

White Heron Theatre Company
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
February 24, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the White Heron Theatre Company was held by Zoom teleconference on February 24, 2022. The meeting was called to order by President Robert Doran at 9:04AM. Present at the meeting were Directors Martin Tackel, Sheri Feigen, Lynne Bolton, Robert Doran, Robin Hammer, Jim Malone, Leighanne Champion, Chris Bierly, and Carolyn Durand. Josh Borenstein and Michael Kopko were also present at the invitation of the Board.

Mr. Doran asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board held on both November 9 and 16, 2021. There as a motion and a second and these minutes were approved with the changes that Michael Rhea and Martin Tackel did attend the meetings, and a clarification that James Malone was only at the November 9, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Doran began the meeting by offering some comments about the Company's recent history. He noted that the Theatre had come through a "Tempest" together and had landed its ship well. We are adding more audience to our shows, increasing our donor base and building a balance sheet. There is increased awareness of our work on Nantucket social media and we are about to launch a new education program headed by Michela Donovan. In staffing news Mark Shanahan has agreed to become the Company's Associate Artistic Director. Our fund-raising among the Board members is going well with \$850,000 pledged towards our Board goal of at least \$1,000,000. A few Board members have yet to make their pledges. All in all, we are headed in a very positive direction.

Mr. Doran expressed a desire to move the May Board meeting to Nantucket if we can, and efforts will be made to do that.

Mark Cunha next gave the Governance Report, reporting about the new financial Capitalization policy approved by our auditors. The issue is simple – at what point do we capitalize an expenditure rather than simply expense it for financial accounting purposes. The recommended policy is that expenditures over \$4,999 be capitalized provided that the item has a useful life of more than one year. After a brief discussion a motion was made by Mr. Cunha and seconded by Mr. Malone that this policy be adopted. There being no additional discussion, Mr. Doran called for a vote and the Capitalization Policy was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Cunha also brought before the Board a new Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy. This new policy is a product of the settlement of a complaint made against the Theatre by Actor's Equity in the summer of 2021. After discussion, Mr. Cunha moved and Mr. Bierly seconded a motion to adopt this new policy. With no additional discussion, Mr. Doran called for a vote. The members present voted unanimously to adopt the new policy with Mr. Tackel abstaining because he had not yet had time to study the new policy.

Ms. Bolton next gave her Artistic Director's Report. She first spoke glowingly about having Mark Shanahan officially join the WHTC team as Resident Director. She noted that this is a "legacy appointment" making clear that the Company has long, well-defined future. As part of his duties, Mr. Shanahan will direct two shows during the 2022 Season.

Ms. Bolton then presented the 2022 Season.

The first two plays will be The Half and Sea Monsters of the Deep played in repertory beginning in the last week of June. For The Half, this production will be the show's North American premiere. For Sea Monsters, the production will be its world premier. Michael Kopko will direct The Half.

Our third production will be Dial M for Murder. This play will open in mid-to-late-July [now, July 26] and feature Tony-award winner Celia Kennan-Bolger and her husband, John Conlee. The two previously appeared at WHT in Private Lives a few summers ago.

Our fourth production will be Thurgood, a play about the life of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. It will run during the last two weeks of August.

One change to our presentation schedule is that the shows will play on Sunday nights through Thursday nights, leaving the weekends for White Heron Comedy Club presentations. Our experience has been that we draw very well on weekday nights but not on weekends.

Finally, we will again produce Nantucket Christmas Carol beginning the night after Thanksgiving.

We are also planning to renew our annual Gala on July 28. Details to follow.

In other theatre news, we have begun a collaboration with the Nantucket Theatre Workshop to do some training together and to coordinate our seasons. They are planning to do the musical "Queen, We will Rock You" this summer, a show outside our area of concentration.

Mr. Borenstein next gave the Managing Director's Report. He advised that we were very happy with the turnout for the Christmas show. We had record ticket sales and a wonderful show. There were many fewer Comp Tickets (only 11 versus 48 in 2019) and a number of first-time buyers.

In disappointing news, the on-line Annual Appeal was a flop. We were down \$17,000 from last year. In all, we ran a \$54,000 deficit in 2021. We have applied for various institutional grants. We applied to the National Endowment for the Arts under the American Rescue Plan but we were not chosen. We have applied to the NEA for a specific grant for Miss Mitchell. That show has been deferred until 2023; it is still in development.

Our efforts to obtain a grant from the Shubert Foundation are still hampered by the amount of debt on our books. Hopefully, a realignment of our financing will help there. We also applied to the Massachusetts Cultural Council for a replacement upgrade to our HVAC system. That grant is in the amount of \$150,000. We are also applying for a ReMain Foundation grant.

Ms. Feigen next gave the Education Report. She reported the exciting news that McCaela Donovan has agreed to direct WHT's Education Program. She knows the company having been seen recently in the role of the Mother in Carrie. She's an actress and singer. She has experience working with college-age talent, a group we expect to have in our theatre this summer. She will also work with Jimmy Calitri and Joe Short and his wife. We also expect her to work during the off-season in a public speaking program. Jimmy Calitri will still direct the summer education program. Micala will add more administrative overview.

Ms. Feigen, Mr. Borenstein and others thanked Hayley Cook for her help with this program and other administrative duties at the theatre. She's been an invaluable resource.

Mr. Borenstein next presented the 2022 Budget. Our total income and expenses are \$1,158,000. Of this amount, ticket revenues are budgets at about \$250,000, Trustee and individual contributions at just shy of \$500,000 and another \$300,000+ in special events and other sales. On the expense side, theatrical production at \$390,000, education at \$74,000, personnel at \$246,000 and administrative at \$324,000. Because of performance cancellations, we have extended all Heron Society Memberships through December 31, 2022.

Our 2021 financial audit is not yet complete, but Mr. Borenstein noted that we received about \$200,000 in Covid Relief Funds and almost \$400,000 in

individual giving. Housing budget expenses are next after salaries. We are using social media to boost ticket sales.

Robin Hammer spoke about the Capital Campaign. We are looking for more donors, to build a better balance sheet, a stronger artistic team and a better education program. We will have a Washington, DC fund-raising cocktail party at the Georgetown home of Michael Bayer on April 23. We are also planning a summer fund-raising party at the Hales home on the Island.

There being no additional business, Mr. Doran asked for a motion to adjourn. It was so moved and seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47AM.

Respectfully submitted,

James Malone,

Clerk