

OUR FAIR CAROUSEL, INC.
Board of Directors Meeting
October 1, 2015

Present: Ben Albaugh, Peter Boehm, Tom Braun, Michele Furrer, Trude Harmon, Gary Jones, Peggy Kipka, Bob Marabella, Carrie Martinson, Linda McDonald, Mike Merrick, Bill Nunn, Nancy Peterson, Kevin Points, Jim Weichert. Executive Director: Colleen Murphy Roth.

The meeting came to order at 7:02 p.m.

Minutes of the April 23, 2015, board meeting were approved as mailed.

Finances. Jim Weichert gave a short report, given that the fiscal year had ended only the day before the meeting. Weichert said the firm that has been doing our annual audit has sold that portion of its business to another firm that has agreed to do the audit for the same price. Peter Boehm noted that our cost has gone up over the years and that our budget is lower than the threshold at which an audit is required. He asked whether Weichert would recommend continuing to do it every year, or perhaps less often. Weichert said he believes the fee is reasonable and that the audit is important for us as a small organization, to make sure we are following good practices and to provide credibility with donors. "I believe our numbers have integrity," Weichert said, "but I also think the audit is worth doing." He recommended continuing with the new firm.

He said payroll filings and unemployment withholding are both up to date.

Weichert said our certificate of deposit was coming due the next day and he recommended that instead of renewing it we put the money in our bank account and then use it to open a Schwab account to purchase CHS preferred stock, as discussed at the April meeting. The stock is currently yielding 7 percent.

Boehm reported that ride income is down for 2015, and much of that decrease is caused by an operational change we made to allow more young children to ride free. In the past, we have allowed children under age 1 to ride free. Meanwhile we have required children under age 3 to be accompanied by an adult, and we have required a ticket for both the child and the adult. This year we changed the policy to allow children under 3 to ride without a ticket; they must be accompanied by a ticketed adult. We made the decision during the off-season so could not test it; we estimated that we would lose about 5 percent of our ride income. But instead we are down by about 14 percent. Boehm's observation of families coming to ride one weekend indicates that about 14 percent of riders were children ages 1 and 2, the ages that now ride free.

Boehm said the new pricing practice has eliminated the steady stream of complaints generated by the old system, and for that reason it is well worth continuing. He made two proposals dealing with implications of the income shortfall.

First, we had asked the Cafesjian Family Foundation to fund cost overruns related to the hiring of a new executive director. We will have a shortfall of about \$12,800 due to our miscalculation of the new pricing policy. Boehm asked for a motion that we pay that amount from our own resources. The motion was approved.

Second, the executive director's compensation package provides a bonus for increases in ridership. Boehm proposed, and the board approved, reducing the threshold from \$150,000 in ride income to \$135,000.

The board briefly discussed ways to increase ridership. Colleen Roth mentioned her interest in increasing our ties with the zoo and conservatory as well as with companies around town. We might be able to create some joint promotions that are mutually beneficial. In addition, drawing more of the people already in the park seems like a big opportunity and a top priority.

We experimented this year with opening 90 minutes early on alternate Fridays in order to capture people waiting for the campus to open. We drew about 85 riders on each of those days, and we sustained the increase for the day. (In past tests of Thursdays we found that increased morning attendance simply brought reduced afternoon attendance.) Michele Furrer said that Monday is the weekday with the highest average attendance. Board members talked briefly about the possibility of adding Mondays to our operating schedule, if we think we can recruit enough volunteers to work the extra shifts.

Volunteers. Bob Marabella distributed minutes of a September 29 volunteer committee meeting. Excerpts: the committee discussed training and suggested supplementing training sessions with a training video and with onsite mentoring and job-shadowing. Efforts to recruit new volunteers will be a high priority, including the volunteer fair at Mall of America. The committee will work to build community among volunteers by posting photos in the volunteer area and by sending birthday cards. Colleen Roth is interested in doing an online survey of volunteers to supplement the annual end-of-season discussion.

Roth shared graphs showing open shifts by position and time of day. We tend to have the most difficulty scheduling people to work on the ride and to work on weekends.

Gift shop. Roth reported that a volunteer has taken over running the gift shop. He has cleared out much of the older inventory and repriced some. Some new items were ordered, and some of those sold out quickly. The display space and storage space has been decluttered and reorganized. Volunteers seem to welcome the changes.

Band organ. Mike Merrick said the organ has been working well. He replaced the blower bearings in spring. He plans to bring a sound engineer to the carousel to make recommendations for the backup music system, which needs to be replaced.

Carousel. Kevin Points reported that everything looks good. However, there are a couple of projects that will be worked on in the off-season. One involves the collar on the crank

in the row of horses led by the rifle horse. There has been noise and shaking because the shaft on the intermediate gear needs to be repaired. Also, Points will continue to look into the feasibility of an automatic oiler for the top bearing. He expects to be able to create one using a reservoir, solenoid, and GoPro camera. Instead of someone having to climb to the top of the carousel every day to pour in a cup of oil, someone standing in the motor house will be able to take care of it from below by turning on the flow for 10 to 30 seconds each day.

Restoration. Linda McDonald reported that last spring a volunteer from Thunder Bay came for a week to help with painting restoration. The volunteer learned a lot, and together they accomplished a large amount of work. Linda will invite her back in the spring. Meanwhile McDonald is monitoring wear and comparing the performance of acrylic paints, which she used for most of her restoration work, and oil, which she used on the pinto.

Tom Braun said the outer rim boards at the Carmel row will be replaced. The boards have to be soaked for some time until they are bent to fit the outer curve of the platform. He has identified an individual who seems qualified to do the work.

In addition, some of the lag bolts on horse steps are stripped and no longer can be tightened. Where that has happened, the horse must be taken off the platform, the hole must be drilled larger, and a section of dowel must be glued in. Tom Braun will teach Mark Carlson to do the work and Kevin Points will list the most badly damaged ones. We will try to repair over the next three years all the ones that need work.

Communications. Nancy Peterson reported that she has focused on Facebook promotions during the season. She will work with Colleen Roth during the off-season on communications support for volunteer recruitment and ridership and to produce new informational panels within the carousel pavilion.

Fundraising. Boehm reported that there have been no recent adoptions of carousel ponies. An installment payment of \$2500 is due soon, and toward the end of last year we were given a gift of \$1000 for a new computer.

Boehm spent many months working with a vendor on a new recognition plaque for the Adopt-A-Pony program. When it was completed, it was wrong in several ways—wood was the wrong color, some names were in the wrong size font, the photo of the band organ was upside-down. He had it redone, and the final product was beautiful. Unfortunately, something has been splashed on it and several panels were stained. He is experimenting with various products trying to clean it.

Executive director. Colleen Roth suggested that we move our free days to holidays, and perhaps seek sponsors for them.

She noted that we were closed two days because of a campus power outage, and we closed early one day because of extreme heat. The city is removing trees and putting 72

new parking spots between us and Como Town. Repair work to address the cracks in the concrete on our patios has again been included in the capital budget request. Como will be doing sidewalks next year, so we might be able to get our work done even if the project isn't specifically approved for the capital budget. Our fire suppression system is leaking; Viking is due to take a look at it.

President's report. Boehm noted that before the season he spent many days at the carousel clearing out things accumulated there since 1999. He said he kept anything of significance to the organization and the project but had tossed about 70 percent of what we had.

Board meetings during 2016 will be the second Thursday of January, April, and October. Those dates are January 14, April 14, and October 13.

Executive session. The board went into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next meeting will be Thursday, January 14, 2016, at the Como Streetcar Station.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Peterson, secretary