



Mission Statement: The Sheldon Theatre entertains, educates, and enlightens the community and its visitors through the transformative power of the performing arts.

Statement of Intent: We gather today in this room as one people to discuss and attend to the matters of Red Wing. Together, as a government body and as community members, we agree to treat everyone with courtesy, dignity, and respect. We will listen to all sides of an issue, encourage participation, support each other, act with honor and accountability, and inspire pride in our community. This we commit as we open this meeting.

**Meeting Announcement and Agenda
Sheldon Theatre Board Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers, 315 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN & Virtually
Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 5:15 PM**

This meeting will be held in the City Hall Council Chambers and virtually via Webex at the same time. Members of the public can join this meeting either in person at City Hall or virtually. To join this meeting via Webex, [click this link](#). To join via telephone, please dial (415) 655-0001. Enter access code 2559 946 5056 and password 2025 when prompted.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
- 5. Public Comment**

We now invite anyone to share their thoughts on a topic that is not on the agenda. We welcome all opinions and ideas. We appreciate you stating your name at the lectern, and please remember that personal attacks may be ruled out of order. You will have up to three minutes to comment, and we appreciate your time in coming tonight.

6. Consent Agenda

6.A. Motion to Approve April 15, 2025 Minutes.

7. Placer AI Information Session

7.A. Samantha Whipple, Sheldon Theatre and Meyer Beckner, Red Wing Downtown Main Street will present data from PLACER AI specifically for the Sheldon Theatre.

8. Motions & General Business

8.A. Lead Production Technician proposal

9. Communication Items

9.A. Director's Report

- 9.B. Finance Report
- 9.C. Board Chair's Report
- 9.D. Committee Reports
- 9.E. Government Relations Report
- 9.F. Board Member Comments

10. Adjournment

Accommodations for signing interpreter, Braille, large print, etc. can be made. Call City Hall at 385.3600 seven days prior to the need. Hearing assistance devices are available during meetings.

**The Sheldon Theatre Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
April 15, 2025**

Members Present: President Chap Achen; Board Members Laurie Bell, Meridith Wardle, Susan Christenson, Art Kenyon, and Glen Witham

Members Absent: Board Member Dennis Brennan

Others Present: Shantel Dow, Executive Director; Beth Snyder, Council Liaison

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Achen at 5:15 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

President Achen led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

President Achen reported that all members were in attendance except for Member Brennan, who was on a leave of absence.

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Member Wardle, seconded by Member Bell and unanimously carried, to approve the Agenda as presented.

5. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Motion to Approve March 18, 2025, Minutes.

A motion was made by Member Kenyon, seconded by Member Christenson and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

7. Motions & General Business

President Achen reported that he will request a motion during discussion of the Finance Report. There were no other general business items to discuss.

8. Communication Items

A. Director's Report.

Director Dow highlighted items from her report:

- Director Dow reported that the 2025-2026 performance season has been finalized. She stated that 44 touring shows have been booked.
- Director Dow discussed upcoming accessibility training sessions, noting that there are more than 50 registered participants.

