

**OUR FAIR CAROUSEL, INC.**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
January 14, 2016

**Present:** Ben Albaugh, Clyde Boysen, Tom Braun, Barbara Deneen, Trude Harmon, Gary Jones, Bob Marabella, Carrie Martinson, Mike Merrick, Bill Nunn, Nancy Peterson, Kevin Points, Jim Weichert, John Willy. Executive Director Colleen Murphy Roth.

The meeting came to order at 7:02 p.m. In the absence of Peter Boehm, Clyde Boysen presided over the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of October 1, 2015, were approved as mailed.

**Finances.** Jim Weichert reported that the auditor is working on the certified audit. He said the auditor has found nothing remarkable about the balance sheet. Ride revenue was down by about \$24,000 compared with the 2014 season. One factor is that 2014 was the carousel's 100th birthday and we gained a lot of free publicity; an even bigger factor is that we decided to allow two-year-olds to ride free, not just one-year-olds. Payroll expenditures were up about \$16,000, consistent with the fact that we upgraded to the position of executive director. We used \$12,493 in cash to balance the budget. Weichert said our balance sheet is very strong, and that we have \$204,000 in cash of which \$103,000 is in certificates of deposit.

Weichert pointed out that in past years the board has approved in advance the filing of our annual Minnesota return, and he asked for approval to do so again this year with Weichert and Peter Boehm signing off when the report is final. A motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Weichert said all income tax filings are current except the W2 forms, which are on the way.

Weichert noted that the board had previously approved a motion for him to put some of the organization's money in stock funds. He said that when the stock market showed some instability he held off. He has been watching the funds he had recommended. Their value has risen, and all maintained their value and strength.

The board approved the treasurer's report.

**Season de-brief.** Boysen said it was clear from this year's debriefing session with volunteers that they appreciate Colleen Murphy Roth and the job she has done. They reported that there was less tension at the carousel than in previous seasons, that customer relations are handled smoothly, and that they welcome the new merchandise purchased for the gift shop. In addition, they like the new practice of keeping the band organ turned off until after the ride has begun, saying it makes communication much easier and has eliminated the need to shout in order to be heard. One suggested improvement was that board members be more visible by attending events for volunteers.

**Budget.** Boysen introduced the budget that Boehm had prepared and mailed out. He noted that Boehm budgeted conservatively in light of the lower ride income and higher staff costs we experienced in 2015. He also pointed out that Boehm and Colleen Roth had agreed that the most promising source of new income is opening on Mondays. Initially we were closed most Mondays for maintenance, but that is no longer an issue. At a previous meeting Michelle Furrer told the board that Monday is the park's second-busiest weekday, only exceeded by Friday. Roth said she had experienced some customer comments about it being hard to predict when the carousel would be open, and said ultimately we might reap customer-satisfaction benefits as well as increased income from an open-everyday schedule. She acknowledged it will not be easy to get enough volunteers for the extra day.

The budget and proposed new schedule call for us to designate holidays as free days. Overall, holidays currently do not generate as much income as we believe Mondays will. Offering free rides on these days will also give us another opportunity to promote awareness of the carousel in connection with media stories about the holidays. In addition to Memorial Day, July 4, and Labor Day, we will have free days on National Carousel Day (July 25) and the opening day of the State Fair.

A motion was introduced to increase income instead by reverting to offering free rides only to children under age 1. Roth said she anticipated problems for both riders and volunteers if we were to revert after a single year. She said response to the newer policy has been extremely positive, because it covers all children who can only ride when accompanied by an adult. The change has eliminated a lot of negative exchanges prior to the ride. There was discussion about making the adult free, instead of the child, because it's the adult who "has to" ride. Roth said given the artistic and historic value of our machine, she would not like a policy that implies that only children want to ride.

After much discussion, it was agreed that during the season we would evaluate the impact of changing the ticket policy. The motion to change the policy was withdrawn, and the budget was approved.

**Volunteers.** Bob Marabella said the committee had asked him to bring to the board a proposal to install security cameras to monitor operations. He noted that the cameras were not included in the budget and said he had never heard anything back. Roth said she thought she had sent him a copy of the estimate, which was very high. Several things we wanted to do could not be accommodated in the budget, she said.

**Gift shop.** Roth reported that volunteer Mike Mariana will again manage the gift shop and ordering will begin soon.

**Carousel.** Kevin Points said new pieces—a crank shaft collar and a gear shift bearing—are being made at a machine shop and should be ready in time for him and Mark Carlson to install them. He said he will meet soon with Carlson regarding the new oiler mechanism.

**Band organ.** Mike Merrick said there was nothing to report at this point.

**Restoration.** Tom Braun said Kevin Southwick, who runs a business repairing and restoring antique wooden pieces, had replaced some broken outer-edge boards on the carousel. He is also working with Mark Carlson on the best way to repair stripped screw holes on the carousel floor; there are many where the horses are mounted.

**Communications.** Nancy Peterson said she will continue to handle the carousel's Facebook page and other online presence and will help with other projects as requested by Roth.

**Executive director.** Colleen Roth said her biggest priority is recruiting new volunteers. She is using many of the traditional recruitment strategies and also testing new avenues, including hosting open houses in April for prospective volunteers and meeting with special groups including retired teachers. She is readying new volunteer management software that will, among other things, enable volunteers to check their schedules and see open slots online; it will also track their participation. She is reviewing signage, planning spring painting projects, building a comprehensive calendar of operational and management activities, and more. She will need to hire a new shift supervisor and a brass polisher this season. She also is keeping a notebook of ideas for things she wants to explore as time and opportunities allow.

**President's report.** Boysen directed attention to printed schedule showing the carousel being open every day from May 1 through Labor Day and listing the chosen free-day holidays. A motion to approve the schedule was made, seconded, and passed.

**Executive session.** The board discussed the executive director's performance evaluation and salary increase.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 14, 2016, in the Como Streetcar Station.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Peterson, secretary