Minutes - Village Voices Board Meeting

Sunday, January 5, 2025 7:30 pm

Hosted on Zoom by Deborah Scott

In Attendance: Jerry Shaw, Dan Fasani, Mike Hanika, Geri Mankey, Chris Alexander, Gloria Hilliard, Katie Phillipson, Tami Lesser

Not in Attendance:

I. Approval of November 17, 2024 minutes – Approved. Will be posted on the VillageVoices.org website.

**II President’s Report**

1. Happy holidays to all and a healthy new year to you and yours. We had a very successful concert last month, a fact that we can all take pride in.
2. Issue with concert dates for winter 2025. To summarize the first issue (concert dates), we have typically given a cash deposit to the Scheer Forum Theater (Bank of America Performing Arts Center or BAPAC) to hold our concert dates one year in advance. This had always been honored except this past spring where we had to move our concert several weeks earlier to the middle of May. In planning dates for our coming Holiday 2025 concert, we once again were pre-empted by one of four groups who have first choice of venue dates. We currently have our deposit shifted to a late November date (just prior to Thanksgiving), although we could opt to have the concert after the holidays in January. Mike Hanika talked with April Carter at the BAPAC and she apologized for losing the December 2025 dates, saying there was nothing she could do. After discussion, we determined that a date in January is not acceptable, and don’t want to look for another venue. The school district venues are not able to hold dates for us this far in advance. The Board voted to hold the concert on November 21 & 22, 2025.

There was more discussion about dates going forward. The Board would prefer to continue to hold our concerts at the BAPAC for several reasons – our patrons are used to that venue, and it offers a number of benefits such as technical directors, box office, green room, and publicity. April Carter at the BAPAC has assured us that we have the dates of December 5 & 6, 2026, based on her discussions with the group that prempted us. April says we also have the first weekend in December going forward after 2026 but is not able to guarantee this. The Board feels we need more assurances from the BAPAC that we can have the dates we need. It was suggested that members of the Board would like to meet with her and theater management to discuss commitments going forward. We also have safety concerns with the staging and need to address that with Forum management.

Music committee will need to work on new music for this concert November 2025.

May 30 and 31 are the concert dates for 2025 spring concert.

**III Committee Reports**

**Ways and Means report – Geri** Zeffy is a fundraising service that works with non-profits. Geri spent some time talking with Zeffy and a choir in Camarillo that uses this service. Benefits they provide include live-stream of concerts, fundraising portal, and increasing donations (streamline marketing, fundraising efforts, etc.) It is a free service, though they do have service charges for some things. The majority of our revenue currently comes from concerts, and our ticketing needs to go through the BAPAC. This type of service would work for our Broadway Review which is held at the Methodist Church, but not our concert ticket sales. We have 20-25 donors per year, and Zeffy might increase donations and increase the number of donors. Discussion about how we would use this service, who would be the liaison with them, and do we have a large enough donor base? If we want to maintain our own donors, we also need a way to capture email addresses of our patrons. After a motion to consider Zeffy, the Board voted 5 to 2 to drop discussions with Zeffy because it is not clear that we need their services at this time. Geri is looking for ideas for other restaurant fundraisers going forward. We currently have booked Panda Express for January. She will approach Patron again, as well as other restaurants suggested by the Board.

**Treasurer’s Report – Dan** Dan proposed that we open a high-yield savings account in a second bank. Generally, it is difficult for non-profits and individuals to open high-yield savings accounts, which are currently paying 4.0%+ in annual interest. However, if we open a new account at a new bank, we can get one of these accounts. He estimates an extra $110 per month in interest revenue, instead of the $13 per month we currently receive in our Wells Fargo savings account. By opening an account a second bank, it would allow the treasurer to move money from one bank to the other when the rates drop. The money being moved would be considered “new money” by the receiving bank, thus enabling the Village Voices to earn higher rates of interest for a few more months from the receiving bank. Motion for Jerry and Dan to open a high-yield savings account at Citibank, which would pay 4.5% interest through March 2025. The President and Treasurer would be signatories on the new account at Citibank, as they are at Wells Fargo. We would not be closing either of our accounts at Wells Fargo. Approved.

