

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Thursday, March 14, 2024

The Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met in regular session on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., in the Trustees’ Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, President Horn presiding.

ROLL CALL

Present: President Horn, Vice President Wilsey, Trustee Gatti, Trustee Kopp, Trustee Lui, Trustee Muduroglu, Trustee Newstat, and Trustee Rocco

Absent: Trustee Fisher, Trustee Pelosi, and Trustee Wright

Staff Present: Kate Sofis, Managing Director and Rob Levin, Assistant Managing Director

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Horn opened the meeting announcing San Francisco Symphony Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen’s final season with the symphony will be the 2024-25 season. He then announced the retirement of Jim Jacobs, longtime stage electrician for Davies Symphony Hall, with the following resolution on behalf of the Board of Trustees, moved by Vice President Wilsey and seconded by Trustee Muduroglu:

RESOLUTION NO. 24-05

- Whereas,* **Jim Jacobs** has retired on January 17, 2024, following more than 35 years of employment with the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center; and
- Whereas,* Jim Jacobs began his career with the City and County of San Francisco as a part-time Stage Electrician for the War Memorial in December of 1988, becoming the full-time Stage Electrician for Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall in September of 1991; and
- Whereas,* Jim Jacobs, working closely with San Francisco Symphony management and production teams, oversaw thousands of Symphony rehearsals and performances to the benefit and delight of more than an estimated thirteen million patrons over his tenure; and
- Whereas,* Jim Jacobs developed a deep understanding of all parts of the technical stage production systems of Davies Symphony Hall, investing considerable time in continuing education and knowledge acquisition related to new technologies and providing vital information to War Memorial and Symphony management on necessary and recommended facility improvements; and
- Whereas,* Jim Jacobs insured operational dependability and long life for the systems and equipment under his care, assisting the War Memorial and Symphony in controlling costs and recognizing unsurpassed return on capital investment at the Symphony Hall and Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall; and
- Whereas,* During his long affiliation with the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, Jim Jacobs, acting as the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Steward, trained and mentored hundreds of stagehands, who had the good fortune to be assigned to work as a part of his crew; and
- Whereas,* As the indispensable leader of Davies Symphony Hall’s Stage Production team, Jim Jacobs welcomed and assisted countless producers and entertainers at Davies Symphony Hall, ensuring their performances were of the highest professional quality; and

Whereas, Jim Jacobs’s vast skillset, perpetual can-do spirit, and dedicated efforts have contributed to the War Memorial’s mission of providing safe, first-class facilities to promote cultural, educational and entertainment opportunities to residents of and visitors to San Francisco; now Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco to hereby thank and commend **Jim Jacobs** for his outstanding service to the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, and for his dedicated service to the cultural community of San Francisco, and extend to him heartfelt best wishes on the occasion of his retirement.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Managing Director Kate Sofis turned to the recent March primary election and relevant ballot measures that passed. She explained that Proposition E gives the San Francisco Police Department tools in pursuit of people suspected of crimes, including surveillance technology and drones, and changes the definition of when a police officer needs to fill out a report for use of force or needing to engage with a perpetrator without physical contact. She noted that this measure should help build back the image of San Francisco and hopes this will reinforce for folks coming to performances, that San Francisco is a safe city. Director Sofis also explained that the Ethics Commission ballot measure, Proposition D, overwhelmingly passed. She noted that since it will take six months before it is operative, there is an opportunity to work with the Ethics Commission to understand the regulations as it pertains to this legislation. She stated that there will be a change to gift rules and reporting of gifts under this new law. She also reminded Trustees that Ethics filings are due April 2, 2024.

ASSISTANT MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Assistant Managing Director Rob Levin reviewed the current revenue numbers for the Board. He noted that the Department is currently at about 70% of the fiscal year being completed, and all venues, outside of The Green Room, are at 70-89% of projected revenue, with The Green Room currently standing at 44 percent. He stated that they have had more inquiries on The Green Room since the price adjustment a few months earlier. Trustee Lui asked about whether package deals on catering are offered for events in The Green Room. Director Levin said currently they do not but encourage all licensees to work with Global Gourmet Catering, the exclusive concessionaire. Director Sofis noted that they would bring that suggestion back to the team that meets regularly with Global Gourmet. Trustee Rocco and Trustee Gatti remarked on the competitive nature of these types of rentals.

Mr. Levin also highlighted some interesting licensees of the buildings, including SFJAZZ, One Piece, and TEDx. He noted that the TEDx was made available by collaboration with the San Francisco Opera for use of the venues. Mr. Levin also announced that two new members of the Booking Team will be joining on Monday, March 18, and they will now be fully staffed.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Assistant Managing Director Levin stated that items submitted on the Consent Agenda included: the minutes of the January 24, 2024 Budget & Finance Committee meeting; the minutes of the February 2, 2024 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting; the minutes of the February 8, 2024 Regular meeting of the Board; Rental Requests for March 14; Housekeeping Expenditure Reports for February 2024.

Following discussion, on motion of Trustee Kopp, seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 24-06

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco, the minutes of the January 24, 2024 Budget & Finance Committee meeting; the minutes of the February 2, 2024 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting; the minutes of the February 8, 2024 Regular meeting of the Board; Rental Requests for March 14; Housekeeping Expenditure Reports for February 2024, are hereby approved.

