

Caution must be taken to preserve the historic integrity of the theater as well as the acoustics of the theater. The shape of the floor is contributes to the great acoustics in the theater.

Floor coverings also need replacing.

## **Funding**

Carolyn pointed out that it is to everyone's advantage to include the community members and businesses in the fundraising efforts as well as seek some sort of public funding. She suggested that we look at some sort of fundraising efforts along the lines of the 1996 "Remain Seated" campaign that was implemented to raise funds to restore the existing seats. She noted that the plaque in the theater lobby recognizes those contributors who "bought" seat(s). This approach gives ownership to many.

Fundraising for the seat project cannot be solely on the private sector as Montana is limited in the amount of large businesses that have resources to fund non-profit efforts. Therefore, they are tapped for many projects. We need to maintain a balance. Caution must be taken not to shift contributions from the producing and presenting non-profit companies to the seat project as those funds are necessary for programming and operations.

Identify all stakeholders including those national companies who may promote something in Great Falls only once a year. Engage them in creating a positive image in our community.

Funding resources brainstormed:

- Bond issue
- Davidson Companies
- Dennis Washington Foundation (Is Phyllis Washington is originally from Great Falls?)

## **Next Steps**

Presentation at the Commission Work Session on April 2, at 5:30 pm

Explore both seat configuration options:

- Hire an architect
- What inventory is lost?
- Cost estimate