December Year to Date, income was up $15,783 over budget due to a very large donation, concert ticket sales up $2,700 over budget and the opportunity baskets bringing in $1,100 which wasn’t budgeted. The big negative from the budget was that we only received grants totaling $3,600 vs $6,600 budgeted. Expenses year to date are up nearly $3,000 more than budgeted, with the largest item being a $1,000 scholarship that was awarded that was not budgeted. Overall, income is up $12,824 more than budgeted through the first six months of this fiscal year (July through December) and we have a little more than $35,000 in

the bank. We are in great shape heading into the second half of our year.

Scholarship Fund Balance: The current scholarship fund balance is $4,684.81. The Scholarship Fund is comprised of donations specifically designated for Scholarships, plus the funds raised from the Broadway to Westlake Scholarship fundraiser, less scholarships awarded. The Board could donate additional funds to the Scholarship Fund, but has not done so in the past year.

There was a quick discussion about clarifying the role of the treasurer as Jerry and committee are updating the bylaws.

There was a motion to add a budget item for publicity in order to boost posts on social media or use advertising. Motion to budget $800 for advertising for second half of fiscal 24/25 year. Approved.

**Concert Master’s Report - Mike** There is a positive $2,060 settlement from BAPAC from December concert. Expenses were lower than budgeted and ticket sales higher than last year. We sold a total of 600 tickets and 475 attended. Should we be concerned about this? Some issues with scanning, but no one was turned away. Mike spoke with Cameron (the technical director) again and we will add verbiage to contracts to add an additional riser and safety bars going forward. Upcoming concert dates: May 30 & 31, 2025 and November 21 & 22, 2025. He will discuss concert dates going forward with April Carter and management at the BAPAC.

**Membership Report - Chris** Audition dates scheduled for Saturday, January 11. Tami is running ads about auditions in Facebook, the Conejo Valley Guide and Nextdoor. Rehearsals start Feb 4. Chris is now our webmaster. He is looking for photos and videos from the December concert. He asked Gloria for the program list for the spring concert and she will send recordings to Chris when she has them ready.

**Publicity Report -Tami** Promotional Efforts sent to Constant Contact and all socials, including the Acorn, Conejo Valley Guide Forum, Goebel Center, and Arts Council of the Conejo Valley:

·      “Spirit of the Season” performance blasts

·      12/11 Corner Bakery Fundraiser blasts

·      Winter/Spring 2025 Auditions Starting January 11 blast

**Boosted Facebook Ads for:**

·      Boosted ad for “Spirit of the Season” 2024 winter performances ran 11/11-11/29/24, totaling $300.

·      Boosted ad for winter/spring 2025 auditions will run 1/6/25 through 1/26/25

There was a motion to budget $800 for publicity for the spring semester. Approved.

**Graphics and Programs Reports -Katie** She will work on getting Broadway Review graphics to Glora, Tami, and Chris for posting on our website and publicizing this event before February 1 & 2.

**Choir Director’s Report - Gloria** New music arrived. She will work with the Librarian to get this sorted for the spring semester. Currently, she is working on rehearsals for the Broadway Review. Laura Rank is setting up a date for scholarship auditions. Gloria will ask Helga if she would like to continue as wardrobe person.

**IV Old or New Business** The Board took a quick email vote on December 9, 2024 regarding Katie Phillipson using the Village Voices name for an outside event. Her kid’s choirs were performing on December 15th and a small group of Village Voices members will be singing a few songs. She requested permission to acknowledge them as an ensemble from the Village Voices Chorale. Approved by email vote.

**V Adjournment** at 9:33 p.m.

**Next meeting Sunday, February 9, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.**