

Murray Arts Advisory Board
Minutes for August 20, 2013

Attendance: Scott Mooy, Shauna Hart, David Christensen, Brandon Beckstead, Alisa Brousseau, Sharon Whitney, Mary Ann Kirk (staff)

Excused: Jenny Simmons

1. Minutes for June 18, 2013 were approved as written. Mary Ann thanked those who have been helping at the amphitheater for ticket sales.
2. Mary Ann gave some preliminary attendance figures for summer productions. She will have a financial and attendance summary for Murray Arts in the Park in September. The amphitheater events have averaged around 300 a night. The daytime concerts have averaged around 75-150 which is about the same as last year.

We did have an accident in the amphitheater with a set piece that was not properly secured. During a strong wind gust, it hit a few orchestra members in the head and damaged a bass in the pit orchestra. The set piece was fairly light. We are reviewing our procedures to double check safety issues in the future. We are processing the instrument repair fees.

We used Home Town Values, KSL Deals, and Pass of All Passes as advertising tools for Oklahoma. We will evaluate the total # who used these offers next month to determine if they were worth the costs of revenue losses for discounts. Pass of All Passes was somewhat disorganized. KSL Deals also had problems and listed the wrong price. They were recalculating what they owe us. We need to evaluate if the social media is effective. Some studies are showing that email is more effective.

3. The storytelling festival is moving forward with a new coordinator since Holly moved. We are making contact with the various principals and are trying to get all the secondary schools involved this year. We are also trying to smooth over a problem we had at Woodstock. We will be doing it at the library and include puppet shows to draw more people.
4. We have had more problems than usual related to school facilities this year. School facility staff has changed and they are learning the ropes of how to give us priority. We followed the process we have been asked to do, but some facilities were reserved before our dates were put into the computer. Hopefully those problems will be resolved over time. Rehearsals for the pit orchestra were moved to the library because the rooms were so hot.

Amphitheater repairs will be made with a new roof and possibly new ticket booths.

The county has asked for clarification about our application for the performing arts center. They have asked about parking, matching funds, and commitments from local groups to use the facility considering the agreement at Hillcrest Jr High. Mary Ann has written a response that Hillcrest won't meet all of our needs and this is a regional facility and should not be solely reliant on Murray groups. We provided surveys from other groups who were interested in using the facility. When we made the presentation to the county, some committee members asked if this could alleviate crowding at Rose Wagner which it certainly could do. The city wants to phase in the parking structure but the county is concerned it does not provide enough parking for the arts center. Board members agreed we should stress this is a transit oriented area with other transportation options which reduces parking needs.

5. A young woman who has been involved in the Miss Murray Pageant wants to create a Miss Murray Teen. She tried to get a reduced fee for school facility use as a city sponsored organization. Mary Ann, Doug, and the Mayor's office have told her the city doesn't want to expand the Miss Murray Pageant to create a teen program. Board members agreed with this decision. They didn't feel it was appropriate to encourage

pageants at this age level.

6. Mary Ann passed out a tentative schedule for this winter season and next year's summer season. She asked if we should raise ticket prices for our summer musicals since we are now offering various discounts as advertising strategies. She suggested we go with \$10 adults and \$7 children/seniors to match what the Murray Arts Council has been charging for theirs. We could possibly consider adding a family night price if we felt that was helpful. If we raise the individual prices, we could also raise the season prices. She would like to have the summer and winter season prices the same. The winter season has about 20 events but some of them are free. Brandon said that people who are coming to the play are typically supporting cast members and will pay no matter the cost. They will also communicate to each other about the discounts. Sharon wondered if the deals brought in enough money to account for the discounts or if our attendance would increase if the price was lower. Mary Ann thought the deals increased attendance. Board members thought \$10 was still reasonable and agreed to raise the musical prices to \$10 adults and \$7 children and seniors. There was a discussion if seniors would notice a raise in the season price. It is still very inexpensive at \$40. It has been raised twice over 20 years. We haven't raised it for five years. Brandon said this didn't even cover inflation. Board members agreed to raise season adult and senior prices to \$45 and \$40 but leave the student/child and family rates the same where applicable. We do not offer student or family rates in the summer. We could see if it affects sales but Mary Ann said sales have been going down even when the price did not change.

Suggested musicals for next summer included Oliver and West Side Story. Mary Ann has not been able to find a director yet for Oliver. Brandon suggested the name of Tucker Dansie. Scott thought these were both dark shows. The Arts Council is thinking of Shrek but two other community are also producing it next summer. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is another idea. Newsies suggested but it is not available yet. Brandon suggested doing a ukelele festival during the day followed by a concert at night.

Mary Ann said we will be hosting a showcase of summer musicals from the various arts councils in the valley. She is trying to secure a date in September. Mary Ann wants to host this without charging patrons a fee because they are largely cast and family members who attend. This gives the various art groups an opportunity to see what other groups are doing.

7. Mary Ann passed out a summary of Arts in Education activities. It is impressive to see how much support Murray City provides to the schools. She offered to pay for Steve James Assemblies this year if the school hosted both a student assembly and the parent night. She will get dates to board members as they are scheduled. Horizon and Liberty have scheduled programs so far.

She also distributed the non-performance activities for the school year. David will talk to his group if they are interested in a Literary Workshop. David noted we had the workshop after the competition so we could recognize the winners. We won't charge per library policies. Mary Ann doesn't want it focused on school age youth. It should be focused on adults. We won't be doing music since we are alternating years for music and literary competitions. We are doing a unique Halloween activity called Murder Mayhem in Murray which will feature ghost and murder storytelling in historic downtown Murray geared to adults. This will be followed by Haunted Tales for the school children.

8. Board members explored ideas for National Art Awards. We have recognized local artists, local art organizations, and teachers. We could ask the public if they have nominations. Shauna suggested we recognize financial contributors. Mary Ann said we had done that once a number of years ago. Board members liked this idea. Mary Ann will look at her donor list to see if there are a few who have donated consistently. A city council meeting would be a good setting for this type of award.
9. Scott asked about the lights in the main amphitheater parking lot. He counted 8 lights out on the north bank. Alisa heard someone asking if it was out on purpose. Patrons were complaining about how dark it was. He was concerned about safety. Mary Ann will talk to Kim about this.