Children’s Ballet Theatre

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2021 7:00 PM via Zoom

| **Attendees: Quorum:** Yes |
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| Hillary Henderson (HH) | **Community Members:**  |
| Kelly Joldersma (KJ) | Lisa Whiting Dobson (LWD) |
| Casie Medina (CM)  | Kate Powers (KP) |
| Mindy Morgan (MM) | Cecilia Stajos (CS) |
| Sue Powers (SP) |  |
| Matt Rosendale (MR) | **Artistic Staff:** |
| David Weissling (DW) | Jesse Powers (JP) |
| Amy Zaagman (AZ) |  |
|  | **Absent:** |
|  | Rich Patterson (RP) |

AZ call meeting to order at 7:02

MM motions, SP seconds to approve September minutes, none opposed.

Treasurer’s report:

We are in a real financial crisis. Need to make sure everyone works to increase requests for sponsorships, ads, etc. We do not have enough to cover our bills. At minimum $5500 professional services, rent and insurance per month are basic operating costs. We will have to use some of the EIDL loan (Loan is $45,000, $30,000 is in mercantile bank account) to finish the season. Shows are revenue neutral so don’t help pay these expenses. Need to increase dancers.

21-22 proposed budget. Roughly $96,000 to run CBT for the year. Right now our income is $52,000/year. So a deficit of $44,000.

Made around $1700 for coupon books, $100 less than expected.

Need real aggressive reaches to fundraise both by board and company families.

CM feels the entire company doesn’t fully understand the need. Others agree.

Nutcracker update:

MR-finalized contact with Grand Ledge (GL); load-in Tuesday before show. Definitely enough space. Talked with Tim at GL about them doing tickets. He is checking on pricing (likely .50/ticket and 2-3% for credit card fee). Drops are ordered. Need curtain speech updates. Need to discuss lighting. Could use GL. Would need to get lighting plot from Michael. GL does have the ability to light upstage better. GL charges $26/hour for lighting. Need to determine if it would be a savings to use them. Discussion around Michael vs using GL for lighting. LWD says using GL to do lighting was a disaster before. She says it depends on what kind of lighting we want, simple lighting could be done by GL. Any previous design, including cues belongs to the designer. MM wonders if there would be some willingness on the part of contractors to help bring the costs down. Last spring we paid a good deal of money for lighting and there was a large failure. SP-we need to have a conversation with Michael to see what he is willing to do. HH-need to also talk with GL and determine how much lighting would cost from them, CM agrees. MR-Michael’s cost has not changed since he started doing lighting. Using GL would be students supervised by Tim. Not sure he could give a good answer on how long it would take. LWD-need to lay out all costs for shows and make choices on what matters. CS we need to think about do we want to survive or pay for lighting? DW feels lighting makes a quality show and thinks people won’t come back/pay if we cut back on lighting. CS-maybe we need to rebuild from the bottom up. CM-everything has to be reassessed at this point. Consensus is we need a current cost comparison. Michael’s fee in the past would buy us 92 hours at $26. Need to set up a convo with Michael and see if he can work with us (DW and AZ, HH or SP will do this). MR will talk with GL.

**Tickets:** No one stepped up to be ticket chair. Would like a platform that we can sell everything (tickets and virtual, etc.) all in one place. MR doubts GL can do both. AZ, KJ and SP will work on tickets for this season. Need to start selling tickets ASAP. MR says most of the services walk you through everything. Will send electronic copy of seating charts to SP. Will also send previous research. Need to set ticket prices. Fees likely to be .50-$1/ticket. If person uses cc there will be an additional fee. Last year $25 adults/$15 students and seniors. CS suggest $28 for adults. MR asks does $28 include fees? AZ proposes $28 inclusive of the fees and ask people do donate back cc fees. KP thinks we need to make it super clear that we are a non-profit. People will pay more for that. DW also ask for additional donations alongside ticket purchases. AZ proposes $28 adults/$20 seniors/$15 students. Fees rolled into cost if possible depending on what system we use. DW motions to go with AZ proposal, SP asks to amend to add veterans-$28 adults/$20 seniors and veterans/$15 students. CM seconds with amendments. None opposed.

