

Murray Arts Advisory Board  
Minutes for July 17, 2012

Attendance: David Christensen, Jenny Simmons, Elaine Judd, Mildred Horton, Brandon Beckstead, Sharon Whitney, Shauna Hart, Mary Ann Kirk (staff)

Excused: Stephanie Pollei

1. Minutes for May 22, 2012 were approved as written.
2. Sharon explained the International Art Competition in the LDS Church Museum. There were about 2000 entries and her husband was selected to display a banjo he had carved by hand. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time he has been asked to participate and it goes until October 14. Board members agreed this was a great honor. Mary Ann suggested we submit an article to the Murray Journal highlighting his woodworking skill since he lives in Murray. It would make a good special feature article.
3. June and July events:  
Mountain Jubilee had 241 attendance and \$840 revenue which was good for this show.

Joseph had 4704 attendance with \$27,908 after taxes. This was amazing. Mary Ann noted that Joseph overwhelmed the front office for advance phone calls and ticket sales. In the future we need to provide some volunteers in the office if we anticipate that kind of advanced sales. Board members said that was doable.

We had several problems with Joseph. Mary Ann asked what is reasonable to ask the cast to provide for costumes. Some people paid up to \$200. Should we set a policy about how much cast members should spend? Board members said it should be explained in the audition information about what they will be expected to provide and should not be extensive. Mildred suggested it can't go over a certain amount. Scott was worried about what type of character they play. Mary Ann said that usually the budget can pay for "rentals" or costumes that are unusual. One of the problems with this show was the amount of cast members which added to the budget issues for costumes. Mildred loved the number of those involved. Some board members wondered why they did the mega mix which cost more money for licensing and required additional costumes. This should have been taken into consideration.

Other problems included not getting permission for the camel which was a liability and a confrontation with a group who had rented the stage the night before the Joseph cast was suppose to move in. Mary Ann suggested that next year we use a lower keyed show. She was considering DooWop Red Riding Hood and hiring a director that did it for after-school musicals. It will have significantly lower name recognition but is a cute script. Elaine thought the name could still be a draw. Jenny wanted to have a good size cast that involved children. We could add an oldies "olio". We also just heard that Les Mis will be offered for community theaters and we will apply for that in September. We have tried to get this for many years.

The board also discussed the complaint about the scene with Potiphar's wife and Joseph. The person complaining said it was the most exposure to inappropriate touching her children had ever had. Mary Ann felt this was over the top but gave her a refund. She asked how to handle this in the future. She doesn't want to micro manage the director. Board members described various versions of this show and how they handled this scene differently. Scott said the choreographer was trying to make it light and funny but it didn't come off that way. He also did not think all of the shows are family oriented. Brandon suggested that people should know what potential types of scenes are in the plays before bringing their children to the performance. Scott cautioned the board that people will find offense at many different things and we can't please everyone. People even complain about the nuns or the nazis in The Sound of Music. Board members suggested we encourage the director to air on the safe side where possible especially when it is a particular show that is oriented toward the family.

Murray Symphony had approximately 400 in attendance. Their attendance has substantially increased and they have had trouble getting good volunteers to help with tickets. Mary Ann didn't want to provide the ticket sales for them. Board members liked the idea of giving them our volunteer list and letting them call them.

The lunch, children matinee, and family night averages around 150 people.

Band camp had 41 students which is higher than normal. They marched in Taylorsville and Murray Parades. We had some trouble with getting the students to fill out a registration form and pay in advance. One person paid after it was over. Mary Ann suggested we charge a late fee after one week and then have a breakoff date that they can't participate if they have not paid unless there has been some arrangement made with the office. Scholarships are available. Board members thought that was appropriate.

The evening series continues to drop (67 this year) however the overall attendance has been maintained so Mary Ann is not worried with the lower season sales. It was originally designed to help provide a larger audience base for single night shows, but they seem to be doing fine. Elaine suggested we advertise season tickets longer. Mary Ann noted that season ticket sales have significantly dropped nation wide but she will try to promote season ticket sales more next year. Shauna wondered if we could offer a mini series. Mary Ann said we did that for a few years, but the numbers were few and it wasn't worth it. Jenny asked if we could provide an annual pass. Mary Ann said it would be difficult to get a good count and the winter is a lower keyed season. Mary Ann said the season ticket holders are similar now between winter and summer. However, Scott pointed out that the difficulty comes from organizing and announcing a whole year in advance. Mary Ann agreed this would be almost impossible.

