

OUR FAIR CAROUSEL, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 2, 2014

Present: Peter Boehm, Clyde Boysen, Barbara Deneen, Trude Harmon, Peggy Kipka, Bob Marabella, Carrie Martinson, Linda McDonald, Mike Merrick, Bill Nunn, Nancy Peterson, Kevin Points, John Willy. Guest: Tammi Beckley

The meeting came to order at 7:25 p.m. because of a delay in getting the meeting facility unlocked.

Minutes of the meeting of April 24, 2014, were approved as mailed.

Finance. Boehm reported in place of Jim Weichert, who had to leave before the meeting because of a family matter. On September 30, 2014, the last day of the fiscal year, OFC had \$152,000 in cash and \$103,000 in certificates of deposit. We still had three large payments ahead in November, our insurance premiums and our \$24,700 payment to the City.

Boehm distributed a table showing \$176,000 in income during the fiscal year, which was higher than in the past two years. Our expenses were \$187,000, but this includes the purchase of special customized merchandise intended to provide inventory for future years.

Boehm said the annual inventory and audit are both underway and all filings are up to date.

Volunteers. Bob Marabella said the Volunteer Committee has not met. He said there were a few agenda items that could use followup, such as the proposal to use a short pre-application form to capture information quickly on people who say they are interested in volunteering.

Boehm said we have had some feedback from customers who have felt badly treated by volunteers and we seem to have some volunteers making up their own rules or misinterpreting rules. Boehm said the committee may be an appropriate part of the process of addressing that. Marabella said the Volunteer Committee would benefit from a mission statement.

Gifts. Boehm said gift sales this year were 31 cents per ride ticket. Tammi Beckley said she hoped we could sell the remaining anniversary t-shirts by the end of the season. Boehm said we didn't have numbers on book sales except that the State Fair sold 21 copies.

Band Organ. Mike Merrick reported that he will do some maintenance on the band organ during the winter.

Noting that we are nearly out of our band organ CD Volume 1, he wondered whether there was a chance of having more produced. Boehm noted that Arthur Curtze owns all the rights and it would be up to him to have the CD reissued. Merrick also mentioned that Curtze could put the tracks on iTunes. Boehm suggested that because of their experience with band organ music, Merrick and Bill Nunn would be in the best position to have that discussion with Curtze.

Carousel. Kevin Points said the carousel continues to be in good operating condition. The only item needing attention mentioned at the previous board meeting was some stripped and broken bolts under a few horses, and Mark Carlson has fixed those. Points said when Art Curtze was in town for the 100th Birthday Party Art made some recommendations for adjustments that smoothed the ride. The speed reducer is leaking a little more oil than usual and will have to be checked in the spring.

Restoration. Linda McDonald said she has been repainting horses' necks where the paint is worn off by the reins. She has touched up the chariots using metallic powder instead of leaf to see whether it will last better. She has been seeking materials that will stand up to weather and use while still providing a historic look. Boehm said an objects conservator from the Minnesota Historical Society has been recommended as a prospective board member and he suggested McDonald meet with him at her convenience.

Communications. Peterson reported on the success of the 100th Birthday Season from a communications perspective. The birthday and attendant events were an opportunity to tell the carousel's story again, emphasizing the carousel's history, value, and role in the community. Stories appeared in all major metropolitan media, several suburban news outlets, and specialized publications including one distributed broadly to Midwest farm families. A lengthy piece by KARE 11's Boyd Huppert ran on the well publicized "Land of 10,000 Stories" segment and then was featured in USA Today and carried by a dozen Gannett stations across the country.

About 1,500 root beer floats were served at the Birthday Party on August 9, and the event went smoothly. The best of the special activities were the castings made so children could make rubbings of carousel images. Boehm said he is considering ways to install them in the building, possibly under several of the display cases on the outer walls.

Peterson noted that a coloring contest had attracted few entries by August 9, the announced deadline, so we featured it during the Birthday Party. We ended up with 85 entries. Peterson and Boehm drew names for the top few prizes in the two age categories, awarded four free tickets to everyone else, and notified the parents for all 85. By October 1, 60 of the packets had been picked up, meaning families had returned to the carousel, which was the goal of the promotion. We had purchased a giant stuffed tiger to use as the top prize but have saved it for next year when it can be featured in promotions and displayed at the carousel all season to promote interest.

Peterson also reported that she promoted the carousel through our Facebook page with at least one or two postings each week all summer and payments to extend the reach of

selected messages. We started the season with 37 Facebook followers and ended with more than 3,500.