- It was noted that approximately two-thirds of the sold-out Bellamy Brothers show audience consisted of first-time attendees.
- An October fundraising event was referenced, and it was noted that Member Christenson would provide additional details later during the meeting.
- Director Dow reported that Music on the Mezzanine has been going very well. She thanked the sponsors for their support.
- The benefits of guest service initiatives were discussed.
- Director Dow summarized a recent meeting with the Red Wing Area Fund Board of Directors.
- Director Dow discussed the upcoming Minnesota Presenters Network summer conference in Fairmont, Minnesota. She reported that Aubrey Bergauer will be the guest speaker.
- An upcoming Minnesota Citizens for the Arts virtual meeting was discussed.
- It was reported that the Minnesota House Legacy Committee has recommended that 47% of arts and cultural Legacy Funds continue to be allocated to the Minnesota State Arts Board and the regional Minnesota Arts Council system, both of which generously support the Sheldon Theatre through grants. Director Dow commented that Governor Walz and the Minnesota Senate have joined in supporting this recommendation.
- Director Dow reported that a remote dimmer switch has been installed. She reported that Director of Production Russell Johnson has been interviewing technical writers for the 2025-2026 season and researching lighting and sound upgrades. It was noted that the piano will need to be replaced.
- Director Dow reviewed sold-out shows.
- A ticketing system update was provided.
- The 2025-2026 season brochure and website updates were discussed.
- A promotional pilot program with Cub Foods in Cottage Grove was discussed.
- Member Bell asked whether anything can be done to improve Google searches. Director Dow discussed the challenges of driving ticket purchasers directly to the Sheldon website.
- Director Dow discussed the benefits of advertising in Chanhassen Dinner Theatres playbills.
- A Friends of the Sheldon update was provided.
- A sponsorship update was provided. Director Dow thanked Member Witham for his assistance.
- It was reported that Associate Director Samantha Whipple assisted the Universal Music Center with a grant proposal to bring musician Rich Redmond to Red Wing for outreach activities in the Red Wing Public Schools.
- Recent and upcoming outreach activities were reviewed.
- Staff and volunteer activities were discussed.
- An opportunity for Sheldon Board participation in a volunteer appreciation event was discussed.

Member Kenyon asked about the utilization of assistive listening devices. Director Dow provided information in this regard and referenced the upcoming accessibility training sessions.

B. Finance Report.

President Achen summarized discussion during the March Board meeting relating to the financial reporting process and questions about the data. He stated that the Board opted not to approve the March Finance Report at that time, pending clarification of the questions. He referenced a subsequent meeting with City Finance Department representatives.

Member Wardle stated that she and Director Dow met with the City of Red Wing Finance Director and one of the staff accountants. She summarized topics of discussion during this meeting and reviewed several takeaways:

- 1) The books are not closed until about 18 months after the start of a fiscal year, following the annual financial audit.
- 2) Adjustments are made to the financials at any point during this time.
- 3) The payroll system is on a cash basis, with payments on a modified accrual basis.
- 4) Financial statements should be viewed as preliminary.

Board Member Kenyon asked about the rationale for these accounting practices. Council Liaison Snyder stated that she will seek to gather more information.

Member Wardle commented that adjustments seem to occur more frequently at year-end and at the start of the new year. She stated that it has been suggested to review the financial data from a couple of months in the past, as these data will likely be more up-to-date than recent data.

Member Wardle reported that a subsequent meeting was held with Director Dow and President Achen to discuss options for financial reporting going forward.

President Achen offered the following recommendations:

- 1) Review City-generated financial statements on a quarterly basis, delayed by one month.
- 2) Create a new monthly report listing recent show and event production-related revenue, expenses, and year-to-date performance data, to be generated by Sheldon staff.
- 3) Approve the year-end financial statements once they have been finalized by the City.

Member Bell asked about capturing demographic information and other data from ticket sales. Director Dow discussed capturing this type of information from the ticketing system and the Placer.ai program owned by the Chamber. It was suggested to gather information for Board review on a trial basis, to determine whether the information is beneficial.

The proposed monthly report information was further clarified. Member Witham expressed concerns about the new process, stating that a primary responsibility of the Sheldon Board relates to management and oversight of the budget and financials. He asked about the possibility of hiring an in-house finance manager who would work with City staff, or redesign the budget to manage aspects over which the Sheldon Board and staff have control. Member Kenyon commented that, even with an in-house finance manager, there would still be aspects of the financials over which the Sheldon staff has no control. He suggested focusing on internal controls relating to items over which the Sheldon Board and staff have control. The pros and cons of managing the finances in-house were discussed. Member Witham suggested defining what the Sheldon Board and staff have control over along with aspects of the financials over which the Sheldon Board and staff have no control.

Member Wardle expressed agreement with continuing to review the preliminary financials on a quarterly basis and asking Director Dow to create a monthly financial dashboard report.

Member Bell agreed with the points made by Member Witham and discussed the importance of reviewing accurate financial information.

Member Witham reiterated his concerns about the Sheldon Board being responsible for the financials but not having control over the accounting process.

