

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 11, 2019 at 12:00 PM Eastern

PRESENT:

Mark Brokaw
Anne Kauffman
Laura Penn
Sheldon Epps

ON THE PHONE:

Linda Hartzell
Ethan McSweeney

ABSENT:

Mark Lamos

STAFF PRESENT:

Maureen Fox
SDC Executive Assistant
Alex Felicetti
*"Mr. Abbott" Award Event
Producer*

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. President Sheldon Epps called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM.

II. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- a. President Sheldon Epps welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Trustees' adjusted meeting schedule (the Monday before the SDC Executive Board Meeting) and reminded everyone the 2019 dates are included in the packet.

III. "MR. ABBOTT" AWARD

- a. SDC Executive Director Laura Penn gave the Trustees a preview of the "Mr. Abbott" Award gala gifts: stationary featuring SDC founding women choreographers and SDC notebooks branded with the SDC 60th Anniversary logo.
- b. Gala Co-Chair Mark Brokaw gave an update on the "Mr. Abbott" Award event. The planning team has one table and 13 individual tickets left to sell for the dinner and 40 tickets left to sell for the performance. They have reached out to Vicki Clarke and Kelli O'Hara to sing at the dinner and the performance respectively and are working to find a script writer. Rick Hip-Flores has agreed to be the accompanist during dinner.
- c. Event Producer Alex Felicetti joined the meeting and provide an overview of the commissions. Three choreographers will use recorded music, and two will use live performers. They range from two to seven dancers. All five choreographers are keeping within the parameters of the commission, and all pieces will be less than five minutes.
- d. Ms. Penn stated SDCF will present the letter to the Agnes de Mille estate as part of the performance and is working with Jerry Mitchell on how to stage that moment. She stated the dinner is divided into three acts: first is the welcome, key messages, and framing the evening; second is the Vicky Traube celebration and tribute, which includes a video and song, and the Fund-a-Need; third is the conclusion with David Hyde Pierce explaining the commissions and directing everyone to FIAF. Ms. Penn confirmed that the Shubert Organization has agreed to the first Fund-a-Need gift of \$10K in the room, and the planning committee will identify other advanced donors in the coming weeks.
- e. Ms. Penn reviewed the "Mr. Abbott" financials with the Trustees.
 - i. She stated that the current projection is \$128K with \$7K in contingency. SDC Board participation is around 60-70%, and Dan Knechtges and Michael Wilson will follow-up with the remaining Board Members regarding their contributions.
 - ii. SDCF has \$9K in ads left to sell and is targeting to raise \$50K during Fund-a-Need.

- iii. Christine O'Connor will research attendees to identify potential donors and will share her research with the Trustees prior to the event.
- iv. The Trustees discussed the idea of the special "Mr. Abbott" Award as being for the unsung heroes of the industry.
- v. Ms. Penn stated that George Abbott's granddaughter will attend for the first time.
- vi. Ms. Felicetti stated the dress code is festive and that the planning committee is focusing on getting more choreographers in the room.

IV. PROGRAMMING REPORT

- a. Mr. Epps stated that Sarah Bierstock is working as an Interim Program Director and is doing an excellent job organizing the remaining programming for this fiscal year and thanked the Trustees for helping her with several events.
- b. The Trustees discussed the Observership stipend (\$300 per week) and discussed ways to increase that stipend as a long-term goal. They discussed a strategy for including that in the narrative for the upcoming Fund-a-Need.
- c. Ms. Penn asked Maureen Fox to check with SDC Director of Finance and Administration Cole Jordan on how much it would cost to raise the Observership stipend to \$400 a week. Ms. Fox reported that it would require an additional \$18K each year.
- d. The Trustees agreed to continue brainstorming ways to increase the stipend.

V. SEARCH UPDATE

- a. Ms. Penn provided an update on the search for a new SDCF Executive Director. She thanked the Trustees for meeting with several candidates and thanked Ms. O'Connor for helping locate prospective hires. Ms. Penn will meet with several candidates later this week.
- b. Mr. Epps asked Ms. Fox for assistance in scheduling an in-person meeting with a potential candidate while he is in New York.

