Thesis Plan B

Creating a Community Theater in Cottage Grove, MN

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Abstract

A community theater seeks to represent the community in which it creates theater. This research project examined two questions; would there be enough interest to start a community theater in Cottage Grove and how does one start a theater? These two questions became the two phases of the project. The first phase examined whether or not there would be enough interest to even start a community theater. This was done through an on-line survey and a community informational meeting. Phase two explored the process of creating a community theater, finding and creating a board, developing a business model, acquiring funding, and choosing a performance.

Introduction

In communities across the country, volunteers are creating theater experiences for members of their community. In the United States, there are more than 7,000 community theaters (Raether SL3). While some theaters struggle, others are overwhelmed with support. Some are volunteer-based with amateur actors while others have paid staff with professional actors. Many are non-profit whereas others are for-profit. One thing, however, is the same for all community theaters; in some way, they are making a difference in their communities and for their community members.

A community theater serves as a creative outlet. By nature, “human beings have almost a primal need to express themselves” (Nelson 11). It is this need for expression that leads many to start theater companies (Mulcahy 2; Nelson 11). Nevertheless, passion will not sustain a theater unless there is a business perspective (Mulcahy 2; Nelson xiii). Both elements are necessary to start a theater.

Currently in Cottage Grove, MN, there is no community theater. However, the community supports theater at both middle schools and the high school. Cottage Grove is a city of almost 34,000 residents. The nearest cities of similar size with community theaters are Woodbury, population 57,000; and Hastings, 22,000 residents. The Woodbury Community Theater was founded in 1975 and Black Dirt Theater, Hastings’ community theater, was founded in 2009. Even though one has been around for over 35 years and the other only three, both theaters have found success in their communities. Since Cottage
Grove is of similar size and relative in proximity to Woodbury and Hastings, it should be able to sustain a theater.

This research project examined two questions; would there be enough interest to start a community theater in Cottage Grove and how does one start a theater? These two questions became the two phases of the project. The first phase examined whether or not there would be enough interest to even start a community theater. This was done through an on-line survey and a community informational meeting. Phase two explored the process of creating a community theater, which consisted of finding and creating a board, developing a business model, acquiring funding, and choosing a performance. This research project seeks to examine these two questions.

Terms defined

Theater is spelled both as “theater” and “theatre” in a variety of sources and both spellings can be used to mean the space where plays are performed, the art of creating theater, or a theatrical event. This paper will use the –er spelling, except when a company or a direct quote is used in which the spelling is –re.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Community theater is most commonly defined as a “theatrical producing organization serving a limited area and operating under an amateur licensing agreement” (Cohen, xvii). A theatrical producing organization is defined as the people who are putting on the play, e.g. actors, directors, designers, ushers, volunteers and any other person directly involved in the final production of the performance. A community can also be defined as a limited group, whether that group is based on geography, ethnicity, socioeconomics, historical connection, or any other reason why groups come into being (Nagel 158). Most often, community theaters serve an entire neighborhood, town, or city.

Community theaters are often amateur theaters that produces plays under an amateur licensing agreement, which means the royalty fees for producing a play are offered at a reduced rate because the theater is not professional (Cohen xvii). Royce refers to community theater as “the artistic equivalent of recreational sports” (1F). Like recreational sports, most people are involved simply because they enjoy participating and do not plan on making money from it. Due to their amateur status and nonprofit nature, many times neither the actors nor the staff is paid (Atwell 2; Cohen xvii; Stadem D5). In certain instances, the theater may hire an actor to play a lead role or a guest director to direct a play. The majority of community theater organizations are run by volunteers who handle all things necessary to produce a play (Cohen xvii). For the purposes of this research project, a community theater is defined as a nonprofit theater where amateurs produce the plays that serve a specific geographic community.

Community-based theater is different from community theater. Some people use the terms interchangeably though there are major conceptual differences between the two. Community theater is an institution or organization, whereas community-based theater is a form of theatrical performance. Community-based theater does not produce plays from published scripts, as is the case in most community theaters. In community-based theater, the communities’ stories are transformed into a theatrical performance (Landis 32; Nagel 154; Rea 184; Seda 183) and created as a collective group.
The script is a creation of stories or an oral presentation of the lives of the community. The goal of community-based theater is to give a voice to certain communities that don’t currently have one (Nagel 158). Community-based theater focuses on inspiring change, while community theater may not always have that same goal. Community-based theaters are often generated from members outside the community that go in to a specific targeted community to produce theatrical experiences (Nagel, 158; Seda, 183; Rea, 184). Many community-based theater staff are paid as opposed to community theaters where they often are not (Nagel 158). Sometimes community theaters produce community-based plays. This research focuses on community theaters as opposed to community-based theater.

Many community theaters were created because the community saw a need to support the arts (Royce, 1F; Smith, 16; Wilberding), whereas others formed out of a need to bring the community together (Gabrels 1; Kufinec 203). Community theaters are sometimes formed from community activities. Lex-Ham Community Theatre in St. Paul, Minnesota grew from one summer show that the community wanted to see happen more often, (Royce 1F). Other community theaters emerge from the need to address problems in the community. In Maricopa County, Arizona, law enforcement officials helped create an arts program that included theater (Gabrels 1). The program directors hoped it would help prevent crime by bringing teens that might otherwise be out on the streets together for theater (Gabrels 1). Additionally, the U.S. Office of Justice Programs has an arts program aimed at reducing crime. The performances incorporate young adults in the process by having them create and perform the plays, (“Arts and Performances….” 1).

The majority of theaters create a mission statement outlining their purpose for operating (Cohen xvi). Cohen argues creating a mission statement is a necessity when forming a new community theater (xvi). It helps guide the theater in its decisions and should be revised every two to three years. Mission statements vary vastly from theater to theater. Tacoma Little Theatre, in Tacoma, Washington, has a mission “to create high-quality, accessible community theater, to enrich lives, to provide challenges and to entertain.” The Performance Circle, another theater in the same area, “seeks to entertain, increase
appreciation of the arts and promote a clearer understanding of the human condition through the presentation of theater,” (Raether SL3). Even though their mission statements differ, they both share a common goal of entertaining. Neither theater explicitly states they hope to make changes in the community, but both imply this goal. Tacoma Little Theater implies they want to “enrich lives,” while Performance Circle uses the phrase “increase appreciation of the arts” to imply the difference it plans on making in the community. The mission of yet another community theater, Merely Players, is to seek out non-traditional audiences who don’t usually attend the theater (Wilberding). While Merely Players mission is vastly different from Tacoma Little Theater and Performance Circle, all three mission statements guide each theater’s decisions and lets the community know their goals. Any play produced at a theater should align with its mission statement. If not, Cohen argues the theater must re-evaluate their mission statement (xvi). The mission statement of each theater is an integral part of demonstrating an understanding of the needs and wants of the community.

