



Syracuse City Arts Council

Meeting Minutes

August 23, 2011

Members Present: Darren Maxfield, Shannon Elmer, Heather Steed, Judy Merrill, Brandon Bills, Seth Lisonbee, and Holly Thurgood

1. Review and adoption of agenda and minutes. SETH LISONBEE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE AUGUST 23, 2011, SYRACUSE CITY ARTS COUNCIL AGENDA AS OUTLINED, SECONDED BY HEATHER STEED; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.
2. Report on 2011 Summer Concert series. Seth Lisonbee expressed his satisfaction with the results of the concert series and their good attendance numbers. The smallest audience was approximately 40, for Mermaid Baby, most likely due to weather. The biggest was just over 100 for the Davis County Symphony. Jensen Park was the perfect venue, and he received a lot of good feedback. His only regret was not getting better coverage in the Syracuse Islander, such as previews of upcoming performances. He gave them a press release, but they did not run it. They did publish a nice review at the end of the season, and he hoped to improve communication with the paper for next year's series. He came in under budget and discussed possibly changing the 2012 schedule to performances once a month from June through August or every other Saturday. He hoped to book the Army band for Heritage Days, so Holly Thurgood offered to finalize the dates for next year's Heritage Days and email it to Seth.
3. Discussion of upcoming 2011-2012 Choir season. Shannon Elmer provided the upcoming rehearsal schedule, beginning in September, held every Thursday evening at the Syracuse High School. However, her husband's work schedule was changing, and she accepted new employment as well. Their family obligations would make it very difficult for her to continue directing the Choir on Thursdays. They would not be able to use the high school on Saturdays, and Choir members had too many other conflicts on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. They typically prepared for a Christmas performance and a Sing Along in the Fall, but Shannon worried about the size of the Choir. Most residents were more concerned about providing opportunities for their children rather than themselves. The promotion the Choir held at The Music Man performances only garnered six possible additional members. She wondered if the Arts Council should shift its financial support from the Choir to more useful programs or look for someone else with the time and willingness to solicit more members. Brandon Bills mentioned the Davis Symphony Orchestra wanting to do more performances with the Arts Council. They received donations and did not require much money. Board members did not respond favorably to the idea of creating new events at this time for symphony members. Judy pointed out that the purpose of the Arts Council was to provide opportunities for residents to participate in the arts, and if someone identified a need, the Board should consider it. She encouraged Brandon to discuss their ideas and present a more formal proposal at a future Board meeting. Further discussions of the Choir included suggestions to organize it for specific events rather than a group of performances, which would include auditions and just one month of practices. Board members expressed the need for a Volunteer Coordinator on the Board to find Choir members and organize volunteers in every aspect of the Arts Council programs. Board members decided to remove the Choir portion of the article going into the next City newsletter.

HEATHER STEED MOVED TO TABLE THE COMMUNITY CHOIR TEMPORARILY AND SELECT A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR TO CAPTURE SOME OF THOSE CHOIR MEMBERS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARTS COUNCIL IN OTHER WAYS. BRANDON BILLS SECONDED THE MOTION; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

4. Report on The Music Man production. Darren Maxfield reported that attendance to The Music Man performances turned out to be more than anticipated. While understanding that Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat would always be by far the most successful show in Utah, the income from last year's production to The Music Man was comparable. He believed the numbers indicated that advanced online ticket sales were worth the added cost, because the ability to take credit card payments made a difference. Attendance on Monday proved that each year needed to include a Monday performance. Apparently, City Councilman Doug Peterson asked why the City Council did not receive comp tickets. Board members recounted past years when other City Councilmembers reprimanded them for offering comp tickets. After further discussion, everyone decided that any City Councilmember could attend Arts Council events to observe for free how the Board was utilizing their financial contributions.

5. Budget report. Judy Merrill went over the financial report, including the expenses and income from The Music Man, and made corrections as provided by various Board members. Brandon Bills asked about a timeline for adopting a budget. Since the Summer musical productions had the greatest impact on the Arts Council budget, everyone agreed to set the yearly budgets in September.

6. Discussion of 2012 productions and classes. After learning that Kristi Shaw, the Syracuse High School Theatre Advisor, already announced and held auditions at the end of the 2010-2011 school year to perform Fiddler on the Roof in the Spring of 2012, Darren spoke with her about the Arts Council performing the same show. She assured him she was fine with the Council's choice, especially since the high school would be performing it first. Board members voiced concerns about ticket sales due to the high school's show just a few months earlier, but everyone decided that the Arts Council performances attracted a much broader audience that would still support another showing of Fiddler on the Roof.

DARREN MADE A MOTION TO KEEP FIDDLER ON THE ROOF AS THE ARTS COUNCIL'S 2012 MUSICAL PRODUCTION, SECONDED BY SETH LISONBEE; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Darren received and was still receiving a lot of interest for the Arts Council to teach children's theater classes. The classes would focus on how to prepare for auditions, theater makeup, costumes, etc. His wife, Marinda, had been looking into what it would take to begin such a program, and he felt this would probably be a better use of the Arts Council's energy in the winter time than a program for the orchestra. He based his opinion on the fact that they could charge a fee through the Recreation Department to cover the cost of the classes since they had no reserved funds for any new programs yet. Shannon explained how Andrew Owens ran a theater camp in Clinton. Clinton Days had a theme, and they used that theme as the basis for the students to write a script for their show, and it was really funny and very successful.

7. Scheduling of meeting dates for remaining calendar year. Board members selected the following dates for the remaining meetings held in 2011, with the meetings beginning at 8:30 p.m. in the Community Center: September 27, October 18, November 15, and December 13.