



**VANCOUVER CIVIC THEATRES BOARD**

**MINUTES**

**DECEMBER 12, 2013**

A meeting of the Vancouver Civic Theatres Board was held on Thursday, December 12, 2013, at 12:00 noon, in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Salon.

**PRESENT:** Rob Haynes, Chair  
Susan Adams  
Michael Noon  
Wendy Soobis\*  
Karole Sutherland, Vice-Chair  
Karen Wilson  
Iris Woo

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Elizabeth Ball  
Todd Ayotte, Interim Director, Vancouver Civic Theatres  
Richard Newirth, Managing Director, Cultural Services

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:** Charlene Imai, Meeting Coordinator

\*Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

**Leave of Absence Requests**

MOVED by Karole Sutherland  
SECONDED by Susan Adams

THAT Iris Woo be granted leave of absence for the Vancouver Civic Theatres Board meeting on January 16, 2014.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Approval of Minutes**

MOVED by Wendy Soobis  
SECONDED by Karen Wilson

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on November 14, 2013, be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## 1. Chair's Comments

Rob Haynes, Chair, reported on the following:

- Meeting organized by Howard Jang and the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance. Highlights of the meeting included: where theatres in the city are going, infrastructure, marketing, visitor experience. In general, Mr. Haynes advised it was a good meeting and he will be attending future meetings.
- Vancouver Civic Theatres staff party in January - has met with Diane MacDonald, Audience Services Manager, to discuss.
- At their quarterly meeting, Brenda Prosken, Richard Newirth and Mr. Haynes discussed the Business Review.
- Status of executive search for the Director of Civic Theatres position, and Richard Newirth advised he will get an update from the search consultant.
- Opening of the York Theatre which Mr. Haynes did not attend but heard mixed reviews from a number in the art and culture community.

## 2. Business Review Discussion - Guest: Dr. Penny Ballem, City Manager

Rob Haynes, Chair, introduced and welcomed Dr. Penny Ballem, City Manager, who provided the Board with her background. Board members reciprocated and introduced themselves to Dr. Ballem.

Dr. Ballem then spoke to the Vancouver Civic Theatres Business Review, noting that across the country, civic theatres are an asset to a city and that culture is important to the health of a city. Dr. Ballem also referred to the City's Cultural Plan which has been endorsed by Council and posted on the City's website, and the Council-appointed Arts and Culture Policy Council.

Following Dr. Ballem's presentation, she spoke to the important role of the Board in supporting Civic Theatres, and outlined specific ways the Board can ensure Civic Theatres continues to be a vibrant part of the cultural sector. Dr. Ballem requested the Board's input on such issues as:

- Understanding national comparators in order to develop benchmarks and statistics;
- Aligning Civic Theatres operations with the overall Cultural Plan;
- Creating a mechanism to check in with the community;
- Exploring options for rental subsidies;
- Ideas for increasing utilization, specifically at the Playhouse;

- Strategies for managing operating deficits;
- Understanding the community's support and being able to articulate it.

A roundtable discussion ensued, following which the City Manager requested the Board to submit its ideas regarding the cultural ecology and vision of the City's Civic Theatres.

### 3. Financial follow-up questions re Board Report - Year-end Projection 2013 Q3

Todd Ayotte, Interim Director, Vancouver Civic Theatres, responded to questions regarding the year-end projection for 2013 Q3, which had been emailed to Board members.

In response to questions regarding the budget, Councillor Ball provided clarification on the overall budget process, including departmental submissions.

### 4. 2014 Vancouver Civic Theatres Board Meetings Schedule

*Wendy Soobis left the meeting at the beginning of Item 4, at 1:38 pm, and did not return.*

MOVED by Susan Adams

SECONDED by Michael Noon

THAT the 2014 Vancouver Civic Theatres Board Meetings Schedule be approved as follows:

January 16  
February 13  
March 20  
April 24  
May 22  
June 19  
July 17  
August - NO MEETING  
September 25  
October 23  
November 20  
December 11.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

(Wendy Soobis absent for the vote)

## 5. Resident Companies Report

Karen Wilson provided the following comments:

- Bramwell Tovey, Conductor of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, has had his contract extended to 2018.
- Vancouver Opera's 2014 season has been released.
- Canada Post's service cuts will have a huge impact on arts organizations.

## 6. Orpheum Annex Discussion

Due to time constraints, the Chair advised this item will be postponed to the next Board meeting.

## 7. Director's Report

Todd Ayotte, Interim Director, Vancouver Civic Theatres, provided an update on 2013 theatre utilization, noting a significant increase in utilization of the Annex and Playhouse. Mr. Ayotte provided statistics and comparisons (projections versus actuals) for the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Orpheum, Playhouse and Orpheum Annex.

Mr. Ayotte then responded to questions.

## 8. New Business

Rob Haynes briefly discussed the January Civic Theatres staff event, including gifts.

Iris Woo advised she attended a gala concert for the Vancouver Women's Music Society, and learned they would be interested in using the Playhouse. Ms. Woo enquired as to how organizations obtain information on the use of the Civic Theatres, and Mr. Ayotte responded they should contact the Booking Coordinator.

Karen Wilson advised the elevator from the parking garage to the Plaza level was not functioning, and Mr. Ayotte advised he would follow up with staff.

## 9. Adjournment

MOVED by Karole Sutherland  
SECONDED by Karen Wilson

THAT the Vancouver Civic Theatres Board meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY  
(Wendy Soobis absent for the vote)

**Next Meeting**

DATE: Thursday, January 16, 2014  
TIME: 12:00 noon  
PLACE: Queen Elizabeth Theatre Salon

The Board adjourned at 1:50 pm.

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