

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 5, 2013**

Present

Councilor Bruce Sorte, Chair
Councilor Penny York
Councilor Mike Beilstein

Staff

Jim Patterson, City Manager
Carolyn Rawles-Heiser, Library Director
Steve DeGhetto, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director
Carrie Mullens, City Manager's Office

Visitors

Tinamarie Ivey, Majestic Theatre Management Company Executive Director
Kyle DeVaul, The Arts Center Executive Director
Jeri Hauth, The Arts Center Board Chair
Christine Hackenbruck, Fall Festival Executive Director
Louise-Annette Burgess, Whiteside Theatre Foundation Vice-Chair

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Information Only</u>	<u>Held for Further Review</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
I.	Arts and Culture Organizations Introduction	Yes		
II.	Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 92-4.05, "Library Meeting Rooms Policy"			Amend Council Policy 92-4.05, "Library Meeting Rooms Policy" as recommended
III.	Other Business	Yes		

Chair Sorte called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. Arts and Culture Organizations Introduction

Chair Sorte requested each organization identify their top three challenges.

Majestic Theatre

Ms. Ivey said the biggest challenge for the Majestic Theatre is remaining relevant to the community and providing an all-inclusive venue. The theater faces financial challenges that can be addressed through community support and diverse offerings. The theater is working with local artists to reinstitute a robust youth arts program, similar to programming offered prior to 2008. The theater is exploring opportunities to be a fiscal receiver for local artists and coordinating with organizations (including non-profits) who have no capacity or experience to build separate boards.

Councilor York said many arts and culture non-profits struggle with hiring and paying staff, and organizing boards. She encouraged Ms. Ivey to continue exploring collaborations with other organizations.

In response to Councilor Beilstein's inquiry, Ms. Ivey confirmed that if Corvallis Community Theater desired an independent existence, Majestic Theatre would assist them. She added that as a fiscal receiver, the theater would work with any organization who fits with their mission statement and needs assistance with a current function, special project, or operating without a board or bylaws. Local arts organizations can obtain the ability to write grants and solicit tax deductible donations. All of these opportunities could be offered under the umbrella of the Majestic Theatre for a fee.

Chair Sorte noted that a few months ago there were at least three vacancies for executive directors in the local arts and culture organizations. Non-profits have a perception that they are not a valid organization without a director; however, there are many current models of non-profits sharing director resources. He encouraged local organizations to consider this idea.

In response to Chair Sorte's inquiry about Majestic Theatre's decreasing endowment, Ms. Ivey said she is working with the Board on this issue.

The Arts Center

Ms. DeVaul said the biggest challenge for The Arts Center is visibility and engagement. The Center is lucky to have a small group of loyal members, but would like to be a hub for arts and serve more people in the community. The Center seeks opportunities to be open more hours, engage more citizens, create new events, and sponsor a community art event. One idea is to host open house workshops and demonstrations. The Center previously focused on gathering donations with little effort spent on earned income. Ms. DeVaul plans to institute an earned income business model over the next three to five years. Currently, most income is earned through rental space. The Center can acquire additional revenue through classes, but will need to find a way to grow the programs in another facility due to the small classroom sizes. This may involve partnerships with other organizations. Ms. DeVaul noted that the summer programs are at capacity.

Ms. Hauth added that Ms. DeVaul has been the Center's Executive Director for three months. She quickly identified challenges and began working with the Board to alleviate issues.

In response to Councilor York's inquiry, Ms. DeVaul confirmed that she toured the art facilities at The Benton Center and has scheduled a tour of the OSU Craft Center. Councilor York encouraged Ms. DeVaul to utilize community facilities versus creating new venues.

At Ms. Hauth's request, the Committee explained why they invited the arts and culture organizations to the meeting:

- The City provides space and resources to many of the organizations and it is important for the Committee to be supportive and informed.
- Council has recently discussed the arts and culture role in economic development. Organizational information can improve the Committee's ability to advocate.
- There is a perception that the arts and culture community is in crisis, especially the Majestic and Whiteside Theatres.
- City funding for arts was reduced in the midst of establishing an Arts and Culture Commission.
- To gain an understanding of the current state of arts and arts-related organizations, to learn about how organizations are functioning, and to consider what role the Committee might have in promoting and developing arts and culture.
- To provide an opportunity for arts and culture organizations to meet one another, especially due to the numerous new directors, boards, and volunteers.

Councilor Beislstein said The Arts Center has an opportunity to collaborate with OSU. He noted that last spring, the Center offered an academic arts program, but attendance was low.

Ms. DeVaul agreed that the engagement piece is missing. Her focus is to review offered programs, identify gaps, form partnerships, and create opportunities for artists and the community. She said her job is to promote arts and culture in the community.

In response to Councilor Beilstein's inquiry, Ms. DeVaul said the Center has 500 loyal members. She confirmed that the Center will explore ideas to inspire the community to become members.

Chair Sorte made the following observations:

- If OSU's arts center is located west of the stadiums, it will impact downtown Corvallis.
- The Arts Center could work with businesses to offer classes and demonstrations at their locations. This would be helpful for economic development, encourage start-up businesses, and help retain businesses.
- Mailing lists are a great tool for constant engagement.
- Due to low interest rates, people are looking for alternative investments. Offering a class on investing in art could be beneficial.