Skucazek of the Minnesota Association of Community Theaters argues that in many small towns, community theater “can be the main source of live entertainment and artistic output” (Royce 1F). Community theater may be the only access to theater within a community. For many, community theater is an introduction to the theater experience (Royce 1F) and serves as a place to showcase talents (Wilberding). It provides an outlet for non-professional actors to have some fun (Smith 16). Actors, directors, set designers, costumers, musicians, and all other local artists involved in a production also gain experience (Raether SL3).

Community theater serves as a similar place for people to explore the making of a theatrical production. For people new to theater, it is a great chance to see what theater is all about (Nott 30). It also offers the audience a more accessible form of entertainment, (Wilberding). This accessibility exists because it is commonly more affordable to attend, and most often, it is free to be involved with the production with little to no background experience. To remain accessible to their audiences, many theaters provide pay-what-you-can performances, (Lakeshore Players; Nott 30). These theaters realize
and embrace the communities they are in by providing access at an affordable cost. Still others perform plays at no cost at all (Royce 1F).

Community theaters are a way to get theater out to the public because they provide direct and meaningful engagement (Wilberding). Cohen believes community theater artists “have a duty to make sure theatre is available in every community. We need to provide it, perform it, and promote it,” (146). If there wasn’t a need for theater expression, they would not exist. Providing theater to those who may not have access to it otherwise is many times why a community forms a theater. Willmeth states that many theaters are a significant part of the surrounding community (178). While some theaters focus on the involvement of the actors and their connection to the community, others realize that it’s because of their audience they even exist at all (Royce 1F). Whether the community theater serves a role by giving the community a place to express themselves, or because the audience needs exposure to theater, they are making a difference in the communities they serve.

Actors gain experience through community theaters because it is difficult for new actors to get cast professionally without experience. Community theater creates exposure for actors that would not be available on a professional level (Ames 14WC2; Raether SL3; Royce 1F). This exposure serves as a training ground and is valuable to both the actor and the professional theaters. Willmeth argues community theater is successful because “the arts and crafts of the theatre could be grasped by enthusiastic and ambitious amateurs eager for ‘self-expression,’ ” (178). These amateurs will grow into the theaters next generation of talent or move on to serve the theater community elsewhere. Many never seek fame but end up gaining a lifelong engagement with the arts in their community (Wilberding).

Programming is offered by many theaters training future actors for performances, thus giving community members, especially school-aged members, something to do (Royce 1F). Often, school districts only have theater programs for high school students. These additional programs serve to fill the void and serve to train the students not only for productions at the community theater, but give them
training for when they enter high school theater programs. Community theaters, such as Lakeshore Players in White Bear Lake, MN, and Black Dirt Theater in Hastings, MN offer theater workshops and playwriting contests (Lakeshore Players, Langenfeld).

A sense of community that otherwise did not exist can be created through theater. By bringing the community together, members may change their perceptions of one another by getting to know each other (Kuftinec 213). Without theater participation, these perceptions may not have changed. Lynne states, “In the safety of rehearsal, no one seemed uncomfortable saying difficult things,” (44). This creation of community means people feel comfortable enough to talk about uncomfortable things. Sometimes this is enough to measure success of a theater.

Theatrical success can also be experienced even without large audiences. “A lot of times it’s more for the people that are the regulars, part of the theater group, and they perform more to their friends than anyone else,” argues Toltzman who has worked with a variety of community theaters in Minnesota (qtd in Royce 1F). As long as the theater is able to maintain and sustain itself, large audiences are not needed to be successful.

Theatrical success can also be measured by the quality of performance. Whiting contends “Community Theatres continue to rise or fall primarily on the basis of how well and how convincingly they produce plays,” (109). In some communities, these theaters are competing with professional theaters. When audiences compare the level of performances, professional theaters sometimes win out. Sometimes community theaters aren’t successful simply because an audience prefers a professional theater. Ultimately, a community can make or break a community theater (Atwell 2) and it sometimes depends on whether or not the community views the theater as serving a vital role. When there is someone in the community to advocate for the arts, it is more likely the theater will be successful. Rochester Civic Theater is one of the most successful community theaters in Minnesota. In part, it is so
successful because one of the former directors regularly promoted theater as an art to the community (Whiting 201).

While many criticize community theater for being amateur, often actors in community theaters are college trained (Wilberding) and therefore, can compare to some of the best professional theaters (Smith 16). Many college trained actors choose community theater over the instability of working in professional theater. Others believe the actors’ level of ability is not the only success factor. Cohen believes “the more people involved in the production-the larger the audiences-in terms of relatives and friends of the cast and crew,” (xviii). These large audiences sometimes contribute to success. Whatever the reason, community theaters have a long standing history in the United States and in Minnesota. In Minnesota alone, they have existed for over 100 years (Whiting 15).

Summary

As previously stated, community theaters provide advantages and opportunities to their communities. At times, they are the only source of creative outlet that a community has access to and it can expose both those involved in the production and those wanting to attend a production to the theater process. Many community theaters are accessible due to their reduced ticket prices and need to involve their community. Although one particular reason cannot be given for the success of theater, putting on quality plays that meet the communities’ needs and involving a lot of people are reasons why some community theaters do find success.

Looking at the benefits of and reasons for developing a community theater, this information will be used to develop a community theater in Cottage Grove, given that survey results indicate the community wants a community theater. Due to the evidence that community theaters exist in all sorts of communities for a variety of reasons, it is therefore important to examine whether or not the community of Cottage Grove is one of those communities that could sustain a community theater. This question was examined by administering a survey to gage the interest level of the community and holding a community
information meeting. If the survey and community informational meeting indicated enough interest, the second phase of the research project would be implemented; discovering how to start a theater using community feedback from the surveys.
Chapter 3: Methods

Phase One: Determining Interest

Before phase two of the project could be implemented, solid data on the interest level of the community needed to be collected. Initial surveying with positive feedback had been done through informal conversations at high school theater performances. Some audience members were asked whether they would have an interest in participating in a community theater. Responses were positive and supportive. This resulted in prompting the next step of collecting concrete data through an online survey and holding a community informational meeting.

After receiving approval from the IRB committee (Appendix A), a survey was created using SurveyMonkey, an online surveying software (see appendix B). Nine questions were asked; two questions gauged the interest level of respondents to participate in and attend theater performances in the Cottage Grove area; seven questions gauged reasonable ticket prices, funding, performance locations, genre of plays, theater structure, and issues of local concern.

The survey was distributed via e-mail to people who lived in the Cottage Grove area, via the Cottage Grove Facebook page, and ran in an article in the South Washington County Bulletin, Cottage Grove Edition both online and print. A volunteer form was distributed at the community informational meeting with the survey link included. Survey results were collected from June 30, 2011 to January 7, 2012.

There was an initial wave of results after the survey was posted in the South Washington County Bulletin, Cottage Grove edition. Another wave of results came in after the survey was distributed via the Cottage Grove Facebook page. A final wave of results came in after the community informational meeting. Seventy-Six surveys were completed.
A community informational meeting was held on August 11, 2011 at 7:00 PM to share plans for the theater, to share initial survey results, allow people to ask questions, and to sign up to volunteer. Information gained at this meeting would be used with survey data to determine the interest level of the community.

