



Minutes for WLSTS Board of Directors' Monthly Meeting held in person at WLSTS

October 15, 2024.

1. Roll Call & Establishment of Quorum

- a. Called to Order: 5:33pm
- b. Present: Marina Campsall, Mimi Searls, Troe Weston, Becky Strickland, Taryen Owen, Jeff Rankin
- c. Regrets: Stacey Poirier
- d. Thank you to all attendees: Jesse Madden, Aidan Duggan, Kallie Schick, Drinda Huston

2. Review of Agenda

- a. Motion to Approve the Agenda for the October 15, 2024 Board Meeting
 - i. Motion: Marina
 - ii. Second: Becky
 - iii. Discussion:

- iv. Amendment:
 - v. Carried: Troe abstained. All others in favour
- 3. Motion to approve minutes for September 18, 2024
 - i. Motion: Jeff
 - ii. Second: Mimi
 - iii. Discussion: Spelling error to be corrected (losing supposed to be closing)
 - iv. Amendment:
 - v. Carried: Troe abstained, all others in favour
- 4. James Dreyer of GK Sound.
 - a. B. Can do training, tech can come up and do basic tutorial, \$90 per hour tech fee- 8 hours plus tax (\$720 plus tax)
 - b. can do financing for 1 year,
 - c. 50 % deposit, balance on delivery
 - d. Jeff presented specs of original quotes s21 and sq6, Jeff has reached out to others regarding helping set up. Mimi is questioning a non professional helping us. Jeff presented another board system with specs. Jeff recommended we get other quotes from other suppliers.
- 5. President's Report
 - a. Do some training as a Board, view other Board meetings to see how we could improve upon and make things better for all. Art Center board meetings, Joint committee meetings.
- 6. Treasurer's Report and Financial Committee Updates
 - a. September and October report to be presented at November meeting
- 7. Season Producer's Report - Tabled

- a. Kate:
 - b. Stacey:
8. Sweeney Todd
- i. Director Troe: Sets coming along, Act I is blocked, this coming weekend is run off book Act I. Fully blocked by the end of the month.
 - ii. Producer Stacey:
 - iii. Liaison Becky: Has let cast and crew know she is liaison.
9. Online Business
- a. A new liaison needed to be appointed to Sweeney Todd and Becky volunteered
 - b. Motion "to pay The Chute Eatery \$1550 to provide a gratuity."
 - i. Motion: Stacey
 - ii. Seconded: Becky
 - iii. Discussion: Mimi pointed out the food was really good and so was the services
 - iv. Carried: unanimous
 - c. Stacey provided some links for Board to read about not for profit organisations
 - d. Mimi set the first meeting for October 15
 - e. Troe presented the poster for Sweeney Todd. There were some minor changes and then it was approved.
 - f. Becky chose to take on all elements of Social Media as the role of VP
 - g. Becky contacted all Directors and Producers to let them know she can be contacted for all social media needs
 - h. Stacey asked if we should put out a call for fall script order
 - i. TRU offered us the opportunity to set up a table at their open house on October 22. Troe has agreed to take this on.

- j. "Motion to renew our Canva subscription at \$150.00."
 - i. Motion: Stacey
 - ii. Seconded: Troe
 - iii. Discussion: Stacey: I have changed our settings to Not-for-Profit and we may be able to get it for free but it is under review.
 - iv. We have been approved as a non profit for Canva so we do not have to pay
 - v. Carried: Unanimously
- k. Mimi asked Becky to send out a reminder about Set build on Saturday
- l. Stacey asked that the Board let her know before we try and access the email
- m. Stacey shared links to a variety of properties currently available in Williams Lake.
Possibilities for future space were discussed.
- n. Stacey was approached regarding the wording for the SM guidelines. It is clear that the SM deals with garbage, bathrooms, etc during the run but not from the beginning of rehearsals. She is going to change the wording to say that as soon as the current show is in the theatre that the SM is responsible for making sure that the general maintenance of the facility (bathrooms, garbages, dishes, etc.) is their responsibility but include the suggestion of making a schedule of all members of the cast/crew partaking in helping mitigate the tasks.
- o. It was discussed that a contest should be done for Sweeney Todd tickets for opening night. Becky will set up a post.
- p. Rohan Keenan approached the executive about using the theatre October 14 for an interview with a member. Troe did not have rehearsal that day and all agreed he could use the space.

