

Mississippi Theatre Association
Board Meeting
Meridian Community College, Meridian
Saturday, July 24, 2010

Tim Matheny recorded the minutes for the Board Meeting. Members present from the Executive Committee were: Stephen Cunetto, Thomas Hardy, Suzanne Allmon, Stacy Howell, and Tom Booth. MTA Board Members present were: William Rester, Mandy Kinney, Dex Edwards Thomas La Foe, Beth Kander, Sandra F. Camphor, Chris Roebuck, Barbara Smith, Tim Matheny and Daisha Walker. Members not present were Craig Helmuth, Alison Stafford, Rhona Justice-Mallory, Sherri Marengo, Kelly Norris, Tonya Hays, and Lisa Phillips.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15am by Stacy Howell.

Introductions were made around the table.

The board took a moment to review the minutes. Tom Booth made a motion that the board accept the minutes and Suzanne Allmon second the motion. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Treasurer Report –
Stephen Cunetto presented the Income Report

Suzanne Duboes motioned to accept the report and the motion was second by Dex Edwards.

Executive Report –
Stephen Cunetto presented the plans to approach the Riley Foundation for grant money that could be used to bus local students in for the youth festival.
The executive committee met and discussed fund raising options.

- Pledge cards
- Approaching BancorpSouth
- Riley Foundation
- Ford Foundation

They have also asked the board to think of statewide businesses that we could be approached as corporate sponsors (or individuals).

Mandy Kinney made the suggestion of C.C. Clark from Coke a Cola.

Tom Booth reported about the Create Foundation which will match 50% of donations into an endowment for scholarship. They will also manage the account for us.

OLD BUSINESS

Suzann Allmon reported that she received handbook updates

Scholarship Committee -

Tom Hardy discussed taking out a couple of points and making some minor wording changes
Stephen Cunetto suggests that the term “should” ought to be changed to “must.”
There was a discussion on how scholarship is decided
Dex Edwards addresses how another state ran the scholarship awarding.

Secondary Report –

- I. Mandy Kinney reported no changes needed for the handbook
- II. There was a discussion about the fairness to have paid professionals when the other directors/designers are teachers.
Suzann Allmon suggests that the adjudicators should know that professionals have been used or if design elements have been rented.
The discussion continued about stating upfront if the design elements were done by an adult, student, or professional.
The committee will develop a system by which the artists work is declared as professional/adult/student.
- III. The board appeared in agreement that a group only compete with one entry rather than multiple entries.
There was a discussion regarding the development of a youth community division
- VI. There was discussion on the report regarding the need to have a consistent verbiage to ensure all rights are secured (especially the right to cutting)
- VII. Mandy Kinney presented the committees pros and cons to advancing 8 or 10 productions.
Daisha Walker brought up the benefit for programs to have more opportunities to advance in order to develop support from their administration.
Tom Hardy mentioned the importance for each region to make it clear that the current wording suggests that the adjudicators do not have to advance five shows.” If there are only three quality productions then only send three.”
Suzann Allmon suggested that the board wait a year to establish a trend in the number of shows that advance. She points out that there hasn’t been enough consistency to establish a trend.
The board agreed.
- VIII. Regarding the college/university audition’s call back process –
Dex Edwards gave the suggestion that each college/university make a list of the 12 auditionees that they would like to call back. The selection would be done during the audition process and posted during the talkback session. This would provide a healthy competition and give the colleges/universities the opportunity to speak with their most desired student prospects at a designated time.
Tim Matheny suggested that we include a statement, on the audition form, that would express the students interest in speaking to all participating colleges and universities. This would allow the Junior/Community colleges to be freed from the current regional restrictions.
The College/University division will revise the document and submit it to Steven Cunetto.

Community Theatre Report –

Thomas La Foe presented several changes to the handbook for clarity and to alleviate repetitiveness.
There was a suggestion that the application form include proof of rights for music or media. It was also mentioned that ASCAP only applies to scene changes and curtain calls – it does not cover music used during the production.

Stephen Cunetto suggested that the Secondary Division include this in their rights declaration requirements.

Thomas La Foe also wanted to develop a standard light plot for festival production lighting. Tom Hardy said that there should be a statement already in the host's booklet

Thomas La Foe also desired the Community Theatre Festival have more time for rehearsal to match more with other festivals. There was continued discussion and the point was made that the problem lies with not having adequate time and space in the current festivals.

Tom suggested that it may have to stay the same for this year but we should look into finding locations with multiple spaces to allow for such a rehearsal time.

The Board agreed with the desire to proceed with a youth community committee. Juniper Wallace will be contacted for further exploration.

Awards Committee Report –

Suzann Allmon opened the discussion to have a new set of awards entitled the Outstanding Contribution to Theatre in Mississippi Award. The deadline will be November 1st to submit names to be honored. The board was encouraged to help get the word out as quickly as possible.