Fall Festival

Ms. Hackenbruck said her biggest challenge is recruiting enough volunteers. She is focusing on outreach and researching an easier recruiting method and ability to coordinate volunteer time. Artist applications were lower than usual this year so she will explore opportunities to entice more artists. All local art guilds are represented at Fall Festival, but she would prefer a greater focus on local artists.

Ms. Hackenbruck noted that the Board is frugal and those savings helped cushion the loss of cancelling one day during the 2013 festival due to inclement weather. She added that even though many artists canceled early due to the weather reports, 120 vendors participated.

In response to Councilor Beilstein's comments, Ms. Hackenbruck said the festival is commission based, not fee based. Vendors pay a \$100 application fee and give the festival 15 percent commission. The festival and vendors, especially food vendors experienced large losses due to weather conditions and the one-day closure. Ms. Hackenbruck said the festival may consider changing to fee-based; however, it is currently affordable and she prefers a commission-based festival.

Ms. Hackenbruck noted that the festival previously purchased rain insurance. When the premiums became too expensive the Board canceled the insurance and saved the premium dollars in a separate fund. She added that Fall Festival is a 501c4 non-profit and does not collect donations.

Councilor Beilstein encouraged Ms. Hackenbruck to consider a reserve system and/or specific number of spots for local artists.

Councilor Beilstein noted that City financial support for the Fall Festival ended in 2008 when economic development funds were reorganized. The portion of the transient occupancy tax (TOT) used to support festivals was reallocated for in-house economic development. Festivals bring people into the community, but only support low-wage jobs, such as hotel and restaurant employees, which is not considered economic development.

Councilor York said many people travel to Corvallis for arts and culture events which increases revenue in the community and provides jobs at local restaurants and hotels. She added that many local artists are also part-time faculty members at OSU.

In response to Councilor York's inquiry, Ms. Hackenbruck said some of the festivals and organizations met a few times to discuss the Year of Culture events. Many of the directors are new. She agreed that it would be beneficial for all of the organizations to work toward the same mission.

Councilor Sorte said he has respect for every job and the diversity gained from all levels of the work force. He noted that tourism overlaps arts and culture, but is not the same. Tourism also contributes to the community. He challenged the organizations to explore how to extend their relationship with the community for the long-term, how to provide good experiences, and how to engage. Recent research identified that one-third of festival participants return year-after-year, one-third attend once and never return, and one-third attend infrequently.

In response to Chair Sorte's inquiry, Ms. Hackenbruck said 2013 was the first time in 41 years that the festival had to cancel due to weather. The Board is considering whether to develop a contingency plan.

Whiteside Theatre

Ms. Burgess reported that the 800-seat Whiteside Theatre is in a soft-open state during rehabilitation. She encouraged Council to reconsider the use of TOT, especially for festivals, theaters, and Corvallis arts and culture. One event at the Whiteside will result in 800 people shopping at local retailers and eating in local restaurants.

Ms. Burgess said many of the local arts and culture organizations were a part of the Year of Culture Committee. She looks forward to working with the organizations again in the future. The Whiteside is interested in bringing conferences and conventions to Corvallis in partnership with the Majestic Theatre and other facilities.

Ms. Burgess clarified for Councilor Beilstein that the Whiteside Board has discussed hiring one company to book events for both theaters. She said the facilities are completely different and would offer different events.

Chair Sorte encouraged both organizations to consider working together. He opined that because the Whiteside removed economic development from the community it has a responsibility to significantly contribute to the community. He added that more than half of the people visiting a community are there to visit friends, not due to any specific attraction. It is important to understand that when making an argument for acquiring hotel/motel taxes.

II. Council Policy Review and Recommendation: 92-4.05, "Library Meeting Rooms Policy"

Ms. Rawles-Heiser reported that only minor housekeeping changes are recommended in the policy. She explained that the meeting rooms are largely used for public meetings and generate little rental income. Clarifying the use of the meeting rooms for "official" City and County "events and meetings" provides a better description and understanding about fee exemptions. Any meeting the

Library co-sponsors is considered an official City/County meeting and would not incur a room rental fee.

Councilor Beilstein noted that the room rental fee is less than what is needed to cover costs; however, some organizations would find it difficult to pay the fee.

Ms. Rawles-Heiser said the Library does not have many opportunities to recover any costs. The Library rental fees are lower than most of the facilities offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. She noted that a small meeting room on the second floor is available for free on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Councilor York stated support for the fee increase and said if fees are not modestly increased on a regular basis, customers feel entitled to the space, time, and expense.

Ms. Rawles-Heiser noted that groups can only rent the Library rooms four times every six months. She announced that the Library recently installed a hearing loop system in the main meeting room. Most hearing aids have a chip included that can be activated for better hearing when the sound system is used.

The Committee unanimously recommends Council amend Council Policy 92-4.05, "Library Meeting Rooms Policy" as recommended.

III. Other Business

Chair Sorte briefed the Committee on the development history of the Whiteside Theatre.

The next Human Services Committee meeting is scheduled for 2:00 pm on Tuesday, November 19 in the Madison Avenue Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Sorte, Chair