Boehm said in planning the 100th Birthday Season we set goals to inform the public about the carousel's history and character and involve new generations in riding, volunteering, supporting, and generally caring about it. We spent \$25,000 on the celebration, mostly on inventory that will return added revenue. We spent about \$1,000 on the banner for the fence, a similar amount on Facebook promotion, and \$1,500 on cake and ice cream. Modest fees were paid to a handful of entertainers and contributions went to two nonprofit groups that added to our programming—the Minneapolis Aquatennial Senior Choir and a group of historical interpreters from Dakota County who spent a day at the carousel in costume in July.

Boehm said the value of the season's activities will be increased to the degree we can capitalize on our messages and activities. Peterson said she hoped we can build on some of the contacts established this season to create other special events in the future.

Fund-raising. Boehm reported that two more volunteers adopted horses during the season, both at the \$10,000 level. One was paid in full and one will have the balance of \$5,000 paid in 2015. A third volunteer is preparing to donate \$25,000 over five years starting in 2015.

Mike Merrick reminded the board that some years ago the board awarded adoptions in recognition of extraordinary volunteer service. He said two more people should be recognized for long years of specialized service: Linda McDonald and Jim Weichert. Boehm noted that when we were awarding these adoptions in 2000, McDonald was an employee and thus not deemed eligible at that time, but that she has provided extensive service as an artist and restorer for more than 20 years as a volunteer. Weichert, meanwhile, has been Our Fair Carousel's accountant since 1989, also as a volunteer. A motion to award McDonald and Weichert a \$15,000 second-row horse was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. Boehm presented a plaque to McDonald and promised to do the same for Weichert, who was not present.

Fourteen carousel figures remain available for adoption: three outside-row horses, four second-row horses, six third-row horses, and one chariot, representing a total of \$210,000 in potential contributions.

Boehm said the large recognition board on the carousel's front wall has warped since we first put it up so bugs are able to get into the frame. In addition, it is very difficult to add new photos and names, which are printed on paper, and get them to line up properly. He proposed ordering a new board using newer technology in which the photos of the horses (and chariots and band organ) will be printed on metal. Donor names will also be engraved on name places similar to the ones already being used on the carousel platform. He circulated a rendition of the new design and said the vendor's estimate is \$3,000 for the wall display. Board members supported the idea, and Boehm will include the cost in the 2015 budget.

Operations. Operations manager Tammi Beckley reported that the only unusual closing of the carousel this season was one morning when a couple of gorillas escaped from their enclosure in the zoo and the park campus was temporarily closed. In fact the gorillas were still within the gorilla area of the zoo and no visitors were in danger. We had 74 active volunteers and another 14 who put in fewer than 12 hours for the season. Eighty-five attended the volunteer dinner, of whom 24 were guests. Our principal hourly staff members were Audrey Claseman, Cindy Snowberg, and Mark Carlson.

Boehm reminded the board that we experimented with opening early one day a week, alternating between Thursdays and Fridays. The idea is to learn whether we benefit from being open while people are gathering outside the Visitors Center before it opens at 10 a.m. We found that on early-open Thursdays, total ridership was the same as for regular Thursdays. In other words, even when we had riders between 9:30 and 11, the day's total did not increase. Those early riders seemed to be drawn from people who would otherwise have ridden after visiting the zoo or conservatory.

On early-open Fridays, however, we averaged nearly 100 more riders for the entire day. The board agreed that we should continue to experiment, and should try another day. We agreed that we will open early on selected Fridays and Saturdays, and that to preserve flexibility in these tests we will not announce changes in our hours.

Tammi Beckley said the same volunteer group worked all the early-opening days.

Clyde Boysen remarked on the fact that there were only two no-show, no-call volunteer shifts all season, which he said was an exceptional performance for any organization. Boehm noted that 23 volunteers provided half of the hours served this year. Beckley said 10 of the regular volunteers were new this season.

President's Report. Boehm said if any elected members of the board do not choose to continue into another term beginning March 1, 2015, they should let him know.

Executive Session. The board went into executive session to discuss the future of the organization. Tammi Beckley was excused from the meeting and Peggy Kipka had already left. The discussion was not recorded. Following the executive session, the board authorized a search committee to fill a new full-time executive director position.

New Business. The board agreed to increase volunteers' gift shop discount to 15 percent.

The next board meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 8, 2015, at the Como Streetcar Station.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy A. Peterson, Secretary