

**MPAC Board Retreat  
June 26-27, 2016  
Grand Union Hotel, Fort Benton**

**Minutes**

President Tom Webster called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM. Also in attendance: Jill Hill, Kate Huntsberger, Larry Gomoll, John Zirkle, Jim Peaco, Connie Jenkins, Rob Verdi; Arni Fishbaugh, Montana Arts Council, and John C. Barsness, MPAC staff.

Since there were no members of the public, other than Arni Fishbaugh who represented the public interest and was free to speak at any time, there was no need for a public comment period.

***Old Business***

**Traditional reality check.** Members reported on current health of their organizations; there were a few lessons learned and items of interest: 1) Insert a protection clause in the artist contract to prevent loss of audience due to the artist booking several nearby performances. 2) Be aware international artists must to apply for their P-2 visas even earlier than previously stated. 3) Piatagorsky Foundation supplies excellent classical pianists for reasonable rates; Larry suggested contacting them to attend. 4) Have a succession plan for key board members in place as well as a recruitment plan for new board members. Otherwise, everything seems to be going well for the membership.

**Montana Arts Council update.** Arni Fishbaugh said her last day the Montana Arts Council is September 30 and she will be moving to Missoula. She also announced appointment of Jill Hill and John Zirkle to the Montana Cultural Trust grants advisory panel. The next State of the Arts deadline is August 31.

**Minutes** of the January 31, 2016, meeting; Jill made the motion to accept, Kate seconded, passed unanimously.

**Year-to-date financial report.** John B. presented the estimated report and will include as many expenses as known incurred for this meeting in the current fiscal year. Larry made the motion to accept the report, Kate seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**Fundraising.** John B. reported Montana Arts Council SSO/PVP grant(s) were awarded at \$26,660 for the each of the next three fiscal years and that number appears in the proposed FY2017 budget. Amazon Smile also contacted the office and requested MPAC register for their voluntary program which passes 0.05% from purchases to designated non-profit organizations. Kate made the motion to participate, Jill seconded, motion passed unanimously. John B. will provide details when available. Tom reported he will speak with another donor who might provide a significant contribution to MPAC. Kate and Gary later added they will speak to another donor for a smaller contribution.

**Presenter booking resource survey and 5-year artist showcase & booking report.** John B. walked the board through each of the graphs and charts. For presenter resources, 17 of 19 surveys were returned, which represents an extremely high response, therefore statistical validity. Although MPAC is the most significant single resource for presenters, it is only 26%, and therefore

the other categories combined show a significant shift in presenter behavior. The booking reports were taken from 7 years of data as reported from Presenter Development participants. Although this sample does not represent all presenters who participate in MPAC, plus those who do not, it is indicative of trends in Montana presenting. Overall, we can report to artists that on average 60% of those who participate in the conference find work through MPAC. Work is defined as at least one booking, but most have more. Two concerning trends are fewer artists participating and presenters using more outside booking resources. The last chart is anecdotal and shows why few agents are interested in participating and why MPAC depends upon independent self-represented artists. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM and resumed at 9:08 AM on Monday, June 27.

**Review long-range plan.** Much of the morning was spent on updating the long-range plan. Board directed John B. to create a 1-page document/flyer, on MPAC's accomplishments and reasons for presenters and artists to attend, for distribution to prospective new members. New prospects for board members to invite were added to the plan. Updated version of the plan is appended.

Arni spoke about the Montana Arts Council's "blue sparkly" books which provide a road map of standard operating procedures and details on who does what and when so, should a staff member leave or have an extended illness, someone could step in and take over those duties without a steep learning curve. John B. has a similar manual for MPAC, but it is outdated and needs revision, therefore he will add that to the list of things to do.

John Z. asked where MPAC fits with the Advocacy and Arni explained how that works. Although MPAC is not directly involved, specific board members may be asked to contact (their) key legislators for specific issues. For example, the Advocacy lobbyist is currently working on another version of the bill that did not succeed in the previous legislature to redirect Bed Tax money from the state's General Fund to 4-5 specific state agencies to use with tourism-related projects. In Montana Arts Council's case, the Council directed that any funds derived from that source be used for cultural tourism-related project grants.

