

**The Sheldon Theatre Board of Directors
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers
April 21, 2026**

Members Present: Board President Chap Achen; Board Members Laurie Bell, Meridith Wardle, Dennis Brennan, and Maria Haley

Members Absent: Member Susan Christenson (excused absence)

Others Present: Shantel Dow, Executive Director and Jordyn Foss, Youth Theater Director

1. Call to Order

Board President Chap Achen called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

President Achen led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. President Achen and Board Members Bell, Wardle, Brennan and Haley were in attendance.

Member Christenson indicated she would be absent due to sickness.

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Member Bell, seconded by Member Wardle, to approve the agenda as drafted. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5:0.

5. Public Comment

President Achen reviewed the public comment procedure.

No one wished to address the Board.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Motion to Approve March 17, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Member Wardle noted that Member Haley was not listed in the roll call section of the meeting minutes, but was present for the March 17, 2026, meeting.

A motion was made by Member Brennan, seconded by Member Haley, to approve the March 17, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes, as revised. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5:0.

7. Motions & General Business

8. Communication Items

A. Director's Report.

Director Dow provided updates and highlighted information from her report:

- She reported that the new Youth Theater Director, Jordyn Foss, started twelve days ago and shared about her initial progress in the role.
- Youth Theater Director Foss noted that an open house is scheduled for May 28 to promote summer camps and introduce upcoming programming under the new name “Sheldon Youth Center Stage”.
 - President Achen asked about upcoming performances. Youth Theater Director Foss noted that camps will include small performances, with a full musical planned for December.
- Director Dow stated that interviews for the Associate Director of Production have been completed. Samuel Boettcher, currently serving as Lead Production Technician, has been selected, with hiring for his replacement anticipated in June or July and a target start date of September 1.
- She also highlighted progress on the Jones Family Foundation grant, which supports the development of a marketing plan positioning Red Wing as a top arts destination. She noted that a filming crew recently visited multiple locations in town, including the Sheldon, and conducted an interview with Nomfusi Gotyana, a performer from South Africa. The project will showcase “big arts in a small town” as part of its initial marketing efforts.
- Director Dow discussed ongoing work related to ticket scalping and noted an upcoming meeting focused on potential legislation to address the issue.
- She reported that Director of Production Johnson has distributed rental contracts for the 2026–2027 season and is helping establish a strong operational foundation before his departure, while also supporting current events and maintenance projects.
 - President Achen asked if the Staff had any modifications in mind for the Lead Production Technician role before hiring. Director Dow confirmed that adjustments are being considered for the Lead Production Technician role to allow flexibility between 32–40 hours per week, rather than a fixed 40-hour schedule.
 - President Achen asked if the role is exempt or non-exempt. Director Dow stated non-exempt.
 - President Achen asked if there were any changes regarding the scope of the role. Director Dow noted that while no immediate changes to the scope of the role are planned, she expressed interest in expanding technical training opportunities for part-time and casual Staff.
- Director Dow noted the donation of an additional piano for the green room.
- She shared that Associate Director of Marketing and Communications Stewart is continuing marketing efforts for the remainder of the current season, and that a brochure for the next season is in development with more shows planned.
 - President Achen asked how many new shows were planned. Director Dow estimated approximately eight productions for the upcoming year, including movies.

- President Achen asked about revenue to justify the Lead Production Technician role. Director Dow stated that increased productions have not yet resulted in revenue to justify the role, noting that ticket sales are currently down due to economic conditions. She added that scheduling adjustments are being considered, with fewer spring shows and a more active summer lineup.
- Director Dow indicated that more movie screenings are planned for the coming year.
- Director Dow stated that in the development report, the Associate Director of Community Relations and Development Whipple noted that outreach efforts, including work with Tower View and other schools, have had a meaningful impact. Show sponsorship recruitment is nearing completion and trending ahead of expectations, and a grant has been submitted to the Minnesota State Arts Board.
 - President Achen asked about the financial impacts of school commitments. Director Dow stated that financial commitments from schools for the 2026–2027 season appear to be slightly increased, though she will confirm.
- She stated that Audience Services Manager Adam’s box office report highlighted a wide variety of recent programming, though ticket sales have been lower than expected. Four new volunteers have joined, each committing to work four shows per season. A volunteer appreciation event is scheduled for April 23, and Board members are invited to attend and express gratitude.
- Director Dow noted the youth theater report reiterated Jordyn Foss’s onboarding progress, including meetings with various individuals and organizations, development of summer programming, early planning for spring 2027, and establishment of the program’s formal name.

B. Finance Report.

Member Wardle reported a fund balance of just under \$500,000, compared to approximately \$400,000 year-to-date last year. She noted, however, that a transfer from the general fund was received earlier this year, impacting the comparison. She added that the budget is currently about 12% below target, though it has not been seasonalized.

Member Wardle highlighted that the Mainstage profit and loss statement is showing improvement over last year, with revenue up by approximately \$25,000 and expenses down by about \$20,000.

Member Wardle asked if there was a specific factor that affected last year’s figures. Director Dow responded that much of the difference is due to timing.

Director Dow also provided a ticket sales snapshot for the month of March.

C. Board Chair’s Report.

President Achen discussed the strategic report and the Board's role in overseeing the plan. He asked for feedback from Board members regarding their assigned areas of focus.

Board members expressed consensus in support of their assignments.

President Achen requested that each Board member first meet with Director Dow to determine their preferred level of engagement with Staff and to schedule meetings as needed. He also noted that he will send an email outlining expectations, including which goals will be reported on at specific meetings. He added that it is acceptable if there are no updates to report within two months.

D. Committee Report.

E. Government Relations Report.

F. Board Member Comments.

Member Haley reported that she will be leading a volunteer day, bringing approximately 20 people to assist with a cleanup project at the Sheldon.

Director Dow noted that Staff would be very pleased if the bike rack could be included as part of the painting project.

9. Adjournment

President Achen adjourned the meeting at 6:00p.m.