

MINUTES
WAR MEMORIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BUILDING COMMITTEE / SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

The Building Committee of the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco met in-person at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, in the Trustees' Board Room, War Memorial Opera House, Chair Pelosi presiding.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present: Chair Pelosi, President Horn, Vice President Lui, Trustee Gatti, Trustee Muduroglu, and Trustee Rocco

Committee Members Absent: Trustee Wilsey (*appeared on video, not counted for quorum or voting purposes*)

Non-Committee Members Present: None

Staff Present: Kate Sofis, Managing Director; Rob Levin, Assistant Managing Director; and Francesca Cicero, Board Secretary

Proposed Bas Relief Commemorating San Francisco Opera's Sixth General Director, David Gockley:

Chair Pelosi opened the meeting reminding Trustees they received a packet from the San Francisco Opera seeking consideration of its request to install a bas relief sculpture of San Francisco Opera's sixth General Director, David Gockley, in the lobby of the War Memorial Opera House. He noted that Matthew Shilvock, General Director of the San Francisco Opera, presented the Opera's proposal to this Building Committee at the previous Building Committee meeting on August 8, 2023. Chair Pelosi reminded the Committee that they voted to recommend to the full Board of Trustees that the bas relief project move forward, as well agreed on the proposed location in the Opera House Lobby. He stated that on August 10, 2023, the full Board of Trustees voted to adopt the recommendations of the Committee and unanimously voted to approve the Opera's requests. Chair Pelosi noted that the Building Committee and Board also provided feedback to the Opera on the initial designs for the bas relief sculpture, which has not been finalized.

Chair Pelosi introduced Jordan Amman, General Director's Associate, from the San Francisco Opera, and invited her to update the Board on the bas relief design and answer questions from the Trustees. Ms. Amman provided a brief update to the Board on the sculpture being created by Jennifer Frudakis. She noted that the design was reworked and reportioned based on the feedback received from the Committee, in order to minimize background space and allow Mr. Gockley's features to be more prominent. She noted that due to this change, the sculpture's size on the wall looked disproportionate to the other pieces in the lobby, so the decision was made to reduce the size of the overall sculpture by three inches on the width and one inch in height. Ms. Amman asked for any further feedback from the Committee, as the artist will be creating a completely new clay draft, which the Opera hopes will be the final iteration of the piece before it is cast for installation.

Vice President Lui asked what David Gockley's thoughts were on the piece. Ms. Amman responded that he loves the piece and was able to meet with the sculptor in person. Trustee Gatti asked about whether the argyle in the sweater could be toned down. Following discussion, Chair Pelosi thanked Ms. Amman for the update and that they look forward to seeing the final design at a future meeting.

Request from San Francisco Symphony to begin entitlement process for possible future improvements to Davies Symphony Hall: Chair Pelosi noted that prior to the meeting, Committee members received a letter from the San Francisco Symphony requesting authorization from the War Memorial Board of Trustees to seek entitlement from the City and County of San Francisco to make possible future improvements to Davies

Symphony Hall, including potential front of house lobbies, improved street-level access, creation of an additional performance space, improved backstage support spaces, and possible renovation to the performance areas. Chair Pelosi invited Matt Spivey, San Francisco Symphony CEO, to present the Symphony's request to the Committee.

Mr. Spivey recounted that Davies Symphony Hall is nearing the 50-year mark, and the Symphony has been exploring ways to make the building more accessible and connected to the community. He noted that while they are very much in the exploratory phase, they would like to begin the entitlement process with the City's planning departments, which can take up to two years to complete. He stated that San Francisco needs arts and culture to be as accessible, creative, and as vibrant as the community it is in, and to that end are looking to evolve the space to be more flexible, open, and welcoming. Mr. Spivey discussed aspirations to re-envision the public spaces to create more openness and connection. He noted that each of the front-of-house goals relates in some way to public accessibility, space and transparency. Mr. Spivey pointed out that there are a lot of cinder block walls which close off the space to the street-level and they are looking at more ways to utilize the space not only just for performances, in order to connect more to the surrounding community. He also stated that the performance space and back-of-house goals relate to creating connections between the audiences, the artists, and the space itself.

Mr. Spivey emphasized how important the relationship is between the Symphony and the War Memorial. He noted the intent would be to bring back more detailed plans in 2024 to the Committee and the Board. He thanked President Tom Horn and Managing Director Kate Sofis for their collaboration moving forward. President Horn recognized the San Francisco Symphony President Priscilla Geeslin in the audience and Mr. Spivey introduced and thanked the rest of his team who have been working on this project: Metta Krach, Facilities Chair; Elizabeth Shribman, Chief of Staff; Marni Cook, Senior Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement; and Andrew Dubowski, Senior Director of Operations. Mr. Spivey noted that they intend to file the entitlement submission paperwork with the City at the end of the month. He stated they were eager to start the process, and while it is approximately two years just to secure the entitlement, there is more flexibility on the timeline after securing the entitlement from the City.

Following discussion, and on motion of Vice President Lui, seconded by Trustee Muduroglu the following recommendation was unanimously adopted:

RECOMMENDED, To the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial of San Francisco that it approve the San Francisco Symphony's request to begin the process of seeking entitlements from the City & County of San Francisco for future improvements to Davies Symphony Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment is an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Committee on items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Budget and Finance Committee, but not on the agenda.

There being no public comment, Chair Pelosi closed public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Pelosi adjourned the meeting at 12:31 p.m.



Francesca Cicero
Board Secretary