

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Thursday, November 14, 2019

The Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met in a regular session at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2019, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, President Bechtle presiding.

ROLL CALL

Present: President Bechtle, Vice President Horn, Trustee Davis, Trustee Gatti, Trustee Levin, Trustee Lui, Trustee Myatt, Trustee Shultz and Trustee Wilsey

Absent: Trustee Moscone and Trustee Pelosi

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Bechtle called for approval of the minutes of the October 10, 2019 meeting of the Building Committee. On motion of Trustee Shultz and seconded by Trustee Gatti, the minutes were unanimously approved.

President Bechtle called for approval of the minutes of the October 10, 2019 regular meeting of the Board. On motion of Trustee Wilsey and seconded by Trustee Lui, the minutes were unanimously approved.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rental Requests: Mr. Caldon stated that rental requests mailed to Trustees are routine and requested their approval. On motion of Trustee Shultz and seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 19-38

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that the November 14, 2019 rental requests are hereby approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Revenue, Appropriations and Housekeeping Expenditures Reports for October 2019: Ms. Norris stated that Revenue, Appropriations and Housekeeping Expenditures reports for October 2019 had been distributed to Trustees, and she requested approval of the October 2019 housekeeping expenditures as submitted. On motion of Trustee Myatt and seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 19-39

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that Purchase Order Nos. PO362532 through PO370598 are hereby approved.

Ms. Norris stated that a Revised Revenue Report for September 2019 had been distributed to Trustees, and she requested approval of the Revised Revenue Report for September 2019 as submitted. On motion of Trustee Lui and seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 19-40

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that the Revised Revenue Report for September 2019 is hereby approved.

REGULAR ITEMS:

Global Gourmet request to invest up to \$100,000 for food and beverage related facility improvements in the War Memorial Opera House and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall: President Bechtle stated that Trustees have received a letter from Global Gourmet Catering requesting to invest up to \$100,000 in contractually required facility improvements in the War Memorial Opera House and Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall. She referred this item to the Board's Presentors Liaison Committee.

Global Gourmet request for approval of updated pricing: President Bechtle stated that Trustees have received a letter from Global Gourmet Catering requesting approval of updated pricing for food and beverage concession items. She referred this item to the Board's Presentors Liaison Committee.

Veterans Commemoration Committee request to install directional signage in the Veterans Building: President Bechtle stated that Trustees have received a letter from the Veterans Commemoration Committee, which was previously named the Armistice Centennial Celebration Committee, requesting approval to install directional signage on the second floor of the Veterans Building. If approved, the signage would direct patrons to the World War I exhibit now located in the north corridor of the second floor of the Veterans Building. She referred this item to the Board's Building Committee.

San Francisco Opera request to approve a "What Does Home Mean to You?" activation in the main lobby of the War Memorial Opera House during performances of Hansel and Gretel: President Bechtle stated that Trustees have received a letter and diagram from the San Francisco Opera Community Partnership Committee requesting approval to present an activation in the main lobby of the War Memorial Opera House during performances of Hansel and Gretel. She stated that if approved, the activation would include an interactive gingerbread house located on the marble table, which will have surfaces for patrons to add their own messages about "What Does Home Mean to You?" written on self-adhering shingles. In addition to the display, representatives from local nonprofit organizations Community Housing Partnership and Compass Family Services will be onsite presenting information about their work. Opera staff will also be on hand to support the activation.

President Bechtle invited Charles Chip McNeal, Director of Diversity, Equity and Community for the Opera, to present more information, and to answer any questions from the Trustees.

Mr. McNeal thanked the Board for the opportunity to share with them about the Opera's new Diversity, Equity and Community Department, which seeks to reflect, engage and connect with the community in new and meaningful ways. Mr. McNeal stated that the department was established in August 2019, and is already resonating with individuals and organizations throughout the world.

Mr. McNeal reported that research has shown that for organizations to succeed going forward, they will need to engage with the community in which they live. He stated there is a business rationale and a moral imperative for doing good things that help our society, and that as a result, the Opera is exploring how it can have an ongoing dialogue with the community and emerging markets, such as those represented by people of color, LGBTQ folks, people with disabilities, women, and others.