I anticipated there would be difficulty getting people to participate in the survey. Choosing to participate takes time and it is difficult to vie for people’s time. However, I hoped that by giving community members a chance to voice their opinion, it would contribute to participation in the survey, as well as knowing their feedback could help create a new theater in Cottage Grove.

**Survey Results:**

The following figures and tables show data collected from the survey as well as an analysis of the information. Recurring open responses were compiled for simplicity and demonstrated in the figure. Each table also consists of answers that do not specifically answer the question being asked, however were included as they provided insight on other issues.

*Likelihood of attending a theater production*

Figure 1 demonstrates responses from question 1 (see Appendix B), “How likely would you be to attend a theater production at a Cottage Grove community theater?” The majority of respondents, 84%, would be likely or very likely to attend, while only 16% responding they would not attend or would not be very likely to attend.
Performances a year willing to participate in or attend

Figure 2 examines the number of performances a year someone would be willing to participate in or attend. Ninety-one percent believed they would participate in or attend one or more performances. Nearly half of those 91% would participate or attend two or three performances, and nearly a quarter would participate in or attend four or more performances. Only seven respondents believed they would not participate in or attend any performances, (See fig. 2).

![Figure 2](image)

Performance locations

Figure 3 examines viable locations for performances. The largest response frequency was for rotating locations with 33 responses. The second highest response (12) was for Park High School (the local high school) or other school. Park High School or other school was not a response option, but was an open response written in by survey participants. The response of Park High School or other school has been omitted from table 1 responses unless tied to additional commentary due to the analysis of these
result in figure 3. Community Park received 11 votes, Churches 8, vacant building, 5, and community center, 3. Other responses were added in open response and can be viewed in table 1.

**Figure 3.** Where would be the most ideal location for a community theater in Cottage Grove, Minnesota to perform?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park HS or other school</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Building</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotating Locations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**

What would be the most ideal location for a community theater in Cottage Grove, Minnesota to perform?

- Park High School but other locations are possible too. Rotating may be hard to follow without stable communication lines.
- If at all possible, a community theater should have its own performance space.
- Perhaps a renovated old movie theatre or other auditorium space. I would avoid affiliations with Churches as that may deny some funding. Any space would be great-summer Shakespeare is always fun.
- A school theater? Don’t know if there are any spaces available at present…
- The old Home Depot building
- Community Center
- park for puppet theater
- As long as it is big enough and comfortable.
- Would be good to have use of actual theater space (i.e. At schools) for larger productions.
- Library or new building on Keats Ave. Maybe District Service Center
- Woodbury
- See the theater as completely unnecessary.
- Unsure
- the “Rush” building or the current Chamber of Commerce building
- Would like to see a more theater-type setting like school auditorium-if not possible I guess a local church or rotation locations.
- Perhaps repurposing a church that is empty and for sale? Outdoor performances are nice but can only happen 3 months out of the year.
Park High School’s auditorium, a new space in the community center

Genre of play preferred

The survey asked participants to identify what genres of plays they would like to see performed. For this response, participants had no limit to the number of responses they could select. Seventy-one of the 76 participants responded. Figure 4 presents the responses to question 4 (see Appendix B). The most frequent responses were for musicals and comedies, both with 52 responses; Children’s plays received the third highest frequency of responses with 50. In order of highest to lowest responses were drama, 34; local artists, 27; classical, 23; and puppet plays, 16. Table 2 represents the open responses for question 4 in which participants added specific play titles they would like to see performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre of play</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicals</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local artists</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puppet Plays</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. What genre of show would you like to see performed?

Table 2: Are there specific play titles you would like to see performed? If yes, please list the titles in the order of importance you would like to see them performed.

It may work to do specific types for the season-then rotate. Choosing one would make it faster to become a community trademark though. I think at tryouts it could be evaluated based on talents.
Initially I’d say stuff you can produce simply to save some money. IE Shakespeare or definite crowd pleasers you know you’d make a buck from. Getting the community as involved as possible is good too. Rounding up support.

Peter Pan
Nothing junky—I’d rather see something more professional done and pay a little more to see it than attend some cheaply-done plays. It we are going to represent Cottage Grove and theater, let’s do it right!

Mama Mia Annie
Annie
Rent Fame High School Musical
Mama Mia, Peter Pan, all Disney

Ticket prices

Question five asked about reasonable ticket prices. The options were free, pay what you can, $1-$2, $3-$5, $6-$9, and $10+. The largest number of respondents, 38%, chose $3-$5, and the second largest response for $6-$9 received 25% of the responses (see figure 5). Therefore 63% of respondents were willing to pay between $3 and $9. Ten dollars or more only received 7% of the votes. The major factors effecting how much someone would pay for tickets were location, type of play, age group, and quality of performance (see table 3). One respondent felt, “For something at a park, I'd expect it to be free or pay what you can. For something at the high school on the large stage, I'd be willing to pay $10 or more. For something at a church or other location, I'd expect to pay $3-$9.” Another respondent had a similar response, feeling parks should be free, but $5-$8 for other locations.

The quality of the performance effected how much someone was willing to pay for a ticket also. “If it’s a good, quality show… I’d pay $10 or more to see it…” and “Guess it would depend on the production value.” There were two other responses that were similar, agreeing that quality of
performance and production would be a factor in how much they would be willing to pay.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 5: What would be a reasonable ticket price? For the option “depends, list factors”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For something at a park, I’d expect it to be free or pay what you can. For something at the high school on the large stage, I’d be willing to pay $10 or more. For something at a church or other location, I’d expect to pay $3-$9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d say $10-15 and at least 1-2 pay what you can nights. People are very generous those nights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum cost for families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think any price is fine as long as all the money goes into the theater or back into the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would likely pay more to see a well known show than a lesser known show. I would pay more to see a musical than a play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it’s a good, quality show (see my comments above), I’d pay $10 or more to see it…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids cheaper, adults up to $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of show, where held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays at parks should be free, but in other venues could be between 5-8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guess it would depend on the production value. Would for sure like to see one price for young kids/students/adults/seniors. Comparing to professional theater productions that can cost anywhere from $45 - $100+ per ticket, I don't think $10 for adults is unreasonable as long as production value is there. Less for kids as that is the reason I would go. To involve my kids in the theater experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of show it is, less for kid's shows, more for musicals, but keeping the price reasonable generally gets better attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This depends on if you have to royalties and if so for how many nights. You could start with musicals in the public domain such as Gilbert and Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the amount of work and money put into the set. How much work goes into the making. For musicals: price of a choreographer. Etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theater funding

Question six asked how the theater should be funded. The participants were given five options: Grants, theater memberships, sponsors (such as local businesses), participation fees, and other (with a free response option). Participants were allowed to select more than one answer. Sixty-seven responses were in favor of the theater being partially funded by sponsors such as local businesses. After sponsors, the order of responses in favor of funding was grants, participation fees, theater memberships, and other. The “other” responses resulted in a range of responses (see table 4).
Table 4: How should the theater be funded? Responses for “Other (please specify)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ads in programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopefully all kids who want to be involved will not be held back because they cannot afford it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think all of these are good choices, but sponsorships from local businesses would be the best.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admission fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no tax dollars should be used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those handful of people should fund the theater 100%, those who want no part of it should not have to pay a single cent for this to be built.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Fundraisers (such as a potluck with a 5 dollar adult entry fee and a 3 dollar child fee or something) Nothing that deals with selling things!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theatre structure

Question seven asked participants to comment on the structure of the theater. Answer options were all paid positions, some paid/some volunteer positions, and all volunteer positions. Only one response was allowed per participant. The largest response of 73.7% was for the theater to have some
paid and some volunteer positions; only 26.3% felt the theater should be all volunteer; 0% wanted the theater to be all paid positions (see table 7).

