

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Empire State Plaza Performing Arts Center Corporation was held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 12 noon at the Swyer Theatre.



PRESENT:

Diane Eber (remote)

Mary Griffin

Scott Palladino

John Regan (absent)

Catherine Barber

Christopher Cernik (remote)

Susan T. Cleary

Christine Henseler

Stacey B. Rowland

Maston Sansom

Anna Scaife

James I. Sullivan

Dorcey Applyrs

STAFF: Matthew Moross, Allie Young, Nicholas Bafia (remote)

Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting of December 2023: Minutes approved, seconded. Motion carried.

Introduction of New Board Member: Dr Dorcey Applyrs, welcome!

Chair's Report: Mary and Scott are very pleasantly surprised about The Egg getting an increase in NYS Appropriations, increase to \$500,000. Next steps, setting up meetings with Senate Finance and Assembly of Ways and Means to make sure it stays in the budget. Restores The Egg back to 2011 funding level. New funds will boost programming, enable additional marketing, and support new full time roles.

Capital Project Update: \$12 million OGS project- will fully swap out carpeting and seats in both theaters, update ADA compliance and fire suppression systems, and update lighting. Pushing to also add Lobby carpet to scope of work, likely to be approved, but still tentative. First major shift is the timeline of the project, not feasible to split into 2 separate summer chunks as originally thought, but instead aiming for a 6-month project beginning in mid-2025. Egg Operating expenses for the dark period were not originally included in the Capital Project budget (approx \$500-600k), Diane looking for ways to have this expense covered. Anna believes lobby carpet addition to scope is a go. Anna believes a rental reduction for The Egg during the dark period is also a go. Anna - there has not been a precedent for covering these operation expenses during down time. Mary is concerned about the expense, does not believe the Legislature will provide, could potentially be included in next year's OGS budget? If OGS cannot help with this expense, what is the path forward? Mary/Board cannot approve/move forward with the project without this expense being covered. Mary to reach out to Tom Nitido. If anyone else is interested in joining the Capital Project Committee, let Diane know!

Marketing Report: New hire, Interim Marketing Director, Allie Young! Preliminary social media audit: most room for growth and engagement on Instagram. Recent history of social media has been very passive, lacking focus for each unique platform. Beginning new emphasis on the history of the Egg and leaning into the uniqueness of our venue. Updated branding for "Egg Presents" shows, with positive responses so far. Newsletter has 30k+ subscribers, average 40% open rate, Allie looking into ways to expand reach and engagement, taking every opportunity to "thank" members and show appreciation to strengthen relationships. Update and maintain screens in and around The Egg, they were notoriously outdated. Received immediate

positive feedback from community/passersby on updated screens/graphics/imaging. Implemented unified email signature for staff, created new newsletter signup link, minor updates on website (early seeds for larger rebrand project). Additional assessments -still require attention: Outdated onsite signage, lacking community partnerships, marketing policy for outside rentals, ticketing platform reassessment, more bts, intro Egg Merch, build photo archive, season launch strategy.

Suggest long-term goals: Complete brand overhaul, Website redesign, Grow Marketing team

Development Update: Development Consultant is being hired this week, they are solely focused on grants and funding, not interacting or advising on Memberships. Introduction of Seat Campaign to coincide with Capital project, will need Board support and buy-in.

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- *Finance Committee: March 5, 2024*
- March 20, 2024 at 12pm via ZOOM
- May 15, 2024 at 12pm
- September 18, 2024 at 12pm



Center for the Performing Arts
Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Minutes - MARCH 20, 12pm, via ZOOM

Mary Griffin - Chair
Scott Palladino - Vice-Chair
John Regan - Treasurer
Dr. Dorcey Applyrs
Catherine Barber
Christopher Cernik
Susan T. Cleary
Stacey B. Rowland
Maston Sansom
Anna Scaife
James I. Sullivan
Christine Henseler
Diane Eber, Executive Director
The Egg Staff Attendees: Matthew Moross, Nicholas Bafia

Approval of Feb 7 Meeting Minutes: Chris moved, Scott seconded, all in favor.

Presentation of The Egg 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget: John Regan recapping that Finance committee approved the 2024-25 Fiscal Year budget from Diane. Acknowledges there is ambition as well as risks in budget, reflective of the hiring of Diane, but exciting and practical and attainable. Will require Board participation and buy-in.

Earned Revenue: Programming pretty much at the same amount, keeping it stable while we build up the infrastructure and support around new Egg initiatives. 50 Egg Presents approximately. NYS Appropriation increase to \$500k, will primarily be used towards 3 new positions (General Manager, Marketing Director, Contract Administrator/Executive Assistant). Note increase in Concessions, relates to shift in culture and style of programming (eclipse event is lounge style and will involve more sales than “one and done” for audience members). Ticket sales have a slight increase. Plan to introduce Egg merchandise, experiment with styles and types to gauge interest and potential. Diane to connect with Anna offline to discuss the current Egg merch being sold in plaza.

