

**Camden Opera House Committee
Minutes of Meeting, April 27, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chairman Hal Owen. In attendance; Stephanie Woodman, Jean Belair, Raymond Brunyanski, Select Board Liaison Karen Grove, Hal Owen, Facilities Manager Dave Morrison and Opera House Manager Kerry Hadley.

The minutes of the January 12, 2009 meeting were approved.

Karen Grove talked about plans for the Maine Windjammer Festival; it will not be a Chamber of Commerce event, but the Chamber will act as 'fiscal agent', and help in the process of assembling committees of volunteers to organize the various aspects of the event. Raymond B. mentioned that Dan Bookham of the Chamber had approached him about producing a concert event at the waterfront where the musicians would be on a barge. An example of the kind of entertainment was a symphony orchestra plus Donna Summer. There are logistical questions about how sound and staging would work, and where the barge would be located. Kerry H. voiced her concerns that four months was not enough time to pull together an event of this complexity, and suggested planning begin now for 2010, and a smaller event be planned for this year.

In the Facilities report, Dave M. stated that improvements made to the building over the last year (such as lighting ports, additional sealing and insulating, etc.) had contributed to an easier heating season. The installation of flooring in the attic was recently completed, adding a great deal of storage space and improving insulation and safety. Dave also demonstrated the panorama photo effect that is being added to the Opera House website.

Kerry H. reported that Opera House bookings in the current period are up. There have been two cancellations (Jin Shin Jyutsu due to low registration and CCT's King Lear due to cast difficulties). A note of interest, Kerry mentioned that Mary Alexander, a professional conference manager (PopTech) said that conference attendance nation-wide is down an average of 35%. Attendance at events is down approximately the same percentage.

Kerry went over the proposed Opera House budget as it stands. The purchase of a defibrillator has been approved, but additional hours for the OH Manager were not. This is a source of frustration for Kerry, as she stated that she has worked 30 + hours (compared to the budgeted amount of 25) for years, and she feels that the increase in bookings and OH produced events would not have been possible if she were only working 25 hours. She also noted that the lack of benefits she receives seems unfair, and is difficult for her personally. The board expressed support for Kerry, and Hal O. asked if some kind of official show of support would be helpful. The general consensus was that a non-confrontational approach would be best. Karen G. suggested that the Library was a good example of how a well-orchestrated budget presentation, backed up by a solid show of board support can be very effective.

Next Kerry discussed PopTech; that they had accepted a rental increase for the coming conference, that they were looking for public spaces to hang the art work created last year, and that they were exploring additional spaces to use for the conference, including a tent on the Village Green.

Kerry described the Maine Arts Commission event Poetry Out Loud, and said that the MAC was interested in returning. Kerry then addressed the issue of over-lap between town meetings and OH events. It turns out that the only event that overlapped in the past season was the US Army Band, a concert produced by the OH and Bay Chamber Concerts. Recently rehearsals by Atlantic Ballet Company had been the source of distraction for people attending town meetings. Kerry is going to let ABC know that if their adult volunteers cannot control the kids, then the OH will assign Event Managers and charge it to ABC.

Finally, the Toboggan Weekend was discussed, regarding the idea of an Opera House-produced event, such as a performance by comedian Bob Marley.

Next Opera House Committee Meeting will be Monday, June 15, 2009 at 10 AM in the Tucker Room.

Woodman moved, seconded by Belair to adjourn at 11:25 am

Respectfully submitted
Dave Morrison, Acting Secretary