**Figure 7: What structure should the theater have?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Paid</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Paid/Some Volunteer</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Local issues*

Question eight asked participants to comment on any local issues the theater should try to address/emphasize with its programming. There were nine participants who answered this question. Responses covered issues of unemployment or working class issues and multiculturalism. Other responses varied (see table 5).

**Table 5: Are there any local issues you feel the theater should try to address/emphasize with its programming?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our youth and young adults need positive pastimes, constructive ways to show and grow their creativity. I do like the idea of outdoor shows but can't think of a good venue here. And it would rely on the weather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please try and avoid musicals as Woodbury does these exclusively. It would be nice to do more than Children's theater but that would appeal to a broader audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A community theater should not overlap with the local high school productions but instead find its own area. Children's theater could be one possibility. Also plays based on other cultures' stories could be of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to participate in, and attend performances, by people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and educational backgrounds. I’d like to see a community theater that was for everyone, by everyone-- something that really reflected Cottage Grove and the entire area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(un)employment, working class issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism Inclusion Just plain fun!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No public (city) funding

Would like to see it be something adult and kids could participate in should they so desire. I know I have one child who would love opportunity to do community theater. We did it once through Pips Theater in Hudson, but it was just too far to drive to continue doing. A local opportunity would be awesome!

Having participants be LOCAL kids or people, as well as volunteers. It needs local ownership to thrive
Additional comments

The last question asked participants to list any additional comments, questions or concerns.

There was one concern listed: “taxpayers should not be asked to pay for another thing in Cottage Grove.”

Other comments were varied with some ideas and some compliments. Responses are included in table 6.

| Table 6: Additional comments? Please feel free to list any additional comments, questions, or concerns you have here. |
| I am very delighted to see this being pursued |
| The most important person in a community theater, in my experience, is a forceful director who holds the performers to high standards. |
| Taxpayers should not be asked to pay for another thing in Cottage Grove. We are already discussing a community center and a new public safety building. No more. |
| I heart Tracy!! |
| Instead of just a community theater why not a community center for the young adults to have a place to go instead of just on the streets and the theater could be part of the center. My husband has had an idea to take the land where the rodeo bar was and make that into a skateboard/roller skate rink but we have no funding. |
| Thank you for the effort and energy in putting this together so far! |
| Theater is an exceptional way to teach. |
| Owatonna has a great community theater that you could model this after. |
| This would be a great program for our growing community and children. |
| I'm super excited to hear people are interested in a Cottage Grove community theatre! |
| I am a theater teacher for the Young Actors Theater Company in Eagan, though I live in Cottage Grove, and I would LOVE to see a community theater here! |
| There is a real need for a community theatre in Cottage Grove as any participation is limited now. Many years ago there was a community theatre here, and it had some really nice shows. Don't know what happened to cause its demise. |
| This is wonderful! It's exactly what CG needs. |
| This is a growing community that could use an infuse of culture |

Volunteer sign-up

In addition to the nine survey questions, the survey provided a form for volunteer sign-up. This was an optional response. There were 30 responses; 29 of them were volunteers for a range of activities listed on the volunteer sign-up page (see Appendix B).

Limitations:

While this study provided a base for further community theater decisions, it had numerous limitations. One of those limitations is the quantity of responses. Seventy-six responses is not a large
enough response rate to be representative of the community but suggestive as a limited sample. There are a few explanations that could be made for the low response rate. Electronic media was the main form of communication for distribution of the survey and reached fewer respondents than anticipated. Using electronic forms of distribution limited the demographics of the respondents. It is reasonable to assume this form of communication would not reach all potential participants. The newspaper also limited demographics to subscribers of the newspaper or those who follow the online version. The newspaper article may also have reached fewer potential respondents than anticipated. Using more print forms of advertising such as flyers may have increased survey results. The low responses could also have been a result of people not taking the time to complete the survey.

The survey link could have also created a limitation of responses. While the survey was easy to access if clicking on a link on the internet, for those who were informed about it in the newspaper or on the volunteer form, they would have to type in the address: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9MJJ8TX. This may have limited the number of responses due to complications of correctly transferring the link into the address bar.

The use of multiple-choice options for answer responses may have been leading to the responders. Allowing for completely open-ended responses may have led to a truer representation of opinions. Also, the wording of some of the multiple choice responses may have been too vague for responders to grasp the meaning of the choice, or too specific for them to make the selection of their choice because they did not want to choose any of the options.

One of the largest limitations would be that of the interpretation of the open response answers. These answers were valuable, however, when it came time to compare answers I had to interpret the responses to the best of my ability. This could have left room for error based on my own interpretation of the responses. Analysis bias most likely played a role in the interpretation of these results.
No demographic information was collected from respondents. Therefore, no analysis could be completed relating to level of theater experience and exposure. The results could also not be used to determine a target audience. Participation was also limited to 18 and older. Inclusion of younger ages may have resulted in different results particularly for some questions such as genre of play, ticket prices, etc.

**Community Informational Meeting**

Once the survey was distributed to the public, a community informational meeting was held on August 11, 2011 at 7:00 in the Park High school Lecture hall. This meeting was to share information about the plans for the theater. Sixteen people were in attendance.

The goal of the meeting was to share information about plans for the theater as well as allow people to meet me. Information was shared about my background in theater and why I wanted to start a community theater in the Cottage Grove area. Results of the survey that had been collected up to that point were shared. At this point, a few survey respondents had noted an issue with the theater seeking city or taxpayer funding. This may have been assumed since the city of Cottage Grove posted information about the survey and the meeting on its Facebook page. This issue was addressed, as no city or taxpayer funding was currently being sought. After results were shared, there was time for questions and comments.

Questions were asked regarding the next steps for the theater that would include forming a board; creating a mission statement, name, and logo; and selecting the first performance. Those in attendance also wanted to know some of the long term goals of the theater. Goals included developing kids’ camps, improvisational nights, flash mobs, and creating a presence in the community. After the meeting, individuals shared their excitement for the theater and their hope for it to be established.
Chapter 5: Interpretation and analysis of Results

Responses to the survey and community meeting were mostly positive. There were only two respondents on the survey who repeatedly commented on not wanting to pay for the theater and not wanting taxpayer’s dollars to go towards the theater. These responses may be a result of the information being posted on the Cottage Grove Facebook page. Some participants may have assumed this meant the city was looking to support or fund the theater. This was not the case and this was addressed at the community informational meeting.