- q. Motion “To donate one of our old banners to the High School production of Matilda so they can (hopefully) use it to help advertise their show.”
 - i. Motion: Stacey
 - ii. Second: Mimi
 - iii. Discussion:
 - iv. Carried: Unanimous
- r. Stacey applied for the CCACS grant applied for \$3000.00
- s. Stacey applied for a \$13000 grant to use toward a new sound system.
- t. James sent quotes for speakers, labour and cables. He also sent a quote with a downgraded mixing board and speaker option. Stacey spoke to James about lease to own.
 - i. Jeff has some concerns about the quotes and feels he would have to object to them as the cost is much higher than what was presented. He will bring a letter to the meeting. Stacey also suggested we would hold an SGM about it, where we could possibly also give a demo and invite James.
- u. Mimi asked Becky to send out an email and post about the upcoming Board meeting.
- v. Troe asked if we could donate two tickets to Sweeney Todd, to the TRU open house as a door prize. It was agreed we would do this and Stacey would pull tickets
- w. The breaker blew in the concession stand area. It affected the internet. Because it is a school district issue we will have to wait for it to be fixed on Tuesday.

10. 70th Anniversary Committee- Stacey -tabled

- a.

11. Future of WLST Space-tabled

a.

12. New Business:

a.

13. The Great Gatsby

- a. Rehearsals well underway, Al Campsall came in and taught dance. Through Act I, lots of positive energy in the group

14. Letter from Angela Rankin submitted as per email request and submitted publicly as per her request.

- a. Mimi: really appreciates our members willingness to come to us with their concerns, and is looking forward to improving the culture and feelings that members mentioned. After research there is only 1 life time member who still lives in town that is not involved in theatre. She is looking forward to hearing how we can improve morale. Did not feel it was appropriate for her to hug or approach a previous member of the board after election during the rest of the meeting. The letter was made to feel very personal due to her name being the only one mentioned in the letter. She hopes we can make future AGM's more comfortable for everyone.
- b. Becky: Bring forth the concerns regarding the future of the Theatre in a new space, stick to the 5 year plan. The School District only has to give us 3 months notice that we could lose the building. It was recognised by the Board, it is hard to make the assumption of who will be the future board.
- c. Stacey:

- d. Taryen: Past board was recognized. Being new there is much that I don't know for past history. Can not stay stagnant and not look for a future space, we need to look for the future and what avenues of revenue that could bring to help the Theatre for financial.
- e. Jeff: Agree with the first part of the letter, lofty goal of \$240,000 per year for 5 years. Personally, we will be lucky to get \$60,000. Previous Board tried to look for our own building, but we could not support it. We do need a new building, but we have had a "partnership" with SD 27 since 1989. We have had two close calls from fires. We would need a \$2 mil mortgage for the properties presented to the Board recently. We need a financial buffer. Before we consider owning our own Theatre, we must know what the costs would be to us for things such as, snow removal, lights, and everything that has been included in our current lease. There are other options for us, finding a new partner. Can not rely on grants, we will need a maintenance person to manage the building. if we can make our building fund hit 5 figures he will be optimistic. Amount of plays pitched is diminished greatly. We need to increase our membership. We can not afford to pay for a building with only 3 plays. We should look at other partnerships. There are many groups within the WLSTS groups, as long as there is no favouritism. Other members are upset and read and agree wholeheartedly with the contents. They are upset with the Direction that the theatre has taken. Our AGM did not go as smoothly as he had hoped. Over spent on the food, due to a low turnout. Is upset that no one stood up to thank Kirsten to thank her for all of her volunteer hours. Jeff would like to thank Kirsten for all of her years of work and everything that she has done for the WLSTS. Would recommend that going forward we should have guidelines for the future on how the change of boards should be handled.

- f. Marina: Regarding new property, expect that we will have lengthy conversations regarding our future home. Is not as worried regarding the decision because we will talk at length and break down all the aspects. In response to the letter, felt very attacked and hurt by the letter, because those thanks and gratitude wanted to provide but were not able to and someone assuming that she made the decision to do something unkind, is not how she treats people. Felt like it was unfair towards the new board in regards to how the AGM was handled. All decisions regarding our future must be carefully considered. The letter made her regret running when she first read it and what was posted online regarding the new board. Trusts all on the Board and believes the Board will make the right decisions regarding the future.
- g. Troe: Tend to agree with most of the sentiments regarding the future home of WLSTS. Was surprised to hear there was so much outrage regarding proposals put forth at the AGM. Never just agree to do something because someone had an idea. This is a very large decision and any choices made must be very well thought out. Regarding the sound system, she did not understand why people got so defensive. There are ways to express ideas and feelings regarding ideas brought up. In terms of the split in theatre, has become slowly aware of the rift in the last 3 to 4 months how severe the rift truly is, in all Societies and Boards there will be differences of opinion. We could not have a lovely variety of ideas and debates without feeling differences. Not okay with feeling stuck in the middle. It would be the best idea if the two groups could find a way to exist in the same space and they must find a way to exist. As they are causing many to feel they can not invite people to events without alienating others.