Unearned Revenue: Increasing Grants, ticket buyer donations, corporate sponsorships. Historically untapped sources of income that are now being applied for.

Expenses: Expanding full-time staff and adding essential positions. Increase in health insurance and benefits for new positions is reflected in the budget. Part Time staffers are a key part of infrastructure, including a 5% raise. Artist fees are estimated to increase to approximately \$550k. Goal to invite and promote artists of increasing popularity. Increasing marketing expenses to an average of \$200 per show, well below market average. “Service Contracts” line includes various consultants (Development, Membership, Marketing), should have visible impacts in various revenue lines.

Goal to hire new personnel by June/July 2024, potential to bring on General Manager role sooner.

Personnel Update: Bill Darcy retiring April 2024, plans in place to transition duties to Keegan Bushey and Kyle Van Sandt.

Approval of 2024-2025 Egg Budget (Motion): John Regan presents on behalf of Finance Committee, 24-25 The Egg Budget. Unanimously approved by Finance Committee. All in favor. None opposed. Budget is approved.

Capital Project Update: Will impact 2025-26 Fiscal Year budget, not included in this upcoming budget. Diane confirmed/approved moving the project forward with OGS on March 7. Timeline for construction is July 2025 - December 2025.

Eclipse at The Ellipse: April 8, 2024.

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- May 15, 2024 at 12pm
- September 18, 2024 at 12pm
- Sometime in December



Center for the Performing Arts
Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Minutes - MAY 15, 12pm, SWYER LOBBY

Mary Griffin - Chair
Scott Palladino - Vice-Chair
John Regan - Treasurer
Catherine Barber
Christopher Cernik
Susan T. Cleary
Stacey B. Rowland (absent)
Maston Sansom
Anna Scaife
Dr. Dorcey Appllys
James I. Sullivan (remote)
Christine Henseler (remote)
Diane Eber, Executive Director

The Egg Staff Attendees: Nicholas Bafia (remote)
Capital CFO+ Staff member: Gilles Lauzon (remote)

Approval of Minutes from the Board Meeting of March 2024: Minutes Approved

Chair's Report – Mary Griffin, Chair: Looking at having a Board dinner, potentially in early 2025, to discuss strategy and vision for The Egg. Scott spoke with Blake Washington, explained the situation of operating costs during The Egg downtime for Capital Project. Director Washington verbally committed to working with The Egg, recommending we reach out again during the summer of 2024 to find an agreement/solution. Total amount is approximately \$500k for the 6-month expected timeline.

Personnel Updates - Diane Eber: Bill Darcy officially retired, transition has gone very well. Kyle and Keegan stepping up. Matthew Moross retiring as well, currently transitioning most of duties to Capital CFO+ (Gilles Lauzon in attendance). Sent RFP to multiple agencies and went with Capital CFO for interim period, will continue to research solutions to fill the gap and find Interim CFO.

General Manager hiring process going well, 128 total candidates, 5 interviews, 3 internal applicants, close to a decision and hope to have onboarding in June to begin around Mid-July. Will aim to hire Marketing Director, Office Administrator, and Bookkeeper/CFO after GM is onboarded.

Budget Report - Diane Eber + Gilles Lauzon (Capital CFO+): Had higher expenditures from Audit (10-12k higher), Credit Card Charges (\$40k higher). Previous estimates likely estimated lower ticket sales and/or lower ticket prices. When Gilles reviewed 9-month mark projections, discovered that they were 9 months of actuals and then 3 months of projections without hard analysis for the 12-month projection. Fiscal Year ending Mar 2023- adjustment from Shuttered Venue and employment benefits inflated numbers included in Management Report. Diane would like to use increased \$280,000 in appropriations as a cushion, as the recently passed Egg budget may be influenced by these recent discoveries.

Walk through "Budget to Actual 23-24 report". Most of the rental income has been passive, eventual plans to solicit. Raised ticket handling fee to \$4.25 per ticket, have not heard any negative feedback, modest favorable increase. Lower Membership and Corporate contributions than budgeted, has mostly been passive, new consultants and more active grant searching increasing these lines. Higher admin expenses from salaries primarily a result of doing more rental events, and having more staff in the building for longer periods of time and more often. Audit costs increasing over the last few years, Matthew and CFO+ recommends sticking with UHY for audit again, but then shop around for following year. Feel good 1 month into the new year's budget.