Member Christenson asked whether the same accounting procedures are used for all City boards and commissions. Member Wardle indicated that the process is the same for all City boards and commissions, adding that she was told that the Sheldon Board scrutinizes the numbers more closely than do other boards and commissions.

Council Liaison Snyder commented regarding the complexity of the HRA's finances. She suggested discussing concerns with Council Administrator Chris Heineman.

Member Kenyon agreed with the suggestion for a monthly dashboard report.

Director Dow noted that revenue from ticket sales, donations, grants, and sponsorships goes through the Sheldon system. She stated that expenses are tracked but are paid and reconciled by the City of Red Wing Finance Department. She provided examples of necessary budget transfers and adjustments.

President Achen commented that the Sheldon Board will make most of its financial decisions based on ticket sales and expenses, which will be captured on the monthly dashboard report.

Member Wardle commented that she has full faith that the books are accurate and are audited. She noted that the issues relate mostly to timing. It was clarified that expenses are tracked and that bills are paid on time by the City. Member Wardle and President Achen provided an example of the data that will be reviewed during the June Sheldon Board meeting.

A motion was made by Member Bell, seconded by Member Kenyon, that going forward the Sheldon Board will review preliminary City staff generated financials on a quarterly basis along with a monthly Sheldon staff generated dashboard report, with approval of year-end financials to occur once these reports have been finalized by the City of Red Wing Finance Department. A voice vote was conducted and the motion carried by a vote of 5:1, with Member Witham dissenting.

C. Board Chair's Report.

1. Strategic Plan.

President Achen reported that data from the ticketing system is being compiled and analyzed in order to better understand ticket sales trends, demographic information, and other performance indicators. He stated that the pandemic years will be excluded from the reports. He stated that this information will be used to help develop the long-range Strategic Plan along with information that was previously gathered. The next steps and the anticipated timeline were reviewed, including a review of the data during an upcoming Sheldon Board meeting, followed by committee work for three to four months, with the goal of adopting a plan by the end of the year.

Member Bell suggested consideration of including the data from the pandemic years. Director Dow indicated that these data will be included in the initial reports but could easily be omitted later on, at the discretion of the Sheldon Board.

D. Committee Reports.

There were no reports.

E. Government Relations Report.

Council Liaison Snyder summarized discussion during a recent City Council meeting. She reported that TIF agreements were approved for four Downtown redevelopment projects, including the Boxrud building, the Chief Theater, the Hallstrom's building, and the Eagle House. She stated that the same developer is also working with City staff on redevelopment plans for the former maltery site. She stated that these projects are expected to add approximately 120 housing units to the Downtown area along with commercial and retail spaces. She discussed the next steps in the planning and construction processes.

Council Liaison Snyder also discussed the 2026 budget planning process.

F. Board Member Comments.

1. Susan Christianson - Special Event: October 4, 2025

Member Christianson discussed a special event that will occur prior to a performance by a talented jazz singer, including a trolley ride, a pre-show house party, and an after-party. Separate ticket pricing for the fundraiser was discussed. It was discussed that sponsorship funding toward fundraiser expenses has been secured.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Proposal to Hire a Lead Production Technician

Submitted to the Board of Directors of the TB Sheldon Theatre of Performing Arts

Prepared by: Shantel N. Dow, Executive & Artistic Director

Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Executive Summary

This proposal recommends the immediate creation and hiring of a **Lead Production Technician** to enhance operational efficiency, artistic excellence, and production continuity at the Sheldon Theatre. As our programming continues to grow in scale and complexity, the absence of a dedicated support role has placed strain on our existing production team and limited our ability to increase our potential for additional revenue. The addition of this role will ensure smoother production workflows, improve communication between departments, and uphold the high quality our audiences expect.

In addition, the long-term Associate Director of Production will retire in June 2026. Hiring this Lead Production Technician will help to ease into the future of the Sheldon's experienced technical crew. It may be the case that the person in this new role will be ready to execute the responsibilities of the Associate Director of Production after shadowing and spending increased time at the Sheldon.

This new position will help us to schedule additional rental events, smaller activities, movies, etc. This can result in a growth in the Sheldon's revenue stream.