**Show Times:** MR suggest Saturday and Sunday 1PM, 7:00 Friday. None opposed. Cost diff to cut Sunday would be $500.

**Outreach:** CS had an inquiry from one for the homeschool groups regarding school show (board previously decided no school show this year). Wondering if we want to do some sort of outreach to homeschool. Maybe sell virtual to schools or have different pricing for homeschool. CS is appy to coordinate. HH suggests selling virtual as a great way to make money without costing us anything. KP asks if there is something extra that could be offered to schools to go with the streaming/watching of the show? AZ-maybe a lesson plan, outline of the show, etc. Could we have separate link for schools? HH says Randy can for sure do that.

CS will work on marketing virtual access to schools and school shows. CS asks board to think about what to do about homeschool families.

**Little Guest Dancer:** We have a number of requests that fall outside of the 6-7 age range previously agreed to. One request is an 8 year old, several 5 year olds, some are almost 6, some are family members of current company members. Summer Lettau is little guest coordinator. She is indifferent on allowing 5 year olds. JP is planning the following roles for sure: crown bearer, 4 heralds, little mouse/rat instead of motorized rat. Jesse feels we can do up to 10. Board agrees we need to make sure to have clear expectations for parents. HH proposes putting call for little guests out publicly to see how many we get and then make the decision on those outside the age range after we see how many requests we have. AZ will suggest Summer create an application/google form. AZ and HH will have a conversation with SUmmer about how to proceed. JP will want the LGDs in November. MM thinks we need to also make sure not to hurt feelings of current families.

**Other show update items:**

Angela Oliver’s step father is donating his truck/trailer for Tuesday and Sunday. DW will work on finding out if we can load out on Sunday.

JP will work on tech week schedule after he hears if we can load the truck on Sunday.

DW asks about ornaments for the tree-Dancer management will get info to new members.

CS asking props to remember that items from GR still need to be removed.

Artistic director report:

Show going well. Proud of the dancers.Suggests advertising alumni night. HH will advertise Friday night show as such.

JP/HH brought up divertissement names. Was brought up by dancers. They are uncomfortable with names. Maybe change to be more desserts and treats. JP will rename Chinese, Arabian, Russian, Spanish.

Marketing report:

Marketing and community photos were done today.

Marketing events are a struggle. Many libraries still have virtual story times. We do have ballerina brunch scheduled at UClub. AZ-does this really help us? Does it sell tickets? HH says it does give our dancers an opportunity to be in the public. We do not pay anything for it. Should be revisited in future. If anyone has suggestions for other marketing events email HH.

Comcast proposal from DW regarding buying advertising. 640 commercials for month of November was about $1700, plus cost to produce commercial would be a $300-500 fee. Would be on various networks between 6a to 11p. Total cost $2200. SP feels commercials could help get tickets sold. HH not sure it is enough bang for your buck and we don’t have the money. CS agrees that TV is not the best way to go. KP doesn’t believe the advertising cost would be made up. SP considering paying for it/adding in DanceWorks if worth it. Board consensus is this type of advertising doesn’t seem most effective. KP suggests talking to WILX about doing a PSA for us. MM already reached out to WILX and they are interested in doing a piece on CBT. DW wonders about producing a commercial to use on website/social media. HH says Randy can do this. HH suggests purchasing Facebook boosts.

Fundraising:

CM asks if we’ve had any interest in Mother Ginger sponsorship. If not, maybe reaching out to someone from the GL area. KP suggests maybe reaching out to GL insurance agents. CM plans to walking door to door in downtown GL to try to sell business ads/sponsorships.

Board members need to add sponsorship leads to the google document. Sponsorship packet will also be added to member section of website.

We received a $1000 grant from one of the local Walmart stores and a $10,000 LEAP sunrise grant. AZ is also working on a Costco grant application.

AZ will be sending preliminary info on the show to previous contacts through contact contact. Can likely do this 3-4 times before show.

Old Business:

Two scholarship requests. One has been granted, one has been held out of concerns for committee buyout request and scholarship request for same dancer. Scholarship is determined by scholarship committee not the board. MM moves to grant committee buyout request from Lindsay Ferguson. DW seconds. AZ suggests billing people who don’t complete committee or chaperone work. MM suggests billing before show so people could have the opportunity to complete during show if they don’t want to pay. SP wants to make sure committee chairs are involving all families so all feel they have the opportunity to complete their hours. AZ will draft something.

SP motions to adjourn at 9:34 PM, CM seconds.