Diversity Committee Report -

Barbara Smith presented that MJ has been talking to Robert Walters from Oklahoma about serving as a possible adjudicator. He has worked in various levels of theatre. His information will be presented to the board.

There was a discussion about inviting colleges to the festival (possibly some predominantly African American) to showcase. Some suggested that a showcase slot be established and the groups could submit to present.

Barbara Smith expressed the committee's desire to develop a stronger and more diverse committee.

Stacey Howell announced the town hall meeting scheduled that day at 4pm. She invited all interested to attend.

SETC Report –

Tom Booth will be attending the fall meetings and again in the winter for an invited strategic planning meeting. He will send a form to generate an avenue for concerns to be discussed.

MTA Theatre Workshop Event –

Mandy Kinney and Thomas La Foe presented a chart diagramming their progress on workshop presentations for the upcoming October 1& 2 event.

Mississippi Writer Guild –

Representatives from MWG presented information and history of the group.

Stephen Cunetto discussed the genesis of the discussions between our organizations and the partnership that has developed.

Beth Kander announced the Mississippi Writer's Guild Conference & how we can work together to explore playwriting further.

NEW BUSINESS

Festival/Membership Fees –

Stephen Cunetto presented the need and desire to raise student and adult fees to help the association's deficit. The proposed increase is still less than the per person cost.

Tom Booth stated that he feels we must implement these fee adjustments or consider cutting programs. As of date, we don't have the outside income to fill the gap.

Thomas La Foe suggested differing some of the cost from student's fees to be absorbed elsewhere.

There was a discussion and the general agreement was the rise in student cost while not desirable was not a problem. The cost is still lower than other festivals.

Secondary Committee's main concern was the rise of chaperone costs. The chaperones are a necessity thus making the cost unavoidable.

Stephen Cunetto mentioned that there has been a trend that festival spaces have been charging.

There was a discussion on raising fees in other areas

College and University agreed that their fees could be raised by \$25

10 Minute Play Festival agreed that their fees could be raised by \$10

Theatre for Youth agreed their fees could be raised by \$25

Tom Booth brought the motion before the board and Daisha Walker seconded the motion.

All agreed and motion passed.

2011 Festival –

Suzann Allmon and Tom Booth gave an update on securing adjudicators

Playwriting Updates –

Beth Kander and Stacey Howell reported about their recording with Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

Beth Kander will meet with the Mississippi Writers Guild. She discussed the HONE list on the website and a media push of updated resources/events.

Beth also expressed the need to have an established system on choosing readers by passing them through Stephen Cunetto.

Stephen questioned the desire to have a summit again this year.

Thomas La Foe said it was a good summit and a good round table discussion

Stacy Howell stated that we probably don't need to have one every year but it might be a good idea to continue with a summit for this year.

There was a discussion on the locations of various divisions' events at the upcoming festival. William Rester suggested trying to use the Riley Center as much as possible –

Having the Theatre for Youth in the Riley Center would be of great benefit.

Parking will be an issue – there will be limited and paid parking on Friday.

Stephen Cunetto presented that Penny Kempt from the Riley Center is helping with suggestions for other venues needed.

College and University –

Dex Edwards discussed the problem in generating interest in a state festival. The suggestion was made to have a state college/university summit on Friday of the festival. Dex will put out a call of interest.

Community Theatre –

A summit will be planned to discuss concerns and develop ideas.

Professional Division –

Chris Roebuck distributed material from NewStage. They will explore having a main stage showcase again this year.

Chris also said the summer camp was a huge success.

Individual Events –

They will have a conference call to organize. Last year's events went well. There was some discussion on limiting events in the Adult sections to avoid single entries for events. There is a desire for college/universities to encourage students to compete in the adult events.

Theatre for Youth –

William Rester lead the discussion of sending a letter or encourage groups be considerate of the age appropriateness of material presented.

There was discussion of an awards issue. The suggestion was made to have more specific wording of awards to not have to change the rules.

William Rester made a motion to making changes to the wording of awards. Daisha Walker second the motion and it passed in full agreement.

Ten Minute Festival –

There was a discussion on updates on festival handbook. There was a discussion on the need to encourage a code of conduct to be addressed by the teachers.

Suzanne Allmon suggested setting a rule that if a student is involved in a secondary production they not be allowed to participate in the 10 Minute Play Festival to avoid conflicts in scheduling. IE events are acceptable but not involvement in secondary or community productions

There was the suggestion that all students wishing to participate in the 10 Minute Play Festival must submit how they wish to participate in the festival. (ie. actor, director, etc.)

There was also a suggestion to add to the rules that chaperones must stay at the event for control, if an issue arises with their student, and to help maintain the event.

There was a discussion and agreement that there should be a \$10 fee for students participating in the 10 Minute Play Festival.

The board adjourned and traveled to the Riley Center to tour the facility.