Background

Over the past few years, the Sheldon has expanded its programming, serving larger and more diverse audiences. We currently host more than 70 events annually. There continues to be demand for bigger and better events. Our technical and artistic teams have managed increasingly complex productions with limited backstage support, often multitasking beyond their primary responsibilities.

Currently, production tasks such as tech coordination, rehearsal logistics, show advances, calendar maintenance and artist support fall inconsistently across one person leading to occasional burnout and somewhat limited usage of the theatre.

This position creates a potential talent pipeline to the Associate Director of Production position.

Proposal Overview

The **Lead Production Technician (LPT)** will serve as the central logistical support person for all stage productions, assisting the Associate Director of Production and casual employees/technical crew from pre-production through strike. This role will be instrumental in:

- Preparing the theatre for rehearsals, performances and other events
- Addresses basic maintenance issues such as light bulb replacement, building safety, basic equipment repair, etc.
- Assists with pre-show preparation of performances and operates equipment as directed
- Operates lighting, sound and/or backstage equipment during performances

Objectives and Benefits

1. Streamlined Communication:

A dedicated point person will ensure consistency from planning to performance would help bridge between tech and other staff and users of the Sheldon. Currently there is work with touring shows, Phoenix Theatre, vendors, Sheldon staff, rental folks and more.

2. Enhanced Production Quality:

A smoother workflow allows directors, designers, and technicians to focus on their creative strengths.

3. Staff Sustainability:

Reducing the burden on overextended staff promotes long-term retention and wellbeing.

4. Professional Development and Mentorship:

The LPT role offers a vital entry point for mid-career theatre professionals, with potential for internal growth into higher-level technical or production management positions.

Position Outline

Title: Lead Production Technician

Classification: Part-Time / Seasonal or Full-Time, depending on programming volume

Reports To: Associate Director of Production

[Insert proposed range based on local standards and budget]

Qualifications: Experience in stage management or technical theatre, excellent communication skills, strong organizational abilities, ability to work nights/weekends.

Financial and Logistical Impact

A modest investment in this role will yield significant returns in operational efficiency and artistic quality. Long and short term benefits of adding this position include:

- The saving of time and money on continual search for and training of PT technical employees
- It is typical to hire an Associate Director of Production to shadow the current employee in this position for several months. Hiring this person will alleviate the need to have two people being paid in a higher salaried position for 3-6 months. (One year salary savings estimate: \$26,769-\$53,539, not including benefits)
- The Sheldon currently has 5 open positions for PT Production Technicians. Each of those positions' compensation is estimated at \$10,000 per year. Hiring one full time person in the Lead Production Technician position would help to diminish the need for 9 PT technicians currently approved for hire. We hope to limit the need to 4-5 PT technicians in the future.
- Long-term benefits: Continue quality programming and increasing usage of the theatre, creating more community partnerships by programming summer events and scheduling community usage of the theatre spaces, alleviating staff burn-out, maintaining equipment by having additional qualified and trained people in the theatre in a full-time capacity and growing the quality of large national touring shows with additional tech staff. We will be better equipped to accommodate the requests for rental use of the theatre for special events, speakers, movies, music promoters, etc. Currently, we need to turn-away potential revenue-generating events due to lack of depth in our technical department. The frequent PT staff turnover and difficulty to recruit leaves us with short-term and insufficiently trained hires (strictly due to the PT status) to do the job to the fullest potential.
- Short-term benefits: Help to bridge the upcoming impactful loss of the current Associate Director of Production after 13 years of service and national recognition of being one of the best in the business, offer hands-on training so that the impact of this major change in personnel will be seamless for visiting artists and our patrons, investing in staff will help to boost morale and help with work load of the small staff of the Sheldon. The nuances of a historical building bring a unique set of challenges that a person in this position can help to orchestrate. Again, we can also add events to the calendar with this additional trained technical person on-board. This will increase potential revenue for the venue.
- Financial impact: New position hourly salary at \$22.50/hour will be an increase of \$5.50/hour what the PT experienced technical staff is making. It will increase from 20 hours/week to 40 hours/week plus benefits. The estimated increase in salary will be \$560/week.

