

AD HOC THEATER COMMITTEE MEETING

October 14, 2020

The Ad Hoc Theater Committee of Chardon City Council met on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 6:30 PM via video conferencing system, Zoom (Meeting ID 891 0068 1434).

Members of Ad Hoc Theater Committee present: Andrew Blackley, Deborah Chuha, Heather Means.

Others present: City Manager Randy Sharpe, Park and Recreation Director Adam Rogers, Clerk of Council Amy Day, David Malinowski, Paul Holm, Hannah Maxwell, Alyssa Lombardo, Andrea Gutka, Andela Hansen, Brian Doering, Chris Cipriani, Jen Lieber, Faith Carey, Fred Sternfeld, Karen Porter, Kim Labeledz, Michael Krolik, Michael Lund Ziegler, Mike Butt, Paul Sloop, Paula Sloop, Paula Sant, Ryan Davis, Sara Tackett, Stephen Waybright, Yvonne Thomas, Chris Labeledz, Steve Baum, Desiree Boardwine, Brett Boardwine, Jim Boardwine.

Ms. Means, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2020 meeting as presented.

Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Means reviewed the format for the meeting and the presentations by Willoughby Fine Arts and Thrive.

**Regarding a presentation by Willoughby Fine Arts for programming and management of Geauga Theater and Building 106,** Paul Holm, CEO of the Willoughby Fine Arts Association and David Malinowski reviewed their vision for the use of the facilities and explained that they wish to have a blend of performances and educational programming.

Mr. Blackley asked representatives of Willoughby Fine Arts questions regarding their partnering with the City, which is smaller in size to the Willoughby organization.

Mr. Malinowski stated that he sees many similarities between the organizations and sees them as good partners. Having one organization managing both facilities will help programming for

audiences in both communities and beyond.

Mr. Blackley asked if they would envision allowing residents of Chardon to have access to classes in Willoughby since they plan on using 106 Water Street mainly for set construction.

Mr. Malinowski stated that Willoughby would be available for Chardon; however, their intent is to use some of 106 Water Street for set construction but would also it for classes.

Mr. Blackley asked about allowing music performances by outside groups.

Mr. Malinowski stated that they are eager to partner with other arts organizations and performers as much as they can.

Ms. Means asked about the organization's vision for 106 Water Street.

Mr. Malinowski stated how the facility would be used for classes and set design.

Ms. Means asked about the type of theater performances that are planned by the Willoughby Fine Arts.

Mr. Malinowski stated that he envisioned having different performances at the two different locations.

Ms. Means inquired about the financial support they would be looking for from the City.

Mr. Malinowski stated that there will be some costs to bring the theater in performance-ready condition including repair/replacement of the stage and drapes. In addition, there are some general cosmetic needs at 106 Water Street.

Director of Development, Yvonne Thomas, suggested that a fundraiser would be a good way to start to help raising money to make improvements to the spaces.

Mr. Blackley inquired about the projected finances and how the profits would be used.

Ms. Thomas stated that she believed the City would need to be a contributing financial partner. What that dollar amount is, can evolve over time.

Ms. Means asked if the expectation is that the City would pay for these costs upfront.

Ms. Thomas explained how to raise funds to move those projects

forward, possibly with a fundraiser. She added that due to COVID-19, time is on their side to figure out how to do this.

Mr. Sharpe asked about the approval process for the funds.

Ms. Thomas explained that a sponsorship or fundraiser would be the first step, and the remainder be taken to the board.

Mr. Holm stated that it is hard to answer until there is more information about the scope of work.

Ryan Davis asked if there would be separate budgets for the two facilities and how fundraising would be handled.

Mr. Holm explained that there would be direct cost accounting and costs would be allocated to cover development costs or staff costs. They would have the efficiency of one accounting system but costs would be allocated so that the revenue and expenses of each location can be viewed easily. He added that he envisions that there will be times that fundraisers will be held specifically for the programs of each facility and sometimes they will be done to benefit the whole.

Ms. Thomas stated that Willoughby Fine Arts has processes, tools and resources that can help offset the costs of the Chardon facility.

Ms. Means asked about staffing at the Geauga office.

Mr. Holm explained that they expect to hire a couple of staff for Chardon.

Mr. Sharpe asked if thought had been given to if the name of the Geauga Theater would be changed.

Mr. Holm stated that he would expect each space to have its own identity under the Fine Arts umbrella.

**Regarding a presentation by Thrive for Programming and Management of Geauga Theater and Building 106,** Jen Liebler, Brett Boardwine and Jim Boardwine, representatives for Thrive, provided a YouTube link about their organization and about their vision for the Geauga Theater.

Mr. Blackley inquired about the time to be used for productions and movie theater.

Jim Boardwine stated that Thrive's idea is to offer 5-6 main stage productions, having multiple live music events, and movies during the year.

Mr. Blackley inquired about the education they wish to offer.

Mr. Boardwine stated that they envision using 106 Water Street for workshops and classes and a space for community learning.

Mr. Blackley asked what Thrive's vision is for the City's financial commitment.

Brett Boardwine stated that they envision very little commitment by the City. Thrive anticipates doing fundraising and improving the space and re-investing in it.

Jim Boardwine stated that the theater is not ready for a show today but they are ready to outfit the building with sound and lights and technology.

Ms. Means asked if set building in Streetsboro is realistic long-term.

Jim Boardwine stated that they do envision it as a long-term solution.

Ms. Means asked how Thrive would welcome local interest in the theater.

Ms. Liebler stated that their style of production is infectious. They would have an open forum and open casting.

Mr. Sharpe asked how the City would be incorporated into Thrive's board.

Ms. Liebler stated that they have a board of voting members that are officers and also have established business partners that are trustees that provide critical counsel and insight. Their goal is to invite a Chardon representative to their board. They were looking to expand and are looking to continue to add members to their board.

### **Selection Team Feedback**

Park and Recreation Director Adam Rogers spoke to say that both organizations can offer benefits to the City. He stated that either would be a good collaboration. He added that he likes the ability for the City to utilize space at 106 Water Street.

Ms. Means asked Mr. Rogers what type of programming he would like to see at 106 Water Street and the frequency he would like to use it.

Mr. Rogers stated that he has instructors for various programs such as yoga, dance and woodworking, yet he lacks the space to

provide the classes.

Fred Sternfeld asked the organizations if they would be looking to duplicate programs and how this would be done with the limited space Chardon has. Also, if the groups are looking to expand, what community partnerships would they try to create if they are looking to expand.

Michael Lund Ziegler, Director of Education for Willoughby Fine Arts, stated that it is driven by community conversations and partnerships and to match what they can provide with the needs of the community.

Jim Boardwine stated that they believe that they can leverage their partnerships in Streetsboro and bring that instruction to Chardon through learning by doing and through guest instructors and workshops and the make-your-space concepts which create partnerships.

Brett Boardwine stated that the collaboration space addresses the lack of space issues. As a young organization they are experienced in working in less than perfect spaces, but feel they can maximize the space that is there.

Ms. Lieber explained how the programs mentioned by the Park and Recreation Director are all potential partners that they are excited about.

Mrs. Chuha thanked both groups and stated that either group will be well received.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - none.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting was set for October 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Blackley moved and Mrs. Chuha seconded to adjourn. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Attest:

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AMY DAY  
Clerk of Council