- h. Jesse: Does not believe 1 person should be thanked more than other members of the Board.
- i. Drinda: feels some people are so upset that she must explain why she voted the way she did. The anger that is happening is making her uncomfortable. When she started here she felt how open everyone was, in the last year she feels it is not as open as she hoped and she now feels she must be picky and choosy about who she will work with. Everyone has great attributes and knowledge to pass on and that some people need to be more aware of how they are treating people. Is excited for the new Board as she feels the new Board is full of people who are focused on making all feel included and is excited to see where they go forward.
- j. Action Item: Mimi to respond to the letter. Letter to be shared before sending.

15. Sound System - Talked to James

- a. Action item- Troe suggested we get at least 2 other price quotes for the sound system.

16. Summer Workshop for Youth

- a. Mimi, would like to put together a committee to head a 5 to 10 day workshop for youth. 5 or 10 day weekdays workshop drama camp.
- b. Becky: Would we be able to charge for this camp? Mimi will chair the Committee. Troe would like to be on the Committee.

17. New WLST Website Proposal

- a. More user friendly, has had someone approach us regarding facelifting the website.

Troe hesitates to put a call out to our community. Approach Brad before this goes out to the community. Will discuss at future meetings

18. Recognition of “the work”

- a. Take time to acknowledge the kind of work that goes into the Board. For example time that goes into social media, to show the amount of work that goes into the positions. An fyi post of what each position, about the laws and such on social media.

19. Meeting dates: Third Tuesday of every month. Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 18, Mar 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, Aug 19, Sep 16.

20. Changing of signers:

Motion: “To change signatories at WLDCU to Mimi Searls, Becky Strickland, Stacey Poirier.”

Motion: Mimi

Second: Troe

Discussion:

Carried: Unanimous

21. Concession P&L - Tables

22. New Lighting

- a. Motion lights did not come with power cords. Stacey said she will contact people they were purchased from for the cords. Need to purchase a few 3pin dmx cables. Jeff to price out cables and inform us online.

23. Motion to adjourn at

- a. Motion: Troe 7:46pm
- b. Second: Becky
- c. Discussion:
- d. Amendment:
- e. Carried: unanimous

24. Next Meeting at the Theatre November 19th at 5:30.

Discuss at next meeting:

New board terms. 2 year terms.

Paid child care for the next AGM.

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October 2, 2024

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Dear President Mimi Searls and board of directors,

I am a member of the Williams Lake Studio Theatre Society (WLSTS) and attended the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, September 28, 2024. I am writing due to some concerns I had during the course of the meeting and in the aftermath of the elections. I am unable to attend the next regularly scheduled board meeting on October 15th of this year, but I would hope that my concerns will be read into the meeting by the Secretary and attached to the board minutes.

During the AGM a motion was made, discussed, and passed to begin the work of raising money and working toward the purchase of a building by the WLSTS. While I have, many times over the years, stated that I believe that it would be in the best interest of the WLSTS to find a new, and more stable, venue for their live theatre activities, I am genuinely concerned about the financial ability of the WLSTS to maintain a building of their own. Owning a building is so much more than the purchase of the building. Under the current lease with School District #27, the Society is entirely immune to the actual costs of utilities, property taxes, and general building maintenance. I am very much in favour of raising money and working towards this goal, however, I believe that before any purchase is made, the board must come up with a Business Plan to account for these things along with learning about the building itself, such as the age and lifespan of the roof, the furnace, the water well, pump, and tank, whether there will be asbestos mitigation during renovations, costs associated with general maintenance and/or replacement of all these things, the doubling or tripling of our current insurance costs, etc.

