

# PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

## Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors in Attendance: Sandra Nicholas, LeRoy Metz, David Tuthill, Peggy McKinight, Besty Teti, Mary McKinney Flaherty, Shelley Taylor, Dena LeMar, Douglas Kreps, Jim Crockard, Stephanie Bozic, Phil Barr, Dona Hotopp, Celia Gerard, Rich Beaty, Susan Cruz, Dawn Fleishner, Connie Cesario, Debra Dermody, Barbara Cottrell, Winthrop Watson, Austin Davis, Ayana Teter, Melonie Nance

Board of Directors Not in Attendance: Edwin Beachler, Carolyn Byham, Jay Costa, Natalie Mihalek, Richard Rauh, Guy Reschenthaler, Lisa Saperstein, Vincent Silvaggio, Hillary Tyson, Joseph Vincent, Vonda Wright, Beth Brown, Kara Brown Davis, Mary Finger, Stephanie Sciuillo, Michael LaRocco, Kathleen Miclot, Sarah Pietragallo

PBT Leadership in Attendance: Harris Ferris, Susan Jaffe, Jay Romano, Denise Mosley, Kathryn Gigler, Liana Pears, Lauren Carlini, Aziza El-Feil, Margie Grundvig

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## Call to Order, Welcome, Approval of September 14, 2021 Minutes -

Mary McKinny Flaherty called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. and reviewed the mission statement.

Next, Mary gave a few remarks in honor of Dr. Freddie Fu, who will be dearly missed. There will be a more formal event to honor him later in the year. She asked that everyone take a moment of silence for Dr. Fu.

## Approval of September 14, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Peggy McKnight made the motion, second by Doug Kreps to approve the September 14, 2021 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Passed.

## Financial Report - Rich Beaty and Jay Romano

Rich Beaty began the financial report. We are a full quarter into the year and there is minimal change since the last Board meeting. Looking at the balance sheet, liquidity remains strong. PBT may receive another large cash windfall as the supplemental SVOG application is still pending. The endowment is slightly down as it is mostly market driven. The balance sheet overall remains consistent from the last meeting. He noted that season ticket sales are tracking behind where we typically are at this point in the year. The school is also tracking financially behind as well, which is to be expected as there is uncertainty with the pandemic. The Gala is tracking well in terms of profitability and *The Nutcracker* ticket sales are coming in strong. We are in a fortunate liquidity position and will continue to monitor the operating performance.

## *September 30, 2021 Financials and Cashflow Report -*

Jay Romano gave the September 30, 2021 Financials and Cashflow report.

### *Statement of Financial Position -*

The first two lines items show the combined total of our restricted and unrestricted cash of a little over \$4.5M, which is the largest part of our current assets. The endowment at the end of September is close to where we were at the beginning of the fiscal year at \$10.5M. Under property equipment and leasehold improvements it shows \$9.9M, which is for the new HVAC system installed at the Byham House. We still have the restricted line of credit under tied into the RACP totaling \$835,000.

### *Statement of Activities -*

As Rich mentioned earlier there are a few areas we're closely watching such as ticket sales. The second quarter always has a major impact on this organization. The variance column under operating revenue shows some of the setbacks we've had in terms of School revenue. The public and private support category shows a positive variance as we've received a few small

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winds. Last month the projected year end shortfall was \$172,000, and now the projection is a \$169,000 year end shortfall. These numbers will keep shifting as we get closer to the end of December and *Nutcracker*.

## *Statement of Cashflow -*

Cashflow has never been better. The fiscal year will remain strong and we will continue to monitor all activities, income, and expenses.

There were no questions on the financial report.

## Audit Report - James Crockard

Jim Crockard presented the audit report. Schneider Downs is a Pittsburgh based company that PBT uses as its audit firm and prepares PBT's tax filings. Overall this audit was difficult in terms of logistics because they had to deal with Covid 19 and social isolation requirements. Jim thanked Jay and Shelly for the work that they did since this was essentially a virtual audit versus in-person field work. The Audit Committee was satisfied with Schneider Downs' work and recommends that the Board approve ballet's audited financial statement at the conclusion of this report. He pointed to some highlights from the audit report, specifically pointing to the government support the ballet received due to Covid 19. We received a clean / unmodified opinion, meaning that the Board continues to be excellent stewards of this organization. On page three of the report is the balance sheet for the year's end. He pointed out a few things that were different this year. There were no difficulties encountered with this audit: no disagreements with management, nor audit adjustments nor uncorrected misstatements. There were two waived misstatements deemed as immaterial. The auditors did not observe any fraud.