Executive Director's Report - Diane Eber: Activity Report review, Feb 24, 2024-April 30, 2024. Learning from new programming and building new audiences with more diverse offerings. Developing new Marketing muscles to reach new target audiences, and learning what methods work and where effort is best distributed. Eclipse at the Ellipse was a success- generated a lot of positive feedback and media attention. Partnerships and new programming were introduced and experimented with, to positive review, exciting to develop these ideas for the future.

Review Board Committees - Diane Eber + Mary Griffin: Postponed to next meeting for sake of time.

Executive Session: Motion to move to executive session. Approved 12:55pm.

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- September 18, 2024 at 12pm
- December 5, 2024 at 12pm
- *February 12, 2025 (Finance Committee Meeting - Budget Presentation)*
- March 12, 2025 at 12pm
- May 14, 2025 at 12pm
- September 17, 2025 at 12pm
- December 10, 2025 at 12pm



Center for the Performing Arts - Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES - September 18, 2024 - Hart Lobby

Mary Griffin - Chair
Scott Palladino - Vice-Chair
John Regan - Treasurer
Dr. Dorcey Applyrs
Catherine Barber
Christopher Cernik
Susan T. Cleary
Stacey B. Rowland
Maston Sansom
Anna Scaife
James I. Sullivan

Christine Henseler
Adrienne Bonilla
Isabella Underwood

Diane Eber, Executive Director

The Egg Staff Attendees:
Emilio Roberts, GM
Allie Young, Marketing Director
Capital CFO+: Gilles Lauzon/ Robin Dee
Administrator: Nicholas Bafia

Approval of Minutes from the Board Meeting of May 2024: Motion approved and carried.

Welcome 2 new Board Members - Mary Griffin: Adrienne Bonilla, Isabella Underwood

Welcome 2 new FT Staff Members - Diane Eber: Emilio Roberts: GM, Allie Young: Marketing Director

Budget Report (Report, Audit, Approval Letter) - Diane Eber: According to Management Report, at this time in calendar year, Egg was supposed to be at -\$14,000, but with the recent policy and venue adjustments have resulted in being approximately \$114,000 in the green. Q1 carried approximately the same quantity of shows, but overall revenue is up. Received increase in NYS Appropriation up to \$500,000, as compared to \$220,000. Increased revenues have resulted in 2 new fulltime positions, General Manager and Marketing Director.

Management Report - Allowing drinks into theatres has resulted in approximately doubling concession revenue. Largest discrepancy is the "Service Contracts" line of budget, as a result of losing Fulltime Financial Manager position and replacing with Capital CFO Firm. Identifying room for growth in development and membership. Identify increase in Marketing expenses, which have resulted in concrete results.

Grants and Sponsors- Existing history with PriceChopper and Stewarts. Recent grant applications and awards have been sourced from local Albany/Capital Region foundations and funds. Diane would like to source beverage sponsors. Installed new digital screens around The Egg, potential to sell rotating ad space on screens. If members have ideas, there will be an opportunity to join committee and propose ideas, all are welcome! Individual giving has slowly been increased due to mailing lists, however there is much room for growth and outreach to foster the existing relationships and source new members/funders. Idea to initiate "End of Year" giving campaign in the future.

Audit Review (Gilles) - Clean audit with no major findings, with a couple comments on the closing letter. April 1, 2023 - May 30, 2024 was a strong year. Ticket rev up 20%, Rental rev up 27%. Strong financial position in terms of cash flows. Assets and Liabilities are both up.

Motion is made to approve Financial Statements for Audit

Executive Director's Report, Activity Report - Diane Eber: Would like to shift the ratio of events to incorporate more "Egg Presents" (in-house) shows vs Rental events (outside renters using our space). With new staff to support functions of The Egg, the Executive Director will be able to focus more heavily on Artistic Planning and curating The Egg's voice and programming. Idea to partner with a museum to transform The Egg into a varied art space, featuring different mediums and more independent artists in addition to traditional and larger events/promoters.

Report Presentation - Hatching The Egg as a cornerstone of Diane's new direction. Supporting and growing the Internal Culture. Started biweekly staff meetings, diversified Staff and Board, introduced staff group chat, hired Marketing Director and General Manager, modernizing and digitizing internal admin systems to help efficiency. Physical shifts in terms of redecorating/renovating office (low cost, but high impact), beautification of internal spaces. Funding increases in Grants, Appropriations, Concessions, and rental revenue. Marketing initiatives include 166% increase in email subscribers (over 80k), 20% social media growth, dramatic increase in press coverage, building bridges to community with physical presences, installed interior screens to capitalize on captive audiences. Website refresh has been a resounding success, still in need of a complete overhaul, but in the meantime significant improvements have been made to the aesthetics and functionality. Artistic Programming is being developed, as well as outreach and partnerships.

