



Executive Director Highlights

October-November 2022

Deb Maher

As we head into the beginning of the second quarter of this fiscal year, we are continuing to build on the momentum that we have started.

I am focusing my work on four areas:

- Community engagement; outward facing activities and networking
- Fundraising in all its forms
- Board engagement and organizational development
- Day-to-day operations and oversight

Community Engagement

We are working to expand our engagement with more sectors of the community by engaging in more cultural programming and community activities.

- We were thrilled with an evening called *Sounds of Africa* with a performance by Ratie D a local resident originally from Zimbabwe and QWANQWA, an Ethiopian group touring the U.S. with Ethiopian cuisine provided by Makedas, a local Ethiopian food truck. This culturally diverse evening was full of joyful and uplifting energy! The most immediate feedback: “we want more of this!” We worked to connect with the U of O Dean of Global Affairs, Head of African Studies, NAACP, the Ethiopian Community, local merchants, and others.

We have posted the *job announcement for the Community Voices Coordinator* who will do more of this kind of programming, and daytime activities and work with our Booking Manager to coordinate the calendar.

- I am continuing to build relationships with our neighbors. Josie McCarthy, the manager of the Dining Room (across the street) met with the EPD captain and downtown district sergeant to discuss our concerns regarding unsheltered people who surround our neighborhood and our concern for the safety of staff and patrons.



Community Center for the Performing Arts

After the first of the year, they will be providing more bicycle police and foot patrols during the day and vehicle patrols at night.

- Theresa Sizemore, GM at the Hult Center continues to offer guidance and support for the WOW Hall. She has been especially helpful in providing an overview of the arts and culture scene and the role the City plays.
- Kelly Johnson, of the Downtown Business and Arts Alliance included the WOW Hall in a national survey to help document the impact the performing arts have in contributing to the economic development of downtown
- Miles Pendleton, the NAACP Executive Director met with me briefly at their recent reception to discuss how we might engage in programming together.
- Rene Soto, the Chair of the Lane Housing Coalition will be bringing a group of 20+ local housing leaders to the WOW Hall for quarterly meetings starting this November.

Money!

Submitted two grant applications this month:

- Lane County Cultural Coalition to support an event called *Celebrating Latin Beat*
- Collins Foundation Letter of Interest: *Transformational Programming for Diversity and Belonging*

Received: \$50,000 sign-on bonus for renewing our contract with Ticketweb. We have had a successful seven-year relationship and look forward to a continued relationship

Connected with the Independent Venue Coalition of Oregon; and will be part of an educational effort to gain additional funding from the state legislature for venues across the state. The WOW Hall received an unexpected \$225,000 at the beginning of this fiscal year and with any luck, we will get more perhaps in the Spring of 2023.... But it is up in the air at this point.... We will see how it all plays out, but we are definitely part of the coalition!



Community Center for the Performing Arts

Board support for organizational work

I am grateful for the support of the Work Groups and Subcommittees and the expertise they bring as thought partners.

We worked together to:

- Complete a new Employee Handbook
- Create and implement a long-term finance strategy
- Revise organizational bylaws for approval of the membership

Operations

The Building

- We had a leak in the roof in the women's bathroom. Fortunately, we found a roofer who could come in an emergency and repair that section of the roof. I have asked for estimates for 1) repair/patches and 2) the cost of an entire new roof. I will have two or three estimates and then will come back to the board with perhaps a capital campaign to get a new roof.... stay tuned!
- Completed network upgrades in the Hall. A big and complicated project and now finished!
- Landscaping clean-up around the building; all leaves and debris picked up, the back is cleaned out, the side yard spruced up and leaves are removed from the roof.
- The scissor gate will be installed on Friday, Nov. 11th

Staffing

Eric Herz has decided not to return to the WOW Hall, and this leaves a big void. We are so grateful for all that he did and his many years of dedication. He helped ensure the WOW Hall survived the pandemic and without him, I am not sure where we would be today.

We are advertising three new positions; all are posted on the website

- Facilities Manager
- Assistant Membership Coordinator
- Community Voices Coordinator

Applications are coming in and we hope to fill all positions by the end of the year or sooner. **Please pass the word!**

New Website

I worked with Aaron Dietrich to prepare a revised schedule with a projected go-live date before the upcoming Annual Membership Party.