PBT has a healthy balance sheet as a result of government support and the financial support we got to put the mobile stage together. At the fiscal year end on June 30, 2020 we had \$2.4M in the bank and currently that number is doubled, so the Board should be pleased with the organization's stability. In current assets on top of the \$2.4M in cash we had government grants receivables in cash totaling approximately \$600,000. These are related to 4th quarter 2020 Employee tax retention credit. The endowment as of June 30 2021 was up roughly 20% due to the market. The first PPP loan was forgiven this year. Deferred grant revenue that roughly 1M was recognized as revenue this year and we get to keep this money. Long term debt shows \$145,000 balance is from SVA loan that was a package offered through covid relief. The interest low to zero, so this will be on here for a considerable time as it amorizes from \$145,000 down to zero.

On page four we have the statement of activities and changes in net assets. We can see here if PBT ended the fiscal in the red or in the black. At the end of this past fiscal year PBT ended in the black with \$841,000. This is PBT's 15th straight year ending in the black and not reporting a deficit. Jim cautioned that the Board should be careful to not let this deceive us since it was

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mostly external support we received from government funding through of covid relief programs. If we are not diligent this could easily turn into a deficit, so we do still need public support i.e. ticket sales and donations. Page 24 is a supplement that shows a more normal comparative income statement. Under public and private support the number more than doubled year over year, which is an anomaly. We will see a large surplus again in 2022 because of the supplemental SVOG and after that the numbers will go back to what we've seen previously.

There are a few footnote disclosures that Jim highlighted. Footnote two there is a new revenue recognition standard that lays out the nature and timing of PBT's revenue streams. In footnote 3, which is particularly important during a crisis, is PBT's liquidity including the lines of credit available. We have \$2.5M in total lines of credit available and because of our current assets we are extremely liquid during this unfortunate pandemic. Footnote 9 provides more details regarding PBT's lines of credit. Footnote 10 discusses the SVA loan and retirement arrangement. Footnote 11 is about the PPP loan forgiveness and employee retention tax credit that is being recorded as revenue. Footnote 17 goes into details about the SVOG received at the end of the fiscal year. Jim asked Rich to confirm how much PBT received from the Shuttered Venues Operators Grant.

Rich confirmed that PBT received \$2.7M from the SVOG. He also added that the line of credit increased by 1.5M at the beginning of the year, but this is not an additional cost to the organization. We wanted to make sure we understood all of our liquidity sources. We also appraised the Byham House.

Jim thanked Rich for his comments since it is important in times of crisis to proactively manage our liquidity to make sure we stay afloat. We were smart about everything and the work done by PBT to secure government funds was crucial in maintaining a strong balance sheet. He mentioned that PBT will be under more audit scrutiny because government auditing standards will apply to the SVOG. There will be more in depth testing of the ballet's internal control structure and compliance under the grant as a condition to get the money. Finally, the Audit Committee completed the 990 filing, and there were no changes except for the government grant. It was a simpler filing since there was no boutique or program ad sales in 2020.

There were no questions on the audit report.

Jim Crockard moved that the audited financial statements be approved. LeRoy Metz seconded the motion. Passed.

Jim Croackard moved to approve the ballet's 990 tax filing for the fiscal year June 30, 2021. LeRoy Metz seconded the motion. Passed.