Conclusion

Hiring a **Lead Production Technician** aligns with the Sheldon Theatre's rich tradition presenting consistently high-quality performances. This role will serve as the connective tissue that supports both artistic integrity and operational success.

I respectfully request the board's approval to proceed with this hire for the upcoming season, preferably July 1, 2025.

Submitted by:

Shantel Dow

Executive & Artistic Director



**Executive Director's Report
6/17/25**

Submitted by: Shantel Dow & the Sheldon staff

Quick Summary:

Excellent number of people auditioning for the summer Phoenix musical, SHREK: THE MUSICAL. Rehearsals have begun with Julie Martin as Director. The show will take place the last two weekends in July with July 27 being a sensory-friendly performance.

I attended the Minnesota Presenters Network summer retreat in Fairmont, MN. We had two days of excellent professional development, artist showcases and networking.

The 1949 Steinway piano at the Sheldon has served its purpose for many years and is in need of replacement. More to come on this as fundraising and piano research is in process.

Industry Sector:

There are many technical directors/production managers retiring over the next year or two. It is growing more difficult to find qualified people in this field so we have our work cut out for us over the next 12 months.

Great news from MN Citizens for the Arts: The MN Legislature passed a bill last month to continue with the current level of legacy funding. 47% of the arts and cultural heritage fund will go to the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota Regional Arts Councils. State bill HF3045 passed providing stable General Fund support for the arts with a modest increase.

Russell's Production Report

- Met with a sound consultant last week. I gave him a very detailed tour of the Sheldon sound system. He is going to consult his team and come back with his recommendations for improvements in coverage.
 - o He feels that the Sheldon is fortunate to have such a sophisticated sound system.
 - o He is going to focus on two specific areas: eventual replacement of stage monitors and enhancing balcony coverage, especially in the first few rows.
- I have now met with two sound consultants and will compare their findings and recommendations
- With the official season complete, there are a few rentals and bookings through the summer months attend to. Fusion Dance, Paranormal Exploration, The Elks, Phoenix Theatre's Summer Musical Shrek, RW Ambassadors, two kids shows and the McDonald's All Start Alumni band residency.
- I will find time for the many maintenance projects:
 - o Replacing and repairing lighting cables. This includes the lighting raceways (circuit plugs) on the lighting pipes.
 - o Painting the stage floor
 - o Deleting and updating files in the lighting and sound control consoles
- The Summer musical will begin set and prop building as well as rehearsals on stage up until they perform at the end of July.
- I plan to advance some the higher profile events in the 25-26 season over the summer to help get a plan in place and manage expectations.

Brenda's Marketing Report

- Season Announcement was successful with around 200 people in attendance. Everyone seemed excited for the season and appreciated the slightly longer video and refreshments.
- We have encountered a few hiccups in the new ticketing system, however we have found some temporary workarounds while we work with the support team. Box office has been very helpful to those calling.

- One of the benefits of this system is that we can set up a box office anywhere. We set up a table in the lobby and transferred phone orders to Samantha. Essentially, we had 4 work stations instead of just 2, so wait times would have been cut in half. It was nice to see a long line at the doors when tickets opened to the public 😊
- Mailed out 14,000 brochures and have already seen a number of first time buyers.
- Partnered with Samantha on email sends and Social media posts to Friends and to promote Sheldon Theatre Friends.
- Posters will be going up around town, brochures are being delivered to key places in Red Wing and working on distribution to the surrounding area.
- Gave 200 brochures to the Father's Day Car Show and approx. 1000 to our Welcome Services. This has been done the last few year as well.
- Don't wait to get tickets to the current Top 5 shows **1.) Takin' It To The Limit Eagles Tribute, 2.) Orleans, 3.) A Tribute to the Music of John Fogerty & CCR, 4.) The New Standards Holiday Show, and 5.) Atlanta Rhythm Section.**