Analysis of responses for questions 1 and 2 (see figures 1 and 2), along with feedback from the community meeting helped determine whether or not there was enough interest to start a community theater. Even though there were only 16 people in attendance at the informational meeting, responses by all were positive. Individuals spoke with me directly about their excitement at the potential of a community theater. Three community members also sent e-mails after they were not able to attend the community meeting to express their interest in the theater and pledge their support for the idea. With survey responses of questions 1 and 2 resulting in 84% being likely or very likely to attend a performance, and 91% being interested in participating or attending one or more performances respectively, this was a majority response. While 76 responses are not enough to be conclusive of the success of creating a community theater, it was determined to be enough data to move on with phase 2 of the project; how to create a community theater.

Further Analysis

The results for question 2 (see figure 2) would have been more beneficial for future analysis and use had the question been divided into two separate questions; one asking how many performances they would be willing to participate in and the other asking how many performances they would be willing to attend. The level of commitment to attend is only one evening, while the level of commitment for
participating in a play can range from a few weeks to a few months. This may explain the discrepancy between question one, where only four respondents would not attend a performance, and question two, where seven respondents would not attend or participate in a performance.

Questions four through nine were included in the survey to be used if phase two were to be implemented. These results helped guide board decisions as they determined number of performances, genres, locations, issues to address, etc.

**Phase Two: Creating a Community Theater**

**Creating a Board**

Results of the survey and community information meeting indicated there was enough interest to move forward with creating the theater. It was decided that a board would be created to make all major decisions for the theater. Board applications were created (Appendix D). The application requested information regarding level of commitment, special skills and qualifications, and reasons for wanting to serve on the board. Due to the amount of responsibility the board would be taking on, information regarding level of commitment was needed from each applicant. The special skills and qualifications section was used to find board members with a variety of skills. I hoped to include board members with experience in financing, management, publicity, and theater. These skills were important to have a well-rounded board that could handle a wide range of tasks. Understanding why each applicant wanted to serve on the board helped me gain better insight into their goals for the community theater.

Information regarding the board application was posted on the Cottage Grove Facebook site and distributed via e-mail to all who expressed interest either on the volunteer form of the survey (Appendix B) or by filling out a volunteer application at the informational meeting (Appendix C). Twelve people expressed interest in serving on the board. Completed applications were submitted by five interested applicants. Four applicants were chosen to serve on the board and each accepted a board position. The board needed a minimum of five members, and had to be an odd number to prevent tie votes. I would
serve as the fifth board member. Specific board positions were not appointed at this time but would be determined by the board at a later vote.

The first tasks the board needed to accomplish included creating a name, logo, mission statement, and determining how the board would operate. Each task was needed to be accomplished as part of the business model for the theater.

**Creating a Name**

A business name is a vital part of creating a theater. A name is how the community identifies with the business. Results from the survey response to question eight and nine (see tables 5 and 6) were taken into consideration when creating a name. A criterion was created by the board for selecting a name which included being inclusive of the Cottage Grove area (St. Paul Park, Newport, Grey Cloud Island, and Afton possibly), representing community characteristics, and aligning with the theater’s mission which was also being developed at the same time. A list of community characteristics was generated, and the board felt a prominent characteristic was the rivers that surrounded the community. The name River’s Edge Players was chosen. However, after a simple internet search, it was discovered there was a River’s Edge Playback Theatre in Minneapolis, which was too close in proximity to have a similar name. The theater needed to have its own unique name. When consulting survey results, one respondent stated, “having participants be LOCAL kids or people, as well as volunteers. It needs local ownership to thrive,” while another stated “I’d like to see a community theater that was for everyone, by everyone—something that really reflected Cottage Grove and the entire area”. The board wanted the theater to be a product of the community, and so the board finally decided on Locally Grown Theatre. The name embodied the communities; which used to be largely farming communities. The board also thought it encompassed the mission of growing theater and theater artists within the community. A search was done to ensure other theaters did not have a similar name in the area, and after none were found, the board voted and accepted the name Locally Grown Theatre.
Creating a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a summary of the goals and values of the theater. Considering the majority of questions at the community informational meeting regarded the theater’s goals, a mission statement would be needed before the theater would be taken seriously. Narrowing goals for the theater became the most difficult task. The board consulted survey results for question four (see figure 4 and table 2), question eight (see table 5), and question nine (see table 6). In each of these responses there was an emphasis on being sure to include children. There also seemed to be a trend of creating theater that was inclusive of all people regardless of age, ability, or ethnicity, and an emphasis on involving the community as much as possible. The board also reviewed mission statements of local theaters, as well as consulted the literature, and referenced the books *How to Start Your Own Theater Company* and *Building the Successful Theater Company* for guidance. It was determined that the mission statements that were straightforward were the easiest to read. It was also decided to keep it simple to not lose the interest of the community. The mission statement needed to include information about who the theater would serve, how the theater would serve them, and long-range goals. The board also decided to incorporate the theme of growing into the mission statement since it had been used in the name and the board was working it into the logo. The board finally decided on the following mission statement:

The mission of Locally Grown Theatre is …

to *plant* the seed of theater;

to *cultivate* the inner artist in youth;

to *nurture* the love of theatre arts within the community;

to *grow* artists, of all ages, through experimentation in multiple theatrical forms.

The board also liked that the mission statement could be summarized to say, “The mission of Locally Grown Theatre is to plant, cultivate, nurture and grow theater within the community.” It is easy to remember and easily identifiable. This mission statement, either the simplified or the long version, responded to community needs from the survey.
Creating a Logo

A name would give the theater recognition, and a mission statement would give the theater a purpose, but a logo was needed to give the theater an image in the community. Initial ideas for the logo were very complex, and would be difficult to make easily identifiable. The board used the same survey results for creating the mission statement and name (see figure 4; tables 2, 5, and 6) for creating the logo. The board also incorporated information from table 3. The board knew the logo needed to be simple, recognizable, and if at all possible, incorporate the name and theme of growing. An acorn was chosen for a few reasons. One reason is because it grows into an Oak tree which represents strength and the board hoped to eventually have in the community. Another is because the seed represents the youth of the community, the youth of the theater, and the yearning to grow. It also fit very well with the mission statement and theater name. One respondent in table 3 commented that “I think any price [for tickets] is fine as long as all the money goes into the theater or back into the community.” The vice chairman of the board drew an acorn with the seed portion of the acorn becoming a “G” that also looked like a circle with an arrow which represents giving back to the community like the survey respondent had requested. It was similar to the idea of the recycle symbol (See Appendix E).