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## *Pointe in Time* Update - Sandra Nicholas

Sandi Nicholas gave the update on *Pointe in Time*. She thanked the ball committee and Board members that bought tables and for those who've helped secure auction items. *Pointe in Time* is 3 weeks away and we are 77% of the way to our goal in corporate and individual sponsorships and have sold 38 single tickets to date for a total of 292 guests. Several donors have elected not to attend in-person, but have instead donated the full value of their table and will attend virtually for the auction. We will be zooming guests into the ballroom and taking bids virtually for the Community Youth Scholarship and the live auction. The links will be emailed closer to the event and we're working on a mobile bidding platform for the silent auction as well. She highlighted three of the live auction items: the Oceanfront stay at the Fort Lauderdale Ritz Carlton for six Six Walk-in roles in Alice in Wonderland, and a diamond necklace that will be modeled by PBT dancer, Jessica McCann. We have a \$50,000 match challenge from the Buncher Foundation and an additional \$20,000 match from the Adams Foundation for all new or lapsed donations. Vaccinations or negative tests are required for attendance. Guests will receive an email prior to the Gala to submit their vaccination and test information in advance of the event. There will be pre-registered and unregistered lines to help with the flow of check-ins the night of the Gala. Masks are required when guests are not eating or drinking. We have two celebrity guests joining us: Kimberly Brewer who will dedicate a song to the Company and Billy Gardell who will serve as our auctioneer.

There were no questions on the *Pointe in Time* update.

## Executive Director's Report - Harris Ferris

Harris Ferris delivered the Executive Director's report. He acknowledged the tremendous work that Aziza has done and continues to do as PBT searches to fill the open positions in the development department. An updated staff contact sheet was distributed, but if the Board is not sure who to contact to reach out to Liana Pears who is the Board liaison. Harris mentioned that a generous anonymous donor is funding a national search for a new director of development. Kelly Englert has been elevated to associate director of institutional fundraising, which oversees government foundation and corporate funding. Once there is a new hire in the government and corporate relations position, that individual will report to Kelly. We are still looking to fill the marketing PR position, and in the interim we are working with Meghan Swartz.

Harris noted that ticket and subscription sales are a couple financial risks the Board should keep in mind. There's also approximately a quarter million in TBA for production sponsorships in the budget. That along with what we're seeing in sales is the projected shortfall of \$169,000.

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The Live Music fund is at \$4.6M against a \$6M goal, so there's a \$1.4M gap left to close. PBT received a positive response from the McCune Foundation to submit an application for a \$3.5M grant for the new *Nutcracker*. Harris thanked Peggy McKnight for her work and rallying enthusiasm.

The Strategic Planning Committee met in September with great input under Dena and Winthrop's leadership. November 3 is our next meeting with the facilitators and the PBT leadership team will reconvene in December. With our current timeline we anticipate another meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee in February.

Announcing the next round of Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) has been delayed, and Harris reminded everyone this is a one to one match. Another opportunity PBT is pursuing is a gaming and economic development fund that will help build audiences from out of market. The state is sitting on \$5 billion from the American Rescue Plan that hasn't been spent, and that has been extended to 2024. PBT along with the cultural sector is lobbying the legislature to extend additional funding through the Museum and Cultural Trust Fund which was a significant grant for PBT last year.

Doug Kreps commented that while ticket sale numbers are disappointing, he wanted to congratulate whoever priced the tickets as they've increased since 2019.

## Marketing Report - Denise Mosley

Denise Mosley gave the marketing report. Her team has been thinking critically about the offerings we're putting out there including strategically evaluating discounts offered that will continue to evolve. A major topic is cost and savings. For the first time PBT printed our own tickets for the season premiere, saving about \$2,000. Meghan Swartz has been working with the Marketing team and has completed at least three press releases, written print and digital stories highlighting Susan and the dancers, and set up interviews with Susan. Another strategy introduced to save on expenses is reducing the number of print quantities of the playbills. To supplement the print copy we've added a digital version of the playbill via a QR code. Additionally, we've done some trading with *Nutcracker* tickets in exchange for services. One final note on staffing is PBT hired a new graphic designer, Homar Herrera, who has hit the ground running and you'll be able to see some of his work next week when the new building banners are posted.

Next Denise highlighted key marketing numbers. So far 11,465 tickets have been sold for the year. In the past season (2019-2020) a total of 16,223 tickets had been sold. We are about 5,000 tickets below where we were last year. Single tickets is the area where we're struggling as we are about 15% of the way to the goal. In terms of subscriptions we're about 75% of the way to the goal. We've also reduced expenses with PBT's boutique by opting for more evergreen pieces with a greater focus on the PBT brand. Finally we've been partnering with the Trust and

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brought about \$6,000 in *Nutcracker* sales through this partnership. The marketing team will continue to be mindful of opportunities to save and to get the word out more personally.

