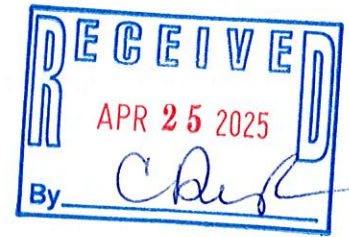


Thomaston Opera House Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting – April 17, 2025



Attendees: Commissioners Michael Burr, Richard Chandon, Mark Foster, Joseph Hartz, Rebecca Skinner

Also in attendance: Jeff Dunn, Landmark Community Theatre; Gary Kingsbury, chair, Landmark Community Theatre Board; other LCT Board members

Chairman M. Burr called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Correspondence: M. Burr said he forwards correspondence concerning the renovation project if it is of interest to the Commission.

Minutes of the previous meeting: On a motion by J. Hartz, seconded by M. Foster, the minutes of the March 20, 2025, meeting of the Opera House Commission were approved with one correction to delete the statement that Jeff Dunn was in attendance (3-0, R. Skinner and J. Hartz abstained).

UPDATES AND REPORTS

Restoration: Progress continues slowly. The elevator shaft is completed almost to the top. Old wiring that is intertwined with the steel roof beams is not in code and needs to be pulled out and replaced. Plumbing work is mostly complete. Duct work for ceiling fans needs to be brought to code. For some projects, such as installing the plywood in the attic, money and time have been saved by hiring local contractors rather than Burlington. In the green room, replacing the windows would have been very expensive and a local contractor was hired to paint them instead. Friends of the Opera House have funded these projects by local contractors.

Landmark Community Theatre: J. Dunn provided a written report for the first quarter of 2025, copy filed with these minutes. M. Burr requested a quarterly revenue report be included each quarter.

TLC Committee: No report (D. Verdosci not in attendance). M. Burr said D. Verdosci will manage a thorough deep cleaning of the Opera House.

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS

LCT contract: The contract needs to be fine-tuned, including addition of clear language about clutter and accumulation, responsibility for cleaning (including rest rooms), use of confetti and glitter. M. Burr also reminded LCT that per current contract painting of walls or floors requires Commission approval. M. Burr emphasized that the attic needs to be cleared out of all items that do not meet attic storage codes. The Commission will help LCT with this endeavor, but LCT needs to decide what to keep and what to discard, and where to store items that are kept.

In response to questions, J. Dunn said when an artist contracts with LCT to do a show in the Opera House, the artist is responsible for ticketing and fees. M. Burr reminded LCT that they should watch

for inaccurate branding in promotional materials prepared by performers, such as "Landmark Theatre" instead of "Thomaston Opera House."

M. Burr also reminded G. Kingsbury that the Commission should be informed of grant applications and acceptances. G. Kingsbury asked the Commission to consider less restrictive wording in Section 18 (Grants) of the contract with the next update.

J. Hartz moved and R. Chandon seconded that the meeting be adjourned at 8:02 pm; motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Skinner,

Secretary, Opera House Commission

Landmark Community Theatre 2025 1st quarter report

2024 Season- The 2024 season was virtually nonexistent. It was very difficult mounting a season with many unknown variables. We initially were told to plan to be closed for the first half of the year. As the bidding, contracting and scheduling moved along, that date was pushed to the end of March. By the beginning of 2024 the plans were pushed to May. We ultimately closed in June with a minimum 4-month closure. This stretched for over 6 months (end of 2024).

Best case scenario, we planned our season around having Spelling Bee, a Summer and Teen production at the high school and reopening in time for Fiddler on the Roof in October/ November and Scrooge! in December. None of this happened. We also learned that our patrons were extremely reluctant to attend performances in the High School. This resulted in a 70% decrease in ticket sales. Concession and alcohol sales were down by over 70% as well. It also necessitated the need for issuing many hundreds of complimentary show passes, exchanges and refunds. At the end of the year, our total ticket sales (which were budgeted for closure and relocation) was down 53%. Fortunately, LCT was able to use its reserves to maintain operations and staffing. This was critical to continued fundraising and a successful reopening.

It should be noted that LCT burdened the entire expense of clearing all affected areas of renovation and ongoing expenses of continued storage. LCT staff worked on fundraising efforts for the renovations and operations. LCT also provide staff and volunteers for moving, clearing and cleaning.

2025 Season- LCT received tentative permission to reopen the facility for 2025 in November of 2024 with the provision that we would not have full access to the facility for several months. This was much later than typical for setting up, publicizing and selling a new season. As a result of the closure and late notification our season subscriptions are down by 25% for 2025. This is further impacted by the total number of refunds and exchanges plus the rescheduling of Fiddler on the Roof. Our group sales are also down significantly for 2025.

We planned a low impact schedule that would be able to work around the lack of dressing rooms, bathrooms and production areas (at least for the first 6 months of the year) while trying to maximize ticket sales. We had a soft opening with a small reading of Love Letters over Valentine's weekend. Most of that weekend was canceled due to snow. Our first real opening was with RENT in March. We had decent attendance with an average of 285 tickets per performance. (Not back to pre-construction numbers yet). Through outside promoters, we have introduced a series of 6 concerts for the year. We expect it to be easier to facilitate once the renovations are complete.

The biggest challenges for this year are;

- Getting subscribers, groups and individual patrons back in the theatre
- Producing shows without full access to dressing rooms, bathrooms, egress and production facilities.
- Reimagining how to best return to the facility and utilize the new amenities.
- Budget for the new realities of not having much if any onsite storage
- Establishing offsite work and construction areas

Education LCT continued its education series throughout the 2024 closure and continues with Fall, Spring and Summer classes and workshops. This also includes the Teen musical production each Summer. The previous youth production of The Little Mermaid was selected by the American Association of Community Theaters (AACT) to present at the annual Youth Fest in Des Moines Iowa in June. They are the youngest group ever selected to present. Andrea and all of the participants have been raising money to offset the expense of the nearly 30 participants. We are making plans to expand our educational classes to better include 13-15 year olds. Additional Senior workshops are in the planning stages.