In terms of raising revenue, several options were discussed and two recommendations consolidated; motion by Larry, Jill second, to raise the artist showcase jury fee to \$35.00 and booth fee to \$150.00 for the next conference. Motion passed unanimously.

Jill asked about changes in the Presenter Development application, which has not changed in many years; she will look into it, decide which items to drop or change, and will bring recommendations to the winter meeting.

**Election of Officers.** Kate moved to keep the current slate; Jim seconded; unanimous in favor.

### **New Business**

John B. presented a proposal from Jeff Knapp, MTputer.com, for a Web site revamp to smart phone format, to include on-line registration, and e-commerce for credit card payments. He acknowledged the work of John Z. and Jonathan Hackbarth for a model of what the site should be and will refer Jeff to it for visual reference. However, there are two major differences between a free site and one under contract: security and technical support. Jeff has many years of experience writing encryption programs, uses a third-party credit card service which absolves MPAC of any fraud in connection with outside credit card abuse, has the current site set to accept changes from exactly three ISP addresses in the world, and has to date provided excellent technical support. Also, the new site will

again link to Montana Arts Council's Web site. Jill made the motion to accept the offer from MTputer.com, Kate seconded; motion passed unanimously. Arni requested home and e-mail addresses for each Montana participant to be harvested and sent to the Arts Council for *State of the Arts* and on-line newsletters; board agreed.

**Review 2016 showcase & conference.** Artist report & other comments from January minutes were referenced and 2016 evaluation highlights noted.

**2017 Showcase and Conference schedule.** Great Falls' Mansfield PAC Auditorium, Gibson & Missouri Rooms have been reserved for January 27-29, 2017. Jill suggested using Paris Gibson Square for the Friday evening reception; additional cost is \$50 rental plus champagne punch at cost. Larry requested the jam to be at the Arvon Hotel Dark Horse room (basement) as the entire hotel has been reserved for MPAC and rooms are below market rate. Cost is \$18/hour for the bartender. John B's preference is to hold the jam and reception at the Mansfield because evaluations preferred everything in one location and MPAC can save \$600 by purchasing a Tulip rider on the city's insurance policy; off-site will cost at least the same as an independent liability insurance policy in Fort Benton. Rob moved to hold the Friday mixer at Paris Gibson Square and Saturday jam at the Arvon, Jill seconded; motion passed, but Tom Webster did not vote. The key to successfully starting on time is whether the Arvon has locked storage for Mike Jones' sound system, or will provide a set-up sound system for Mike's use; John B. will check.

**2017 Schedule details** (see schedule attached for changes). Possible speakers should be people who have ties to performing arts (like J. K. Simmons) and who are also willing to appear without a fee because there is no money in the budget. John Z. said he found Douglas Sonntag's address inspiring and was the reason he became involved with this organization. Arni suggested a 2 hour "passing the torch" workshop by Cinda Holt on organizational legacy and how to pass it on to a new generation. It was agreed John B. would invite the new Montana Arts Council ED to speak at the Saturday dinner, probably on a legislative update. For the silent auction Arni suggested announcing the proceeds would be dedicated to performing arts education because "art education" brings a much stronger response at other auctions and is a tangible means to contribute. Board agreed to do that and will earmark the silent auction for Presenter Development. Tom said he would donate some Garrison Keillor tickets. Arni also suggested inviting Carleen to the event and will forward her new contact information. Motion from John Z., Kate seconded, to accept Arni's workshop proposal; motion passed unanimously. However, a 2:00 PM start time is too early for eastern Montana folks.

**2018 location.** Board agreed the 2018 Showcase and Conference will be in Fort Benton.

**Budget for FY 2017.** Larry made the motion to accept, with adjustments as needed, Jim second; passed unanimously. The budget will not reflect a deficit.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Barsness, Executive Director