Shelley Taylor commended the Marketing team on their efforts and the numbers they're bringing in despite the environment we've found ourselves in. While the QR code is a great idea, she asked if there will be signs when people walk in with the code as well? Denise answered that the marketing table will have a sign, but will look into adding additional signage.

Denise ended her report with the numbers for the season premiere.

Friday: 574 tickets sold

Saturday: 512 tickets sold

Sunday: 687 ticket sold

This totals 1,773 with an additional 200 people who haven't paid yet. Another postcard was just sent out so more ticket sales are starting to come in.

## PBT School Report - Ayana Teter and Margie Grundvig

Margie Grundvig gave the School report. The School has been in session for seven weeks. *Nutcracker* auditions were already held and rehearsals started on Saturday, October 9. We continued our Pittsburgh Connection headed by Jamie Murphy by bringing in local guest artists such as Madeline Kendall from Contemporary Ballet Texture. She made everyone aware of upcoming performances. November 12 is the choreographic showcase that will be limited in studio, but will have an option for virtual attendance. On November 21 is our Afternoon of Enchantment that will be at PBT's studios, again with limited capacity. Parent observation week allows families to come into the studio and we're making sure they follow all the proper protocols. A four week workshop for 2-3 year olds was added this Saturday to try and bring this demographic back to in-person since up to this point only ages four and up have been in-person.

Next, Margie gave an update on the students performing in *The Nutcracker* and the covid testing protocols. She reported that of 177 eligible students, only 7 aren't participating in *The Nutcracker*. Of the students who are participating in *The Nutcracker*, 60 are unvaccinated. When we go into performance mode there are two external organizations that are helping dictate us on covid protocols: AGMA and the Benedum. While we remain adaptable, the policy right now is testing two times a week for the students who are unvaccinated and dancing with the Company. We're prepared to do this testing twice a week and this will be over the course of 6 weeks. We're engaging Quest Diagnostics and are providing those tests on site or at the Benedum. We looked into home testing, but there is a supply shortage. The projected cost for these 30 minute rapid tests are \$55 a test, totaling \$36,000. We implemented an \$85 covid fee to anyone participating in *The Nutcracker* that will offset some of the cost and organizationally PBT will cover the remaining cost.

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Ayana Teter commented that whenever Harris or Margie mention protocols there are a lot of details and almost hour by hour updates. She thanked them for their hard work and for keeping communication open with the parents.

Susan Jaffee also thanked Lauren Carlini who has been working extremely hard to keep track of the Covid protocols.

Harris mentioned that the Cultural Trust may be relaxing testing mandates for children under 12 to only have to wear masks, and this could positively affect *Nutcracker* sales

## Artistic Director's Report - Susan Jaffe

Susan Jaffee gave the Artistic Director's report. She is very excited that we're about to go into the Benedum. Helen Pickett is here and she's happy with both casts as she's coaching *Petal*. Judy Bugatti, who was a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet, is coaching Diamonds. Stephen, Marianna, and Susan are coaching the rest of the pieces. Susan encouraged everyone to come to the season premiere as the mixed rep has something for everyone and after seeing a dress rehearsal she is very pleased with dancers. Lastly, Susan mentioned that *Nutcracker* rehearsals have begun.

Susan then discussed next year's season. The season will start with Nacho Duato's *Duende* at the August Wilson Center in October. Next is a narrative work called *The Exiled* by Helen Pickett. The next work came to fruition after Harris introduced Susan to Sandy Rosen, who is the Chair of the Violins of Hope in Pittsburgh. This organization preserves violins confiscated from concentration camps and the music that was written by the Jewish people while they were in those camps. Susan received a story about a young woman named Florence Warren, a Jewish dancer, who hid from the Nazis by dancing for them and became a huge star. She danced all over Europe, eventually moved to America, married an American man, and spent the rest of her life here. Her story is truly inspiring and shows the human spirit and resiliency. After this will be the last season to see Terry's *Nutcracker*. In February we'll perform Michael Pink's *Dracula*, which is very aligned with the novel and we're hoping to market this in a way to capture a broader audience. Next we have Christopher Wheeldon's signature piece that's kindly being sponsored by David and Janet Campbell, *Polyphonia*. Jorma Elo's, Boston Ballet's resident choreographer, signature piece, *First Flash* will be our next piece, and we'll end with *Theme and Variations* by Balanchine. Ronald Hynd's *Sleeping Beauty* will conclude the season at the Benedum. Finally in June in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra the Company will perform *Bolero*. During the second week of *Bolero* presenters will be in attendance and we hope that this is an opportunity to ignite excitement about performing *Bolero* in front of an orchestra across the country.