Creating Bylaws

Bylaws are orders of operation available to the public and members of the theater that outline how the theater will operate; what the board positions are and which board position is responsible for what duties; how one becomes a member; what benefits membership gives a member, the length of membership; and a variety of other pertinent information to theater operations. None of the board members had written bylaws. When The board developed Sections 3 and 4 of the bylaws (see Appendix F), the board included membership fees, but also kept the prices for membership reasonable so that all could participate. The board also decided no one would be turned away for inability to pay. Survey results from figure 6, and tables 4 and 5 were consulted to create Sections 3 and 4. These results indicated that the theater could be partially funded through participation fees, but that the theater still needed to be accessible to all. For other sections of the bylaws, the board viewed sample by-laws of other
theaters, and finally used two sources as models for the final bylaws. The first was a bylaws template from *The Community Theater Green Room*’s website (Appendix G). The second were bylaws for Hartford Players, LTD, a theater company in Wisconsin (Appendix H). Final bylaws can be viewed in Appendix F.

Upon completion and throughout the process of selecting a name, logo, mission, and writing bylaws, discussions were held about how to acquire funding, what would be the first performance, and where the theater would perform. These discussions occurred over multiple board meetings and each topic was discussed at length, often at the same time as the other topics as they were so closely related. For all, survey results were consulted.
Selecting a Performance Venue

Figure 3 responses were considered when selecting a performance space for a summer 2012 production. Rotating locations had received the largest number of votes, however the board felt it might be difficult for the community to follow a new theater if they weren’t sure where the theater would be performing. Due to financing, it was not realistic at this point to own a space. Renting vacant spaces cost $12.00 to $18.00 per square foot per year. Again, due to financing it is not a viable option at this point.

Another respondent suggested avoiding affiliations with churches as that may deny some funding. No research was found to support this claim. However, the board discussed that some churches may try to control shows performed in their space and the board wanted to avoid having external organizations controlling the theater’s decisions. A concern was also brought up that community members who aren’t religious might not feel comfortable coming to a church. After considering this, the board decided if a church wanted to donate a space, it might be a good option to help cut performance costs. Table 3 also demonstrates how a few respondents wanted to see plays performed in a theater-type space. Still others stated they would like to see it at a school or Park High School theater. This may be because respondents assumed the theater did not have its own theater space and Park High School Theater is the truest theater space within the community. The board finally decided that in order to produce a musical, the theater would rent Park High School’s theater space for performances, but would still be willing to use a church space for rehearsal if they would like to donate it.

Selecting a Play

Survey results indicated that children’s theater, musicals, and comedies were the preferred genres for performances (see figure 4). Using these results, the board brainstormed plays that aligned with the mission statement. The board also took into consideration comments made by participants in the survey in regards to local issues the theater should address (see table 5). One of the criterion for selecting a play
included being able to include a large number of community members, as indicated by the survey as well see table 2). The board narrowed the list to large cast plays only, which included mostly musicals as they have the largest casts.

The board struggled to decide which musical to produce for a number of reasons. A musical would cost the most money and it would be difficult to raise that much money. A musical also required a vocal director, orchestra director, and choreographer which is not required for other plays and the board wasn’t sure if qualified people to fill these positions could be found, especially if the theater could not afford to pay them. Determining a targeted audience was also a difficulty. While the board knew that adults would come see a play such as Willy Wonka, the majority of audience members would be children. Concerns also arose that only children would audition and then Locally Grown Theatre may be perceived as a children’s theater. The board also worried about choosing a play that was too adult or that didn’t have any children involved. One of the goals for the first production was to include all ages. This also greatly limited the production options. There were plays that fit the theater’s mission as well as represented the community, but then weren’t big name shows. According to Reginald Nelson, cofounder of Congo Square Theatre, in a theater’s first season, it is important to produce plays people are familiar with that will get people in the seats. Nelson also recommends that after three or four years, a theater can start doing more plays off the beaten path. By this time, assuming the theater will have generated a fan base that trusts them enough to know if a choice is made to do a lesser-known play, the theater must have a good reason to do so (127-8). This was also reiterated by Black Dirt Theater cofounder Andy Langenfeld. Black Dirt is a community theater in Hastings, MN. He tried to perform plays by lesser-known artists or written by him, and for two years the theater struggled to be recognized by the community as a valid theater company. Then in the summer of 2011, they performed Oklahoma! and since have found more recognition within the community. They plan on doing a full season in 2012-2013 and the plays they are choosing are also well-known plays. He said in a couple of years they plan on taking more risks, but not until they have validated themselves as a theater company, (Langenfeld).
For all of the above reasons, *Fiddler on the Roof* was chosen for performance. The cast could be all ages, the targeted audience was all ages, and it was a family friendly piece. It also was a play that centered on traditions and community, which fit well with the theater’s missions. It also had the most affordable royalties of the four musicals under consideration.

**Funding**

The funding conversation occurred at all board meetings. Because it is such a crucial part of producing plays, it was revisited often. Survey results indicated that sponsors, grants, participation fees, and theater memberships might be viable options for funding (see figure 6). However, the board struggled with finding funding opportunities due to not having a performance to talk about to community members. The fear was if Locally Grown Theatre asked the community for money without having a play, they were going to wonder why we needed the money. So before the community could be asked to contribute money, the board had to select a play title and also have a timeline for producing plays. Other funding was also explored.

Initially the board planned for Locally Grown Theatre to become a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. One of the contingencies of being a nonprofit is that the money raised needs to go back into the community and back into the theater. This was the plan with the money all along. Being nonprofit would also allow the theater to apply for grants which are mostly only available to nonprofit organizations. It would also allow people to give a tax-deductable contribution. Being nonprofit would also mean the theater would not pay tax on purchases or income to the theater, so it would save the theater money. The application fee for filing for nonprofit status is $850 if your budget is more than $10,000. If the theater were to do a musical, the budget would be over $10,000 so it would need to pay the $850. Locally Grown Theatre did not have this money and therefore would have to postpone being a nonprofit until funds had been raised to pay for this; most likely until after the musical was produced and generated ticket sales.
Grants are how many artists fund their work. According to a report by the National Endowment for the Arts, “public and private sources account for roughly 56% of total funding of U.S. nonprofit arts organization…the other 44 percent of their revenue [is realized] through earned income (ticket sales, subscriptions, etc.)” (Cowen 2). Grants received the second highest number of responses on the survey (see figure 6). There are grants available from $500 to $10,000 or more. Many grants fit the mission of engaging the community in the arts, however without being a nonprofit, Locally Grown Theatre did not qualify. Other funding options were explored.

Fiscal sponsorship would be a viable option as a new organization. Fiscal sponsorship “is an organization that will receive tax-deductible contributions and agrees to accept, and be responsible for, charitable gifts on behalf of a project that does not have its own tax exemption. Using a fiscal sponsor, a non-exempt …organization can take advantage of a lot of the benefits of a tax exempt nonprofit organization,” (“Incubator”). Fiscal sponsors do not supply organizations with funding, but allow them to apply for grants only available to nonprofit organizations. Springboard for the Arts offers an Incubator program which is essentially a fiscal sponsorship program to help smaller arts organizations get started. Not only does the Incubator program provide fiscal sponsorship, they also provide a variety of other supports such as access to a lawyer to help file bylaws and gain nonprofit status, free grant proposal reviews, tax-deductable gift acknowledgements for donors, and a few other benefits as well (“Incubator”). Unfortunately the Incubator program was being revamped as the board was trying to secure funding. While the board could possibly find other organizations to be a fiscal sponsor, there was as lack of time and resources to do this.