Samantha's Development Report

- May Friends Memberships – 55 for \$8,060
- Friends received a code via email to purchase single shows for a two-week period before they opened to the public on 6/11.
- Sponsorship invoicing is complete and payments are coming in
- The Joy Mobile was present for the school productions of Charlotte's Web and the new sensory tools were rolled out and are available in the box office.
- Red Wing Shoe Foundation grant request was approved for \$70,000, Xcel Energy Grant request was approved for \$5,000 and Red Wing Area Fund grant request was approved for \$80,000
- The Sheldon will be the stage sponsor at Downtown Main Street's Fairy Fest, providing family friendly entertainment, roaming characters from the upcoming production of Shrek and a movie showing of Thumbelina
- Samantha attended the MPN conference

Leah's Box Office and Front of House Report

- Our volunteers were delighted with the treats provided for the Volunteer Appreciation event on April 30th. Thank you! Also, thanks to Glen and Chap for representing the Board at this event.
- We wrapped up our season with 5 performance in May. Tim Harmston & Mary Mack was the last show on May 17th. Then we had Shoreline's Dance Recital on May 18th and just recently Fusion's two dance recitals on June 7th. These are big community events and were good testing ground for Thunder Tix, our new ticketing system.
- The Season Announcement grows in popularity each year. We had to rent a second popcorn machine just to keep up with demand! But it's a lot of fun and generates a great deal of buzz & excitement.
- Thunder Tix training has been intense since the last Board meeting. Overall, customers are doing well online. Since May 29th, 1,299 tickets for \$46,000 have come in online as opposed to 836 tickets for \$21,259 through the Box Office (phone calls and in-person).
- The online experience is simpler; there is no need to login or manage an account. This should eliminate a lot of "What's my password again?" frustration. A detailed patron record is still maintained on our side, of course.
- The process of hand-entering unredeemed gift certificates and credits into the new system is well underway. We've been contacting patrons as we go to inform them of any balance, along with a new code that can now be used online. We're starting with records from 2020-2025 first and

then will tackle older ones.

- The Box Office Team has been doing a great job rolling with the transition. A big shout out to Mary, Evie, Erin, Arielle and to our Audience Services Associate, Sarah as well!

Sheldon Theatre Board

Financial Snapshot* - YTD May 2025



	Revenue	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance
Main Stage Ticket Revenue	\$	184,160	\$ 148,125	\$ 36,035
Phoenix Ticket Revenue	\$	5,830	\$ 8,500	\$ (2,670)
Education/Field Trip Ticket Revenue	\$	23,962	\$ 5,000	\$ 18,962
Rental Revenue	\$	21,031	\$ 18,750	\$ 2,281
Retail Sales	\$	20,342	\$ 17,708	\$ 2,634
Service Charges (only Sustainability Fee)	\$	23,743	\$ 38,333	\$ (14,590)
Grants and Donations Revenue	\$	227,828	\$ 205,210	\$ 22,618
Endowment Interest	\$	164,313	\$ 70,833	\$ 93,480
Totals	\$	671,209	\$ 512,459	\$ 158,750
	Expense	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance
Main Stage Expenses	\$	235,776	\$ 163,208	\$ (72,568)

*This report does not represent an actual financial statement regarding the Sheldon Theatre revenue and expenses and is used for performance management of operations only

Sheldon Theatre Board

Ticket Snapshot - May 2025

Main Stage Tickets Revenue	# of Shows	Tickets Sold	Occupancy %	Rev/Ticket
\$38,540	4	1152	62%	\$33.80
Phoenix Ticket Revenue	# of Shows	Tickets Sold	Occupancy %	Rev/Ticket
\$0	0	0	0%	\$0.00
Education/Field Trip Ticket Revenue	# of Shows	Tickets Sold	Occupancy %	Rev/Ticket
\$5,312	2	740	79%	\$7.18
Rental Revenue	# of Shows	Tickets Sold	Occupancy %	Rev/Ticket
\$2,090	2	433	N/A	N/A

SHOW	Proj. Tickets	Actual Tickets
Kathy Mattea	\$ 15,200.00	\$ 20,569.00
Koo Koo - 2 shows	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 10,382.30
Tim Harmston & Mary Mack	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 7,588.20
Totals	\$ 40,700.00	\$ 38,539.50

Field Trip Shows

Charlotte's Web \$ 5,311.50 Grant \$