Mr. McNeal asked the Trustees to consider this activation an experiment in engagement. He stated it will involve partnering with two community social service organizations, Community Housing Partnership and Compass Family Services. Mr. McNeal shared that the activation seeks to allow new audiences to see themselves, and to feel invited when they come to the Opera House. He said the proposal includes an interactive gingerbread house sitting on the marble table in the lobby on which children can add stickers to the gingerbread house, while adults will be invited to reflect on “What Does Home Mean to You?” and to add a shingle on which they’ve written an answer to that question. Mr. McNeal confirmed there will be representatives present from the two aforementioned local organizations, who are working to end homelessness in San Francisco. The organizations will provide interested patrons collateral materials describing their work, and patrons can make donations via “text-to-give,” if they so choose. Cash donations will not be accepted onsite.

President Bechtle thanked Mr. McNeal for his presentation and complimented his passion. President Bechtle asked Mr. McNeal if there were additional elements to the activation other than the gingerbread house, and he confirmed there would also be two tables in the lobby set away from the marble table, which would contain collateral materials for the two partnering organizations. Patrons would either begin their experience at the gingerbread house and be guided to the tables, or begin their experience at one of the tables and be guided to the gingerbread house. Mr. McNeal assured that the marble table would be protected to prevent damage. President Bechtle confirmed with War Memorial staff that cellular signal strength would be strong enough in the lobby for patrons to text-to-give. Mr. McNeal clarified that all donations made would be split equally between Community Housing Partnership and Compass Family Services. Trustee Lui asked if the activation would be staffed before and after the performance, and Mr. McNeal confirmed that it would.

Trustee Gatti clarified the dimensions and design particulars of the gingerbread house, and asked if staff would be assisting patrons with attaching their shingles to the gingerbread house. Mr. McNeal said that for safety reasons, patrons would hand their completed shingles to Operas staff, who would then affix the shingles to the gingerbread house on the patrons’ behalf, while engaging with the patron about the intent of the activation, and how a patron might be able to support the work of the partnering organizations. Trustee Lui suggested that this activation seemed to be an experimental trial of a new audience engagement strategy. Mr. McNeal agreed with Trustee Lui, and offered that a “text-to-give” donation option had never before been attempted by the Opera.

Vice President Horn asked if the installation would be taken down following each performance. Mr. McNeal affirmed it would, as “Hansel and Gretel” performs in repertory with “Manon Lescaut,” and the requested activation is only for performances of “Hansel and Gretel.” He further described the mechanism by which the gingerbread house will be removed and replaced so as to prevent damage to the marble table.

Trustee Gatti offered that there are multiple points of view from which to consider this activation, one of which is that patrons come to the Opera for escape and to see something wonderfully entertaining, which means the Opera should be sensitive to patrons by not always presenting activations of this type, as we want to use caution that we continue to create and maintain a safe and beautiful experience uncluttered from the stresses outside our doors. Mr. McNeal assured Trustees that the Opera has chosen this engagement carefully to align with the themes of “Hansel and Gretel.” He further stated that it is not the Opera’s intent to present this type of activation in connection with all operas, but rather only when an activation would fit the themes of the opera being presented. President Bechtle speculated that the Opera would receive feedback regarding this activation, and expressed interest in learning about that feedback following its conclusion.

After further discussion, on a motion of Trustee Gatti and seconded by Trustee Shultz, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

RESOLUTION NO. 19-41

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco to approve the request from the San Francisco Opera to conduct “What Does Home Mean to You?” lobby activation activities in the main lobby of the Opera House during performances of Hansel and Gretel, which may include patron interaction with a gingerbread house placed on the marble table, as well as additional interaction with information tables staffed by representatives of the Opera’s community partners, Community Housing Partnership and Compass Family Services.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Trustee Levin stated that at a recent American Legion War Memorial Commission meeting Chair Paul Cox stepped down and was replaced by incoming Chair Helen Wong. Chair Wong briefly introduced herself and shared about her background. She expressed that she was looking forward to working with the War Memorial Board of Trustees and War Memorial staff.

Trustee Levin noted that Monday November 11 was Veterans Day, and asked that the meeting be adjourned in honor of American’s Veterans.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

President Bechtle called for public comment on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, but which did not appear on the agenda. There being none, public comment was closed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Bechtle adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m. in honor of America’s twenty million living veterans.



Jennifer Norris

Executive Secretary/Assistant Managing Director