VI. GOVERNMENT FUNDING STATUS

- a. Ms. Penn reported that with the help of a grant writer, SDCF submitted its New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) grant application on time. She stated that during the process, staff identified a new focus for the Observership program, which is to place observers with directors who are pushing the form forward in terms of EDI and access (for example, SDCF placed an observer with Kenny Leon, who used an ASL-Choreographer on *Children of a Lesser God*). SDCF will strive for intentionality with future Observer placements.
- b. Ms. Penn stated that SDCF is now working on the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) grant for the Observership program. As the grant writer is only available to consult, Ms. Fox will write the grant.
- c. Ms. Penn informed the Board that she is reviewing the contract from the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) for their \$15K gift toward SDC's research project on the life of the director.
- d. NYSCA representative Kathleen Masterson will be coming into the office tomorrow to meet with Ms. Penn and may recommend SDC reapply for additional funding for the research project. Ms. Penn has also arranged to speak with a prospective research firm.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. President Sheldon Epps adjourned the March 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting at 1:14 PM.

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be Monday, April 15 at 12:00 p.m. ET.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 26, 2019 at 12:00 PM Eastern

PRESENT:

Mark Brokaw
Anne Kauffman
Laura Penn
Sheldon Epps
Linda Hartzell

ON THE PHONE:

Mark Lamos
Ethan McSweeney

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Cole Bonenberger
SDCF Program Associate
Maureen Fox
SDC Executive Assistant
Christine O'Connor
Consultant

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. President Sheldon Epps called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM.

II. "MR. ABBOTT" AWARD

- a. Mr. Epps thanked everyone for a momentous evening and their extraordinary work.
- b. Initial Results
 - i. It will take several weeks to confirm all of the "Mr. Abbott" Award expenses and income, but SDC Director of Finance and Administration Cole Jordan informed SDC Executive Director Laura Penn that he expects the event reached its goal of \$120K net.
 - ii. Goal for Fund-A-Need in the room was \$47K and raised \$53,011.99.
- c. Schedule for Thank You Gifts
 - i. Ms. Penn stated that flowers were delivered today to the choreographers and to Laura Osnes.
 - ii. SDCF ordered custom letter openers as thank you gifts and will send those along with framed photos from the event and stationary to event organizers and major donors. Mr. Epps, Mark Brokaw, and Rachel Chavkin will sign thank you letters to everyone who attended and/or donated to the event.
- d. Post-Mortem
 - i. Ms. Penn will organize an official post-mortem in the coming weeks.

III. SEARCH UPDATE

- a. Christine O'Connor provided an update on the search for a new SDCF Executive Director. She stated that there are three finalists for the position, two in New York and one in San Francisco. Ms. O'Connor recommended Rebecca Hewett as the top candidate and stated her belief she would be successful as both a fundraiser and program organizer. Ms. Penn echoed Ms. O'Connor, as did Mr. Epps and Linda Hartzell, who had all met with Ms. Hewett.
- b. Next Steps
 - i. Mr. Brokaw, and Ethan McSweeney will meet with Ms. Hewett (either in person or by phone) in the next week.
 - ii. If the Trustees choose to make her an offer, it was requested that Ms. O'Connor handle the negotiation. She stressed the importance of confidentiality until an offer is accepted.

IV. MAJOR GIFTS

- a. Ms. O'Connor will work with Cole Bonenberger to examine SDCF's donor history and retool the list of past donors with the goal of determining specific individuals and groups to cultivate and/or solicit.
 - i. Ms. O'Connor also stated she and Mr. Bonenberger will review recurring gifts and reach out to individuals whose credit cards have expired.
- b. The Trustees discussed ways to manage SDC Executive Board cultivation and solicitation, in particular the year-end Board campaign and annual "Mr. Abbott" ticket purchases. The Trustees emphasized the importance of setting clear expectations, of being consistent with timing, and considering a range of appropriate giving levels.

V. OTHER

- a. The Trustees discussed creating SDCF lapel pins and Trustee business cards.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- a. President Sheldon Epps adjourned the March 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting at 1:32 PM.

The next Board of Trustees Meeting will be Monday, April 15 at 12:00 p.m. ET.