Our past treasurer, Michael Rawluk, was always firmly against the WLSTS ever owning its own building. He was deeply involved in the Prince George Theatre Workshop when they built the beautiful Prince George Playhouse. The entire Society fell to infighting and financial ruin within a couple of years and the building was taken over by the City. Prince George went without a live theatre society for some time in its wake, and it was a devastating loss to the community and the committed volunteers that saw its demise. Michael did not want to see the same thing happen in Williams Lake, and neither do I, and I'm sure, neither does the current board of directors.

I bring Michael's concerns to remind our board, and our Society, that we must always have our feet firmly on the ground. We must look to the future with clear eyes, especially around expenses and revenue, the likelihood of needing to hire a building manager to make sure maintenance is scheduled and adhered to and to facilitate scheduling of productions and rentals, and the costs associated with having to have a paid employee.

When I first joined the Society, I attended a pitch night where seven plays were pitched. The number of pitched plays has only been dropping since. We cannot maintain a building on three plays a year, even if they are all big name and well attended productions. We also cannot guarantee rental, donation, and advertising income, as these things can and will fluctuate for so many reasons. These things are merely a hope and can only be treated as a welcome bonus. Every year we have new members join our Society, which is wonderful, but every year we are also seeing longtime members disappear. While our Society has been welcoming, it can also be cliquey, and isolating, and exclusionary, as well.

We need to grow our Society, we need see larger turnouts to our AGMs, and not just welcome new members, but also keep our current and past members feeling appreciated and important to our bright future. We need more people who are interested in pitching productions. A business plan will reveal how many productions we will need just to maintain a building and pay a mortgage, but I suspect it will be at least six. We simply don't currently have the active volunteers for this.

This brings me to another concern that has been weighing on me. We have a new president. Congratulations, Mimi. I think you will do a fantastic job. You have energy and heart and a deep love for our Society. That is plain. My concern was in how the previous president, Kirsten Lyons, was handled as an outgoing president. While everyone was busy congratulating Mimi, no one bothered to take a moment to thank Kirsten for all her hard work and devotion. She was first elected to the board in 2015. She gave her time and care to our Society for nine years, and no one gave her a meaningful thank you. If it had been me, I honestly would have felt like that entire moment screamed, 'don't let the door hit you on the way out.' And this is not the first time I have seen this happen when someone has lost an election, although it has mostly been happening in more recent years. The next morning, I wrote to Kirsten personally, because I felt that it was the very least that she deserved, even from a peripheral member, such as myself. I had served with her on the board, and I know how much she cared. I encouraged her to stay involved and that I hoped to see her run for the board again one day, as her experience and devotion will always be invaluable. I deeply wish that she had considered running for a different position, however I am sure she was hurt by how quickly she seemed to have been forgotten in that moment, and she left that night before I could tell her how valued she was. In my opinion, this shows a complete lack of respect to those who have given so much over so many years and is a leading reason as to why we are not keeping members, and why so many lifetime members have disappeared.

I have personally been awarded a lifetime membership. I purposely did not attend the AGM in which this was awarded to me. I feel that lifetime memberships have been given out like candy the last few years, and while sometimes people deserve recognition for above average volunteerism and dedication to the WLSTS, I am keenly aware of how few of our lifetime members are involved anymore. It's starting to feel like they are often given out as a parting gift. A gift of a free membership was not necessary for me, nor is it for most, I suspect. A heartfelt thank you presented to our membership during an AGM with a serious reflection on what they have done in service of our Society should be enough. All many of us want is to be seen for what we bring to the table.

I will humbly recommend that after each of the up to five separate voting procedures at our AGMs, that it be part of the Society's mandate to take a moment to recognize the sacrifice and

devotion of each outgoing member who has lost the election and welcome them to run again for another position, or in the future, and to please stay involved. Also, I believe a moment should be taken to thank everyone who allowed their nomination and did not secure a position, again encouraging them to stay involved and run again. Do not wait until the end of elections – in this case Kirsten left before they were over. I feel that Kirsten deserved more in that moment, as do all board members who give so much of themselves to the success of our Society, whether for one year, or for nine. Maybe especially so then.

In my opinion, the WLSTS will never survive in their own building without a large and strong membership. We must welcome and embrace new members, but we must also continue to treasure and appreciate the members we have. I know sometimes there are personality conflicts, but that is the same with all aspects of life. The WLSTS cannot be a Society of groupies who close out anyone they have tired of, don't have space for, or clash with. We all have our own approaches, and there will often be hurdles to fight though, but the feeling of Family I once had with this Society is gone, and it is sorely missed.

Sincerely,

Angela Laird Rankin