



CHARLES IVES AUTHORITY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

A Nonprofit Organization

Minutes Board of Directors Meeting, June 18, 2014

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DANBURY TOWN CLERK

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BY: LK

To: Mayor Mark D. Boughton and Members of the Charles Ives Authority for the Performing Arts Board of Directors

Re: Minutes of the Ives Authority Board of Directors meeting held June 18, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. The members were recorded as:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Greenberg, Anthony Vournazos, Gina Marcus, Fernando Jimenez, Sherri Hill, Tanya Wulff Truax, Eileen Curran

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Brett DeWeese, Paul Reis

ALSO PRESENT: Phyllis Cortese, Executive Director; Sophia Vournazos, Office Manager; Jimmy Koplik, Chairman of LiveNation CT; Don Weeden; Sean Loughran, WCSU

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The reading and approval of the minutes was waived.

DISCUSSION:

- Phyllis introduced Jimmy Koplik from LiveNation and Ives benefactor Don Weeden. Jimmy provided an overview of his 42-year career promoting live music in Connecticut and spoke of how Phyllis convinced him to visit Ives and how he fell in love with the concert-going experience people can have at Ives.

- Jimmy acknowledged everyone's disappointment about LiveNation having only booked two shows this summer and outlined what he sees as the reasons: artists' perceptions of the inadequacies of the dressing room, lack of running-water bathrooms and the fact that the stage is too small; customers' desires for covered, permanent seats, eliminating the long food and beverage lines with limited options, there is not enough grade/slope to the lawn, difficult sight lines because speakers can't be hung; and promoters' issues, which mirror the artists' concerns but also include the problems of weather variability and small box office facilities.
- Jimmy said Ives is spectacular but needs a lot of "fixes." He sees it as an R&D project for LiveNation and believes he can develop it into the best venue in Connecticut if he can get funding from the state. He provided examples of millions of dollars in funding other venues have received from the state since the late '80s, ranging from \$1.3 million for the 500-seat Infinity Hall to \$56 million for the Webster Bank Arena. He said at a recent meeting with Ives board members, Mayor Mark Boughton and WCSU President James Schmotter, he felt positive about the possibility of going forward, with the help of lobbyists, to secure funds from the state.
- Don Weeden echoed his agreement to go to the state to ask for funding, but stated that he disagreed with Jimmy's statement that if we aren't able to acquire \$5 million for improvements, the Ives would likely cease to exist.
- A round-table discussion between board members and the guests at the table ensued about selling points for the Ives when asking for money, including drawing visitors from New York, who will spend their discretionary dollars in Connecticut, and the connection to the university, which has recently been designated the state school of the arts.
- Jimmy said we need to hire a lobbyist ASAP and that powerful Republican lobbyist Patrick Sullivan would be the best bet. He also said he would be willing to invest his own money in the Ives infrastructure while waiting for state funds because he sees Ives as a boutique amphitheater that will draw the classic-rock crowd with great success.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Steve Greenberg

- Steve said the Ives' priority has always been the fan experience, but we must now put more focus on the artists' experience as a long-term strategy. The old Master Plan was to update the facility and we need to do it because other area facilities have all been updated.
- Steve announced the Paul Reis is leaving the board to pursue a new job at Fordham University. He said Paul was a great partner and thanked him for his service, then welcomed Sean Loughran from WCSU, who will be filling Paul's position on the board.
- Steve will be meeting with the mayor as soon as possible to discuss obtaining a lobbyist. He is confident that funding will come, but is not sure of the timeframe. Because of this, he will look at possibly taking out a business loan for Ives operating expenses during this transitional year.
- Gina Marcus proposed a motion, seconded by Sherri Hill:  
MOTION: That the Ives Board move to authorize Phyllis and Steve to engage a lobbyist." The motion was unanimously approved by the board.
- A discussion followed about the language that will be used to assure our fans that this is a transitional year and the Ives is going to grow. Sherri and Eileen will collaborate on the messaging.
- Tanya proposed creating some kind of fundraising campaign and Steve threw out ideas about using Kickstarter or a Guinness World Record event. Tanya, Gina and Sherri will form a committee to explore fundraising options and will share ideas with the Friends of the Ives.
- Steve thanked all the board members for their efforts on behalf of Ives and particularly expressed his gratitude to Phyllis, Sophia and Brett for bringing Jimmy Koplik to the table.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT: Phyllis Cortese

- Phyllis handed out a summary report to the board in lieu of delivering an oral report.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Anthony Vournazos

- Tony reviewed the balance sheets, including A/R and A/P.
- He said we're very slim right now. We'll get \$14,000 from the city in July, but we will run out of funds at some point.
- Steve asked Tony to prepare a fixed-cost report from July 1 – July1.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT: After motion by Fernando Jimenez, seconded by Gina Marcus, the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

After motion by Gina Marcus, seconded by Tony Vournazos, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, July 16.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri Hill, Secretary