Review Board Committees: Introduction of new Artistic Programming Committee. Committees generally include Board Members who have interest and/or experience in certain areas, do not have full commitment of consistent meetings, called upon as necessary.

Executive Session: Breakout

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- October 23, 2024 at 12pm (*Executive / Finance Meeting - via Zoom*)
- December 5, 2024 at 12pm
- *February 12, 2025 (Finance Committee Meeting - Budget Presentation)*
- March 12, 2025 at 12pm
- May 14, 2025 at 12pm
- September 17, 2025 at 12pm
- December 10, 2025 at 12pm

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Empire State Plaza Performing Arts Center Corporation was held on Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 12 noon at the Swyer Theatre Lobby.



PRESENT:

Diane Eber
Mary Griffin - Chair
Scott Palladino - Vice-Chair
John Regan - Treasurer
Dr. Dorcey Applyrs
Catherine Barber
Christopher Cernik
Susan T. Cleary
Christine Henseler
Stacey B. Rowland
Maston Sansom
Anna Scaife

Isabella Underwood
Adrienne Bonilla
Steven Labate

STAFF: Jenny Harder - Finance Manager

Approval of Minutes September 2024 Meeting: Minutes approved, seconded. Motion carried

Introduction of New Board Member: Steven Labate

Finance Report: Diane talks through Fiscal Year numbers, October was strong, November was stronger, ticket sales are up but artist fees are up more, concession income isn't as much as budgeted, but still higher than last Fiscal Year.

Development Report - Development is strong, a consultant is working alongside Diane and we are receiving almost all grants we apply for. There is room for improvement with Underwriting and Corporate Contributions. Grant funding has come from -

- Arts Center of Cap Region, Thrive & Grow
- Discover Albany
- JM McDonald
- Bender Family Foundation
- Union College up to 20k from 11k
- Price Chopper
- CDPHP
- Market NY (will be reflected on report next Fiscal Year)
- Albany Wine & Dine
- NYS Appropriation (Used to get 221K now 500k + 100k from NYSCA)
- Year End Giving Campaign

Mary suggests we move money from checking accounts to Money Market Account Savings or short-term CD accounts. Diane goes over gross profit (it was 1.5M, and 1.4M was projected). Diane is spending more on artist fees since we are doing more programming and taking more artistic risks and we are getting the funding to support it. Diane explains that in order to invest in different groups and artists, ticket sales are not always going to offset artist fees. Jenny explains that ticket sales on Egg shows are up 70% even with the free programming being done.

Marketing Report: Haven't used the Marketing budget yet, but will by end of the fiscal year, it's doing wonders for visibility and community recognition, production costs are down and production income is up, Deferred income is way up from last year at this time, meaning we're forecasting to hit or exceed the ticket sales and venue rental income budget. Ticketing fee increase has helped our income numbers. Look deeper into the Long-term Pension Liability number and find out exactly what we currently owe and what we *will* owe and especially the timeframe of when we'll owe it (Scott P will meet with us to find us from the Pension agency)

Executive Director's Report: Capital Project Update – officially awarded to the contractor through OGS. OGS has waived our rent for the months we are dark in 2025. Mary, Scott, Diane, and Jenny met with the state Budget division to ask for an extra one-time 500k for the 6-8 months we are dark. Mary is relatively confident we will get it. Diane describes the workload for full-time staff during the capital campaign. Diane talks about how the new chairs will be wood backing instead of plastic to be better for acoustics.

Ticketing update - TheaterManager was sold to another company and is badly out-of-date and not being supported by the new company, so we need a new system. We sent RFPs, narrowed down to Ticketmaster and EXS, and TXR. We have chosen TXR, which is used by Levon Helm Studios, DSP Shows, Wynn Resort, etc. They will take \$2 ticket in fees. No more letting outside promoters use separate ticketing systems. Marketing data and credit card chargeback support will be new and very beneficial.

Activity Report: Diane explains that even though our overall numbers are great, sometimes shows don't do well (ex Encanto). Development Fundraising is an important area of growth. Will eventually need to invest in a development rep to keep us going. The Egg is a blank canvas - have identified an artist to crochet the outside of The Egg, still need the fundraising for it. Year End Campaign - might not raise a ton of money, but will be good to get an idea for future campaigns. Seat Map Campaign - once the seats in the theaters are replaced, people will be able to buy a seat and have their name on a plaque. Diane passes around potential fabric samples for seats as well as carpet samples. Old chairs will be auctioned off by OGS. We will be working with an archivist who will be helping us find historical documents and things related to The Egg.

Executive Session: Breakout

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- *Feb 12, 2025 (Finance Committee Meeting - Budget Presentation, finance committee members only)*
- March 12, 2025 at 12pm
- May 14, 2025 at 12pm
- September 17, 2025 at 12pm
- December 10, 2025 at 12pm