Children’s Ballet Theatre

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

November 14, 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) | Rich Patterson (RP) |
| Matt Rosendale (MR) | Cecilia Stajos (CS) |
| David Weissling (DW) | **Artistic Staff:** |
| Amy Zaagman (AZ) | Jesse Powers (JP) |
|  |  |
|  | **Absent:** |
|  | Sue Powers (SP) |

AZ called meeting to order at 7:03.

October minutes edit PPP loan should be EIDL loan. KP moves to approve minutes as edited. MM seconds.

Treasurer’s Report

Because of the $10,000 Sunrise grant and $1000 Walmart grant we now are at a balance of around $35,000. A few more sales came in from coupon books and we collected almost all tuition. We’ve already had over $2400 in dancer ads and over $7400 in ticket sales. The bank balance looks good right now, but we need to sell more tickets; most show costs have not been paid yet.

Most sponsorship asks have been no or no response.

Show update

MR and a few others met with Tim at GL and things are looking good. Talked about concessions, flowers and meet and greet all are a go.. Waiting to hear from Michael on lighting; he will give us some basic cues to share with Tim.. We are not using Michael for this show at all; it would be difficult for him to set things up in two days, but he is willing to help us by giving some cues we have used before.

In lobby, set up a photo station. Meet and greet after for all dancers after they change into dress clothes and come out. Some principal dancers will come out in costume—HH has list. JP asks about charging for photos with dancers in costume, AZ suggests donation box for this year.

Masking-GL says masks are recommended, not required outside school hours. Majority feel audience need to wear masks. Need to get that information out. Can have masks available at the door. MM asks what do ushers do if someone won’t wear a mask? Don’t make high school ushers enforce; have an adult available to help them. If people don’t want to stay due to mask policy we can offer them the online version and at last resort ask people to leave and refund ticket. KJ also suggest sending email to all ticket holders prior to shows.

Masking of dancers-MR requesting that some dancers(those who are on stage alone, with small groups) don’t have to wear masks on stage. DW agrees (wants waltz to not have to wear masks). HH, KJ don’t feel we can budge on masks. Littles are eligible, but not able to be fully vaccinated before show. Need to think of equity/fairness for all CBT dancers and also CMN and little guests. CM suggests this is too late to change health guidelines, could put people in a difficult situation bc they made decisions based on required masking. MR motions to have sugar pas, snow pas and waltz unmasked. DW seconds. CS thinks this causes division. AZ calls for a voice vote on motion.

Vote on MR motion:

No: HH, KJ, CM, MM, AZ, KP, RP

Yes: MR, DW

Abstain: LWD, CS

Motion fails 7-2 with two abstaining and one absent.

Ballerina brunch was at the U-club today. There were about 100 people there. Shared ticket info., captured emails, did a drawing for two free tickets.

HH marketing photos are not good. David Grist is retiring from his CBT work, We will need to look for a new photographer. If you have anything—video, pictures, etc.—share with HH so she can share. Going to do some ticket drawings for people who share our pages/posts, etc. MM says there is some money in the budget to boost on FB etc. Community papers will go out soon. JP asks about dress rehearsal pictures; is it too late to use someone else? HH says we will finish out the season with David. Jackson National is printing posters for free so we are at their mercy for timing—we will have 11x17 posters and bag tags. AZ will send another constant contact email this week with marketing photos.

Need to get anything that needs to be on sponsor list for Kevin Carter by tomorrow (minimum donation to be listed is $100/season). Need to figure out how to accommodate comp tickets.

Will have parent meeting next Sunday. MM make sure to add cast party to parent meeting.

JP reports everything coming along well with show.

Future sustainability

We are structurally in trouble. Our income does not meet our fixed costs.

We set a goal of $40,000 for asks, really need $100,000. Tuition does not cover costs. The community money is there to get back to Wharton, but we cannot get people/places to donate without right sizing. We can’t use community money to pay our rent and we cannot fundraise $40,000/year.

LWD asks if we, as a board, are personally responsible for the EIDL loan if CBT defaults. AZ suggest we need to speak with a lawyer. If we were defunct they wouldn’t necessarily come back for it. We do have directors insurance.

Tuition increase has been discussed for years, but always put off because of fear of losing dancers. Without more tuition we cannot move forward. We can no longer push this into the future.

DW suggests cutting the amounts we pay Jesse, Ela and for rent and offering a percentage of ticket sales. HH seconds this idea.

We need to consider how to branch out/reach out to other studios.

MM asks why we are paying $5000/month ($2500 in professional services and $2500 in rent) in the summer months when we don’t have programs to meet that expense. RP says this is the per show amount, but split over 12 months. Has not been a major increase over the past 10 years. Basically no change to rent from GLAD to Danceworks. Other expenses have been whittled down.

Board discusses email from Tara Raguss who suggested tiered tuition.

DW suggests we enter negotiations with Jesse and Ela to reduce fees and also a negotiation on rent. MM need $75-80,000/year to cover our administrative expenses. With current number of dancers we would need tuition to be $2500/year.. CS suggests renegotiating the rent. Danceworks took on more space since we would be there (specifically studio one and props area).

RP suggests CBT being under the auspices of Danceworks. This would make one person/business interested in the sustainability of the entity rather than a group of parents whose children will eventually age out. The close connection of parents/board making the decisions on tuition/fees makes it difficult.

Board determines current feasible options-significant tuition increase or begin negotiations for CBT to somehow be “absorbed” by another entity.

MM suggests getting company input on what they feel they can bear tuition-wise in order to keep the company going. RP suggests if we are going to ask someone else to take the company over, we cannot set tuition for them, that will be their decision, but we can survey and see what people think. This would inform both us and the entity we’d be turning CBT over to. CM emphasizes need to be clear/careful on wording. AZ suggests surveying many different options/information gathering.

AZ we have to make some plans because at this point we will not be able to pay rent in December. KP asks would it come as a big surprise to JP if we told him this? CS wonders if company families are invested? MM feels people are looking for other options.

Next steps—Meet with JP (and SP if he would like her to be included) early December/after show. Make him aware of the situation and see what steps he is willing to take. Also gather information from the company; MM will draft survey and send to everyone.

MM motions to adjourn at 10:08, CM seconds.

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