4. We have had approximately \$2000 in donations which is similar to past years. Mary Ann noted that more people are giving \$100. She encouraged board members to donate so the public sees that the board is also supporting the programs. This goes into the general fund but helps demonstrate to city leaders and granting organizations that we have public

support.

5. Our facebook page is slowly growing. Jennifer Broschinsky is managing this site for a small fee. The page had 47 likes from patrons who have 16,612 friends. We have 10 followers on twitter. Jenny suggested maybe we have a drawing for those who “like” the page. Mary Ann will talk to Jennifer about this.
6. The float presented a problem when they delivered the first design rather than the final design approved. To address this issue, the contractor added two little pigs up front working together so it substantially met our intent. The float has won only one parade so far this year. We will be taking grant proposals next year again with the option to extend the contract for five years. The group who has designed our float has typically done a remarkable job.
7. We are recruiting people to sing the National Anthem for the Babe Ruth National Tournament. It is almost done.
8. Mary Ann completed grants for Westaf, OnStageUtah, Hillcrest Jr High, Utah Arts Council and ZAP. We received the grant for WESTAF and are waiting to hear about the others. The city has committed \$200,000 to additional arts space at Hillcrest. We applied for \$300,000 from the Sorenson Foundation. The additional space will include a large stage, dressing rooms, storage space, and a little theater. The district committed \$100,000 along with a dance room. She will be pushing the district to make sure they take care of the community ed dance program which involves 500 students.
9. Mary Ann noted that the discussion about succession planning in May turned out to be timely since she had some heart problems. She will be making a procedure book and has suggested that they need a part time person to help her so if something happened, the programs could continue with the help of the board. She thought it would be difficult to cross train someone in the parks office.
10. Mary Ann explained some of the controversy related to Fun Days. Someone complained about the name of Murray Fun Days and felt it should be something related to Independence Day. We had multiple complaints about the Fear Factory entry in the parade and a few complaints related to the evening firework music which some felt needed to be more patriotic. Some board members said their kids loved the Fear Factory and it won first place in the commercial category. There were several letters to the editor opposing and supporting the entry. Those supporting the entry said that is what independence and freedom represents. Board members agreed that entries should not approach the public with something that feels threatening. They suggested that the entries need to stay together. However Jenny suggested that they were spread out because people wanted to take pictures with the scary characters. The evening show music had a broad range of music from country, patriotic, to rock. Mary Ann said it was a year of negative feedback. Shauna said it was a reflection of a nation who is in conflict. This is also another good example of differences in taste and it is difficult to please everyone.

11. Mary Ann shared a proposed schedule for the winter series. Joan Brinton, the director of the Young Choral Artists, has asked to include both of her concerts in the series. Mary Ann said they haven't been technically recognized as a Murray group who we typically pay for the facility. Scott asked if they pay a fee to be in the group. Mary Ann said yes. He suggested that since they pay to participate and charge tickets to attend, that we include both concerts in the season but pay for the facility for the spring show and ask them to pay for the winter show. Board members felt that was appropriate. Mary Ann said this choir included elementary school choirs in the program last year. Some of the schools complained about having to pay for tickets. Board members didn't feel this was bad. Schools charge for tickets all the time for things like musicals. Mildred felt that this should be the decision of the director. Mary Ann suggested that the director talk to the principals beforehand so they understand what the ticket situation will be. They typically give out a few comps but beyond that, the principals and students who participate should know what expenses to expect.

Mary Ann asked if we should continue to include the high school choral festival in the season. Board members felt that it is still good to include in the season.

Jenny asked why we don't include the junior high shows. Mary Ann felt that the season was already so full. Jenny felt it would help promote the shows. Some board members didn't feel it really needed additional promotion and we have other ways to promote it like our facebook pages.

She didn't include Arts Power production of The Little Engine that Could since it was during the day.

12. Share Tix is an agency that shares tickets with agencies that serve a variety of under-served organizations. Some are low income families but others are agencies that serve families that could afford tickets. Mary Ann asked if we should specify which organizations we are willing to share free tickets with. Mildred said she has handicapped grandchildren and knows the stress the families experience and feels this is a nice gesture. She also felt this was something that can be included in grants. The board felt that ShareTix has taken the time to create criteria they felt could benefit from free tickets and we should respect that. They felt this was a positive contribution.
13. Mary Ann will solicit ticket booth help for Little Women in the early part of August.
14. There was one entry to our music competition. The judge felt it was strong enough to recognize as the winner. We will need to decide where this winner should be showcased. We discussed how to encourage more to participate. Elaine acknowledged how much time it takes to write music. A suggestion was made to discuss this with surrounding arts councils and see if they wanted to do a combined competition.