REGULAR ITEMS

San Francisco Ballet and Opera Proposal to use of Accrued and Future “Facility Fee” funds for upgrades to automatic rigging system in the Opera House: President Horn stated that there is a proposal before the Board from the San Francisco Ballet and Opera to approve use of current and future accrued “Facility Fee” funds, currently accrued for hall improvements related to upgrading the automatic rigging system in the Opera House and to dedicate future collected “Facility Fees” to the project to cover expected expenditures. He invited Matthew Shilvock from the San Francisco Opera to address the Board. Mr. Shilvock explained that the automatic rigging system is one of the most crucial systems in the Opera House, which involves the art of moving things onstage using motors and computers: including curtains, scenery, lighting bridges, and people. He noted that before 2011 the theatrical systems were manual. He stated that the Ballet and Opera invested (80% & 20% of cost) in an automated system, installed between 2001-2011, which replaced dangerous counterweights with motors, controlled by a computerized system, modernizing the functioning in the Opera House. He stated that the system was anticipated to have an in-service life of 10-15 years, which means the automation system critically needs replacement now. He also explained that in late 2021, the manufacturer of the existing “Nomad” automation system, TAIT, informed the Opera they would no longer be manufacturing parts, or servicing the Nomad system as of December 2022, basically forcing a change to their new “Navigator” system. Mr. Shilvock pointed out that without TAIT support, parts must be foraged from disposed systems around the country. He also acknowledged that if something goes wrong, there is limited ability to fix it, and TAIT is not able to work with the Opera House on configuring the system for critical production-specific solutions.

Mr. Shilvock stated that with each passing month, there is now a mission-critical risk of losing a performance to an automation malfunction. He noted a few examples of times when the curtain or scenery motors have failed and impacted performances. He explained that the issues will eventually lead to the cancellation of shows, possibly during a performance. Mr. Shilvock explained that the proposal involves a multi-phase implementation of the TAIT Navigator, which will address system vulnerabilities and add functionality. He explained that the Opera has been implementing preparatory phases, including network and fiber installation, and the next major work needs to be undertaken in July 2025 – but parts must be ordered by August 2024 in order to secure the parts in time for the work. He noted that the majority of the Navigator system must be replaced all at once, and the later phases of replacing motor control cabinets, could occur over the course of four years. He explained that the total cost of the upgrade and replacement is \$5.5 million dollars, \$2.7 of which will be covered by San Francisco Opera capital, and \$2.9 million which is requested of facility fees. He reminded the Board that the Facility Fee is a charge of \$1-3 dollars on tickets sold by the Ballet and Opera, which accrues for projects like the Opera House seating project. He also noted that since paying off the balance of the seating project, the Opera and Ballet will have secured sufficient facility fees to cover the project by the end of Fiscal Year 2026.

Mr. Shilvock stated that while the Opera has agreed to invest almost 50 percent of the system through its own capital planning, the Facility Fee is the only viable source of funding for the remaining 50 percent. He noted that the agreement to use the Facility Fee requires three-way approval between the Opera, Ballet, and War Memorial, and respectfully requested the Board to consider the proposal.

Following discussion, President Horn referred the matter to the Presentors Liaison Committee and requested that they meet to provide recommendations to the full Board of Trustees in April.

Proposal to Extend Collection of “Facility Fee” to Outside Licensees of the Opera House: President Horn then moved to consideration of a proposal to begin collecting “Facility Fee” from outside licensees who rent the Opera House, to make it more consistent across licensees who utilize the Opera House. Director Sofis noted this is a companion to the Opera and Ballet’s request and they hope to have them considered together. President Horn referred the matter to the Presentors Liaison Committee and requested that they meet to provide recommendations to the full Board of Trustees in April.

Rental Waiver Request: President Horn stated that the next agenda item was consideration of a rental waiver request from Open Doors to Future Possibilities for a Veterans Celebration in The Green Room on March 22,

2024. President Horn invited Simone Lundquist from Open Doors to address the Board and she noted the event is free for veterans and law enforcement and their families. She explained to the Board that her organization provides resources and counseling for veterans with PTSD. C.J. Reeves, Chair of the American Legion War Memorial Commission, also endorsed the rental request waiver. Trustee Kopp reported that the Korean War Memorial Foundation will be vacating their offices in the Veterans Building which Open Doors may be interested in.

Following discussion, on motion of Trustee Kopp, seconded by Trustee Wilsey, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

RESOLUTION NO. 24-07

RESOLVED, By the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco, the rental waiver request from Open Doors to Future Possibilities for a veterans celebration in The Green Room on March 22, 2024, is hereby approved.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

None.

GOOD AND WELFARE

There being no good and welfare, President Horn closed good and welfare.

PUBLIC COMMENT

C.J. Reeves, Chair of the American Legion War Memorial Commission, reported that the Veterans Gallery hosted the exhibit *No Delays*, which included a mental health element and photography of the Golden Gate Bridge on silk. He noted that the High School for the Arts exhibit has just begun in the gallery, with the ribbon cutting on March 8 with Trustee Kopp in attendance. There being no further public comment, President Horn closed public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Horn adjourned the meeting at 2:46 p.m.



Francesca Cicero
Board Secretary