

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Thursday, May 13, 2021

The Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met remotely in regular session on Thursday, May 13, 2021, at 2:00 p.m., President Horn presiding.

ROLL CALL

Present: President Horn, Vice President Shultz, Trustee Bechtle, Trustee Levin, Trustee Lui, Trustee Moscone, Trustee Myatt, Trustee Pelosi, Trustee Wilsey and Trustee Wright

Absent: Trustee Gatti

Staff Present: John Caldon, Managing Director, and Jennifer Norris, Assistant Managing Director

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Horn reported that the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center has reopened after 15-months of being closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On Thursday, May 6, 2021, the War Memorial welcomed back a limited live audience of first responders and other guests to Davies Symphony Hall. President Horn noted that this concert also marked the in-person debut of the Symphony's new Music Director, Esa-Pekka Salonen. The first night's audience was limited to 200 people, but the Symphony will be permitted to welcome larger audiences as the City's health and safety guidelines evolve.

President Horn thanked the Symphony for taking this brave step forward and War Memorial staff for their efforts in making it possible. The opening was covered by MSNBC on multiple news programs nationally, which included interviews with War Memorial Managing Director John Caldon and significant media exposure for both Davies Symphony Hall and the San Francisco Symphony. President Horn stated that thanks to Mayor Breed's tireless efforts, San Francisco has led the nation in its response to COVID-19, and now the War Memorial is leading the reopening of live indoor performing arts in San Francisco.

President Horn said that it was a pleasure for the audience to see Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and War Memorial Trustee Paul Pelosi take their seats in the hall for this first San Francisco Symphony concert. Audience applause demonstrated great appreciation for the strong support Speaker Pelosi has given to the arts.

President Horn invited the executives of the War Memorial's resident companies to share with Trustees their plans for the further reopening of War Memorial venues.

Mark Hanson, Chief Executive Officer of the San Francisco Symphony, said that it has been exciting and joyful for the Symphony to host live audiences and that current health guidelines allow for seating 50 percent of overall audience capacity. He reported that the Symphony has created a "vaccinated only" section on the Orchestra level and in its Side Box seats and that a mix of COVID-negative tested and vaccinated people are being seated with social distance in the Loge and on both Tiers. Mr. Hanson thanked Director Caldon and War Memorial staff for their ongoing support.

Trustee Pelosi congratulated Mark Hanson and the San Francisco Symphony for bringing the Symphony back to its patrons. Trustee Pelosi said he is looking forward to coming again soon.

President Horn congratulated the San Francisco Opera for its successful and critically acclaimed drive-in “Barber of Seville” at the Marin County Civic Center during the past month and invited Matthew Shilvock, General Director of the San Francisco Opera, to provide an update.

Mr. Shilvock reported that as the Opera plans its return to the Opera House, many of the protocols it has worked on over the last year will pave the way for a safe return. He stated that the Opera anticipates beginning rehearsals in July and moving to performances in late August in the Opera House, with three operas presented over an elongated season this fall to accommodate safety protocols. He thanked local and federal elected officials for their support of the arts in the United States.

Kelly Tweeddale, Executive Director of the San Francisco Ballet, could not attend today’s meeting because of a prior commitment. President Horn congratulated the Ballet on completing its all-digital season.

In response to a question from Trustee Lui regarding War Memorial office staffing levels, Director Caldon reported that the City recently increased the permitted capacity of City offices to 50 percent starting next week.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Approval of Consent Agenda: Director Caldon stated that items submitted on the Consent Agenda included: minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting of the Board and Rental Requests and Rental Refund Requests for May 13, 2021. He requested their approval. On motion of President Horn, seconded by Trustee Moscone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 21-10

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that the minutes of the April 8, 2021 meeting of the Board and Rental Requests and Rental Refund Requests for May 13, 2021, are hereby approved.

Updates on Reopening Timelines and Budget: Director Caldon reported that the first concert in the Herbst Theatre is scheduled for June 10, 2021. The Wilsey Center will reopen in late summer. The War Memorial Opera House, as reported by Matthew Shilvock, General Director of the San Francisco Opera, will host its first live performance in August 2021.

Director Caldon stated that the Fiscal Year 2021-22 and 2022-23 War Memorial budget is moving into the Board of Supervisors Phase. The Mayor’s Office of Public Policy and Finance submitted the department’s budget to the Board of Supervisors with relatively few changes.

Director Caldon reported that the Capital Planning Committee has shared with the department details of its funding for War Memorial capital projects in the next fiscal year. The Capital Planning Committee will fully restore the facilities maintenance budget back its pre-COVID budget of approximately \$580,000. Capital Planning has also budgeted the full \$2.2 million cost of the project to modernize Davies Symphony Hall front-of-house Elevators One and Two. Director Caldon stated that funding to replace the Opera House mansard roof is not included in this year’s allocation. He noted that he explained to Capital Planning Committee staff the importance of replacing the Opera House mansard roof and that he would resubmit that request next year.

Director Caldon reported on his recent reorganization of War Memorial administrative staff in which the previous Chief Financial Officer position has been redesigned as a Director of Finance and Administration, which will supervise budget and finance, human resources, and administrative operations. This structure will more effectively distribute workload and supervisory responsibilities among management staff. The position has been filled by Donna D’Cruz. Director Caldon introduced Ms. D’Cruz to the War Memorial Board of Trustees and asked her to share a few words.