Kickstarter is an online funding platform for funding a variety of projects (Kickstarter). While donors would not be able to give tax exempt donations, it would provide a secure place for donors to donate. The way the program works is that a project sets a budget and a deadline. If a project is funded 100%, the organization receives a check for the money; however, it continues to collect money until the deadline and projects can be funded over 100%. However, if the project does not reach 100%, the money
goes back to the donors, and the organization does not receive any money. While considered a risky way to fund, it was the only option for the short timeline to produce a play in August 2012. The board launched a Kickstarter project to attempt to secure funding.
Furthering the Project

Future surveys should be implemented so the theater remains reflective and receives feedback to help the theater stay responsive to community wants and needs. These surveys will also help guide future board decisions.

The board will also need to be expanded. While the core executive board will still be in place, other board members can be added to help divide some of the tasks. This will also be crucial in getting the community more involved and having them feel like the theater is more a part of them and their making.

The board is still in the initial stages of development. The first performance has not been completed. However, the board has learned that everything takes time and in order to make decisions that are best for the theater, decisions can’t be rushed. Future plans for the theater include hosting a talent show or improvisational night along with a silent auction to generate funds for the theater. There are also plans to perform a flash mob, host karaoke nights, and develop kids’ camps.

Conclusion

This project answers the research question, “Is there enough interest to start a community theater in Cottage Grove?” While the number of respondents to the survey were limited, the number was still considered significant enough. The positive responses to question 9 (see table 6) were also helpful in making this decision. Through the analysis of survey data and feedback at a community informational meeting, it was determined there was enough interest to implement the first stages of creating a community theater and attempt to answer the research question, how do you start a theater?

Through this research, it is clear that starting a community theater is not a simple task. It is as much about business knowledge as it is about creativity and passion. It would be difficult to start a
community theater without business knowledge; however, if there is no passion, no one will want to participate either. Locally Grown Theatre has completed many of the needed business tasks to move forward. The next steps for the theater will be to produce their first play.

At the time of this writing, Locally Grown Theatre had not reached the Kickstarter funding goal and an evening of one-acts was selected in place of the musical. The plays will involve actors of all ages; free of stress; the evening of one-acts would accomplish this. The performances will take place at an outdoor setting, and the admission fee will be pay-what-you-can. With a feasible plan finally in place, the theater is able to finally go out to the community with a product, a timeline, and the community will finally get to see what Locally Grown Theatre has to offer; a lot of fun and a theater experience for all. The first performance will spark the passion of theater for audience and participants alike, and show the community what opportunities are available to them. The board wants the excitement the theater was originally created under, to carry through the theater’s performance, and inspire others, as Locally Grown Theatre’s catch phrase says, to “come grow with us.”
Works Cited


Langenfeld, Andy. Personal Interview. 16 Jan 2012.


Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

NOTICE OF ACTION
Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of Wisconsin – River Falls

Principal Investigator: Tracy Caponigri
Sponsor/Support: [Blank]
Protocol Title: Creating a Community Theater in Cottage Grove, MN
Protocol Number: H2011-W071
Committee Action: Approved on 29 June 2011, Expires on 29 June 2012

Dear

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Wisconsin – River Falls has reviewed your proposal and approved your study for a period of one year. Approval is based on identification that the study has met federal regulations set forth in 45 CFR 46.111.

Review of the project has identified that:

☑ Risks to subjects are minimized.
☑ Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.
☑ Selection of subjects is equitable.
☑ Informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subject’s legally authorized representative, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §46.116.
☑ Informed consent will be appropriately documented, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §46.117.
☑ Request for waiver of informed consent.

Stated Rationale: Survey requires return which serves as a proxy indication of consent for involvement in the study. Consent form clearly lays out what is expected of the subject.

☑ The research plan makes adequate provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects.
☑ There are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of data.
☐ Other:

Conditions for approval:

- Any changes to the protocol, consent, recruitment, or data collection materials must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented.
Appendix B: Community Theatre online survey

Informed Consent

You are being asked to complete this survey to provide feedback that will help develop and form a community theater in Cottage Grove, MN. I ask you to participate by completing the following survey. The survey includes nine multiple choice and open-ended questions. Please know that this survey is meant to be anonymous, therefore there is no need to identify yourself. All answers are recorded anonymously. If you choose to further volunteer in the community theater, there will be an option for you to provide your contact information after the survey is complete; however, this information is independent from your answers and not linked in any way to any other answers you have provided in the survey.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary; if you are willing to participate in the survey please answer the questions to the best of your ability on the next screen. If you choose not to participate, please select "exit this survey" at the top of the screen, or close your web browser. If at any point during the survey you decide you do not want to participate, please close your web browser, or click on "exit this survey" at the top of the screen. At that point, any questions you have answered will not be recorded.

By selecting "next" at the bottom of this screen, you are giving your consent to be involved in the research. Be selecting "next" you are also confirming that you are at least 18 years of age or older.

Thank you for your cooperation and willingness to participate.

If you should have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write to:
Molly Van Wagner, Director, Grants and Research, UW-River Falls
104 North Hall, River Falls, WI 54022
Telephone: 715-425-3195

This research survey has been approved by the UW-River Falls Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, protocol # H2011-W071.

Again, please DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS SURVEY.

Thank you,
Tracy Caponigri, 1360 Roosevelt Rd, Hastings, MN 55033
651-437-3938
tracy.caponigri@uwrf.edu
Page 2:

**Exit this survey**

How likely would you be to attend a theater production at a Cottage Grove community theater?

- [ ] Very likely
- [ ] Likely
- [ ] Not very likely
- [ ] Would not attend

How many performances a year would you be willing to attend or participate in?

- [ ] None
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5+

Where would be the most ideal location for a community theater in Cottage Grove, Minnesota to perform?

- [ ] Community Park such as Oakwood Park
What genre of show would you like to see performed?

- Children's plays
- Classical
- Comedies
- Dramas
- Musicals
- Plays by local artists
- Puppet Plays

Are there specific play titles you would like to see performed? If yes, please list the titles in the order of importance you would like to see them performed.
What would be a reasonable ticket price?

- [ ] Free
- [ ] Pay what you can
- [ ] $1-$2
- [ ] $3-$5
- [ ] $6-$9
- [ ] $10 +
- [ ] Depends: please list factors

How should the theater be funded?

- [ ] Grants
- [ ] Theater memberships
- [ ] Participation fees
- [ ] Sponsors, such as local businesses
- [ ] Other (please specify)
What structure should the theater have?

- [ ] What structure should the theater have? All paid
- [ ] Some paid/some volunteer
- [ ] All volunteer

Are there any local issues you feel the theater should try to address/emphasize with its programming? If no, please skip to the next question. If yes, please list them here.