Susan went on to discuss the newly formed *Nutcracker* Committee led by Peggy McKnight. Peggy hosted a lunch at the Duquesne Club last Friday to start to get people excited about the



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new *Nutcracker*. By February Susan will have renderings so that the committee can talk to people about the new *Nutcracker* and have a physical picture of Susan's vision. Currently Susan is creating a storyboard so she can start working with a designer in November.

On Friday we have a slideshow at the top of the performance for Patricia Wilde. The slideshow will have personal interviews with people who knew Patricia. Susan thanked Lisa Auel, Missy Graf, and Homar Herrera for their hard work creating and designing the slideshow. The three Season Premiere shows will be dedicated to Patricia. On Saturday PBT is hosting an alumni group to celebrate Patricia and there will be an open mic. Saturday night's performance will have a live stream, A Diamond Tribute to Patricia Wilde. Those who bought a ticket but are still hesitant to enter the theatre will receive a private link to see Diamonds virtually. Before Diamonds there will be a short clip created by WOED about Patricia Wilde and Lati Falk. Susan will come out and speak about Patricia Wilde, the Live Music Fund, and the PBT orchestra. There will be a QR code on the program where people can donate to the Live Music Fund.

Susan gave shoutouts to Denise Mosley and Christian Lockerman who created short videos about the choreographer and dancer for social media to help generate enthusiasm, educate, and create more interest to come to the theatre.

Harris, Susan, Jay have been meeting weekly to strategically discuss ways to find more dancer weeks for more touring opportunities. There is nothing concrete yet, but we are looking to go to places like Jacob's Pillow, Edinboro Festival, Joyce Theatre, etc. Harris has already reached out to agents there to kickstart this project. Susan believes that once PBT is more visible nationally, our entire standing in the dance world and here in Pittsburgh will be elevated.

There were no questions on the Artistic Director's report.

## Education and Equity Project Transformation Team Report - Dr. Kathryn Gigler

### *Education and Community Engagement -*

Kati Gigler gave the Education and Community Engagement report. Kerra Sullivan Alexander was elevated in her position to Assistant Director of Education and Community Engagement. Tonight Janet Campbell and Lisa Auel are hosting a virtual program about costumes for the performances this weekend. New programs in the theatre include pieces by the choreographers here in town as well as Mariana. On November 6th and 7th we'll be participating in Crash the Carnegie's event with the Carnegie libraries. Additionally we'll be participating in a sensory friendly activity for part of their sensory friendly observation for families the morning of November 7th. Next, we're working with Jamie Murphy to preview several of the contemporary core choreography pieces that will be performed at the showcase. They will be performing at the Hall of Sculpture, which is exciting since the Company performed there twice last year. We'll also be working on a consultant basis with Mendelssohn Choir in December who is working on their first sensory friendly concert. We're also

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collaborating with Jeremiah's Place which offers families emergency foster care. We're expanding our collaboration to work with professional development with them as well as creative movement.

## *Equity Project Transformation Team -*

As Margie mentioned, Pittsburgh Connection is up and running and we're expanding that to several more levels as well as supplementing that with the diversity and dance seminar series. Our first round of that for levels four and up through the Grad program was just last week. The first Lunch and Learn series of the season was also last week with Chrisala Brown, a well known African American dancer specialist in Pittsburgh. Kati facilitated an IDEA and mental health focused workshop for faculty a couple weeks ago to start some good conversations with the School around gender identity and mental health and wellness.

There were no questions on the Education and Community Engagement report.

## **Adjournment -**

There being no further business, Mary McKinny Flaherty adjourned the meeting at 1:15pm.

*Submitted by, Harris Ferris*

*Approved by, Betsy Teti*