Ms. D’Cruz stated that though she is new to the War Memorial, she is not new to the City, having worked in multiple City departments over the last twenty years. She stated that she is honored to be a part of this team and historic organization.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Revenue, Appropriations, and Housekeeping Expenditures: Assistant Managing Director Jennifer Norris requested approval of the Revenue, Appropriations and Housekeeping Expenditures Reports for April 30, 2021. On motion of Trustee Levin, seconded by Trustee Moscone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 21-11

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that the April 30, 2021 Revenue, Appropriations and Housekeeping Expenditures Reports are hereby approved.

Opera House Seating Update: Ms. Norris reported that carpet and flooring installation are complete. The custom designed end standard has been approved and is presently being manufactured. The seat installation completion is targeted for mid-June. The ADA path of travel scope, including accessible stalls in the restroom, will take place over the summer.

President Horn expressed his enthusiasm for the completion of the seat replacement project and stated that having new seats, which are elegant and more comfortable, will be a wonderful way to welcome the public back to the War Memorial Opera House. He expressed his gratitude to Trustees for pushing for so many improvements to be executed during the COVID-19 venue closures and to staff for making them happen.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Special Committee on Racial Equity: President Horn reported that prior to the full Board meeting today, the Special Committee on Racial Equity convened to review lessons learned from licensee racial equity reports, which Trustees have been receiving monthly since February, and to discuss the creation of the War Memorial Board of Trustee's Racial Equity Statement to guide Trustee decisions and policy making, which is an important part of the Committee's work.

Trustee Wright, Chair of the Special Committee on Racial Equity, reported that the Committee reviewed a draft Statement she had prepared in collaboration with War Memorial staff. The draft is for review, discussion, and possible approval at the June 2021 meeting of the Board. Trustee Wright read the draft statement for the record:

“The San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, a monument to the San Francisco veterans of foreign wars, the birthplace of the United Nations, was created for the enjoyment of all people.

The War Memorial Performing Arts Center, under our care, has a long history of supporting European art forms, oftentimes to the exclusion of other art forms, artists, arts organizations, and their patrons, in particular people of color. Having been entrusted with San Francisco's premiere performing arts venues, the War Memorial Board of Trustees understands our broader obligation to the San Francisco's performing arts communities. Trustees, and staff, will work to create an environment where people of all backgrounds participate in, and are enriched by, performances and presentations, in venues that they have dedicated themselves to preserving for generations to come.

The War Memorial Board of Trustees is fully committed to advancing racial equity through our policies and use of our venues. The effectiveness of our work will be evident by the expansion of the racial and ethnic diversity of the patrons, presenters, and workers under our roofs.”

Following the reading of the draft Racial Equity Statement, Trustee Levin stated that it is a beautifully worded statement and that it should be supported.

President Horn thanked Trustee Wright and War Memorial staff for their work in creating the statement. He stated his approval of the statement and said that it would be distributed to Trustees for further review and placed on the June 2021 regular meeting agenda to be considered for adoption.

REGULAR ITEMS

Broadcast Fee Elimination: President Horn reported that at the regular meeting of the Board on April 23, 2020, Trustees passed a resolution temporarily waiving all broadcast and recording fees for licensees during the closure of venues due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

President Horn stated that staff is returning today with a recommendation to make permanent the elimination of these fees. In advance of today's meeting, Trustees received a document summarizing the request. President Horn asked Director Caldon to present the request to Trustees.

Director Caldon reported that requests to make audio and video recordings of rehearsals and performances has been increasing year-over-year for more than a decade and that licensees and presenters of all sizes need recordings for marketing and social media posts, to support grant proposals, and for archival and educational purposes. He further reported that the COVID-19 pandemic led performing arts organizations to expand their online presence by offering video content of newly created work and past performances. Director Caldon reminded Trustees that at the regular meeting on April 23, 2020, Trustees approved waiving video origination fees related to the broadcast of content previously recorded in War Memorial facilities.

Director Caldon stated that staff's recommendation is to retain the leniency of these COVID-19 policies as they relate to origination fees because they greatly support the financial health of our nonprofit licensees and represent a minimal loss of revenue to the War Memorial.

Director Caldon reported that eliminating these fees would have a negligible impact on earned revenue, as the War Memorial earned on average \$4,900 per year from recording fees between Fiscal Years 2016-17 through 2018-19, which is equal to approximately 1/1000th of a percent of the average earned revenue per year during that same period.

President Horn clarified the request by stating that for live performances with sold tickets, for which recording is an ancillary activity, recording fees will not be charged, but that there will continue to be rental fees paid by licensees to use venues solely to record performances for broadcast, recording or digital distribution purposes.

Following discussion, and on motion of Trustee Myatt, seconded by Trustee Moscone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 21-12

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that it approves the permanent elimination of all broadcast and recording fees for licensees.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Trustee Myatt said that there will be eight new and informative banners about the role of San Francisco during World War II installed in the Veterans Building Lobby prior to the first concert in the Herbst Theatre.

Trustee Levin added that there were 16 million American World War II veterans and there are now approximately 500,000 still living. It is a shame that the COVID-19 virus robbed them of the opportunity to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of World War II. He said the banners are a tribute to the greatest generation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Horn opened public comment by noting that public comment is an opportunity for members of the public to address Trustees on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board but not on the agenda.

President Horn stated that during the COVID-19 health emergency while Trustees are meeting remotely, members of the public may address the Board by emailing their public comment to WarMemorialBoard@sfgov.org or by leaving public comment as a voicemail at 415-554-6308 in advance of Board meetings. President Horn also invited the public to leave additional public comment until 12:00 p.m. on War Memorial Board meeting day.

Trustees encourage the public to provide their comments and feedback by email or voicemail. It should be noted that no public comment was received either prior to the meeting or in the subsequent week.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Horn adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.



Jennifer E. Norris
Executive Secretary