Additional comments? Please feel free to list any additional comments, questions, or concerns you have here.

Additional comments? Please feel free to list any additional comments, questions, or concerns you have here.

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your information will be used to develop a community theater in Cottage Grove, Minnesota. Please keep watching the South Washington County Bulletin and look for informational posters in local Cottage Grove businesses for updates on progress and performance information.

Would you be interested in participating? If yes, please take a look at the list below of areas in which volunteers or participation will be needed.
Acting
Backstage Crew
Board Member
Carpentry
Costumes
Directing
Fundraising
Lighting
Marketing
Props
Publicity
Scenic Painting
Season Planning
Set
Sound
Sponsor
Stage Manager
Ticket Sales
Vocal direction
Other: Please specify

Please include your name and e-mail address, mailing address, and phone number if you are interested in participating. Please also include from the list above, which areas you would be interested in participating.

Powered by SurveyMonkey
Create your own free online survey now!
Appendix C: Informational letter and volunteer form for community informational meeting

Cottage Grove Community Theater

"Like" us on Facebook to stay updated on the Cottage Grove community theater and its progress.

Haven't taken the survey yet? Log on to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9MJ8TX

How can I get involved?

Following is a list of different areas in which you can volunteer with a brief description of responsibilities. Signing up to volunteer does not mean you will have to be involved in all areas that you sign up. All positions will be assigned.

**Acting** We will need actors with all levels of commitment, from walk-on roles to lead roles. Volunteering to act means you will be included on a mailing list, but auditions will be held for casting. This commitment can be minimal to large.

**Backstage Crew** During the performance, a crew is needed to take care of technical elements throughout the performance.

**Board Member** Board Members will be responsible for overseeing the theater from the finances to advertising and marketing to season planning and securing locations for performances. This is a large time commitment.

**Carpentry/Set** When sets need to be built or lights hung, we will need carpenters to do the grunt work of sawing, hammering, lifting, and hanging. No experience is necessary to serve in one of these roles as you will be taught on the job. Often, actors serve in these roles when they aren't needed in rehearsal.

**Choreography** When producing a musical, the choreographer will design the dances of varying levels for varying ability actors as well as dances that fit the time period and style of the play.

**Costumes** Costumers create the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance. Depending on their style and complexity, costumes may be sewn, bought, revamped out of existing stock or rented.

**Directing** The work of the director is central to the production of a play. The director has the challenging task of bringing together the many complex pieces of a production—the script, actors, set, costuming, lighting and sound and music—into a unified whole. This is one of the largest time commitments.

**Fundraising** Funding is crucial to a theater’s operation. In order for this community theater to get off of the ground, funding will need to be secured.

**Lighting** Lighting designers know how to make the best use of the subtle and powerful medium of light, creating effects that can be changed at will to match the mood of the action.

**Marketing/Publicity** This work involves managing or assisting in promoting the productions, services and public image of the theatre company.

**Props** This person is responsible for designing and securing all stage properties needed for each character in a show.

**Scenic Painting** Painters of all ability levels are needed, as many techniques can be easily taught.

**Sound** The sound designer plans and provides the sound effects in the play as well as run the sound equipment during performances.

**Stage Manager** Stage managers typically provide practical and organizational support to the director, actors, designers, stage crew and technicians throughout the production process. They are sometimes nicknamed the “gophers” of the theater.

**Ticket Sales** We will need people to sell tickets on evenings of performances, as well as someone who wants to coordinate and oversee the sale of all tickets.

**Vocal Direction** In a musical, the vocal director oversees the singing of all the actors.

Volunteer Form: Check the box next to the areas in which you would like to volunteer:

- [ ] Acting
- [ ] Backstage Crew
- [ ] Board Member
- [ ] Carpentry/Set
- [ ] Choreographer
- [ ] Costumes
- [ ] Directing
- [ ] Fundraising
- [ ] Lighting
- [ ] Marketing/Publicity
- [ ] Painting
- [ ] Props
- [ ] Sound
- [ ] Stage Manager
- [ ] Ticket Sales
- [ ] Vocal Direction
- [ ] Other: Please specify areas of expertise/interest

Name: ____________________________ Phone: (______) ___-_____ E-mail: ____________________________
Appendix D: Board Application

BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION

Applications are due Friday, August 26. You may e-mail them to Tracy Caponigri at tracy.caponigri@uwrf.edu or mail them to: 1360 Roosevelt Rd, Hastings, MN 55033. If mailing, applications must be postmarked on August 26. Decisions will be made and you will be notified on or before Friday, September 2.

Contact Information:

Full Name:
Address:

Home Phone:
Work Phone:
Cell Phone:
E-mail:

Please list weeknight availability (day of week and times):

Commitment:

The board will meet every other week for approximately 2 hours. Each board member will also be responsible for completing tasks outside of meeting times to help make meeting times more efficient. Are you able to commit to this amount of time?

Special Skills and Qualifications:

What areas of expertise, specific skills, or personal attributes do you feel you can bring to the board?

Why are you interested in becoming a board member?

Is there anything else you feel should be taken into consideration when evaluating you to become a board member?
Appendix E: Logo for Locally Grown Theatre
Appendix E: Bylaws of Locally Grown Theatre

Bylaws of
Locally Grown Theatre
(Adopted December 14, 2011)

ARTICLE 1 – Name. The name of the group shall be Locally Grown Theatre.

ARTICLE 2 – Mission. The mission of Locally Grown Theatre is to plant the seed of theater; to cultivate the inner artist in youth, to nurture the love of theatre arts within the community; to grow artists of all ages through experimentation in multiple theatrical forms.

ARTICLE 3 – Section A: Membership. Membership shall be open to all persons, without geographic restrictions. Membership is granted after completion and receipt of a membership application and annual dues. All memberships shall be granted upon a majority vote of the board.

Voting Members: must be at least 19 years of age or older.

Minor Members: are any members who are younger than 19 years of age.

Section B: Those members who are 19 years of age or older shall be given voting rights as described in Article 4. Minor members are not allowed to have voting rights.

ARTICLE 4 – Dues. Dues shall be $10.00 per year, per voting member. Individual minor membership dues (without voting rights) shall be $5.00 per year, UNLESS, CHANGED BY A MAJORITY OF THE FULL MEMBERHSIP. A family membership in the amount of $20.00 shall also be available. A family membership is defined as two adults plus minors at the same mailing address. Dues payments shall enroll a person as a member of Locally Grown Theatre for the balance of the year, except that dues paid within the last three (3) months of any year shall be deemed to enroll the person as a member for the balance of that year and the next complete year. The Locally Grown Theatre year shall begin on June 1 of each year and conclude on the following May 31. Locally Grown Theatre fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and conclude on the following December 31. Continued membership is contingent upon being up to date on membership dues.

Class Fees: include membership per for each child registered for a class, it gets you one minor membership.

Adult persons who have paid their dues shall be deemed active members and shall be entitled to the following:

A. A vote at all general meetings of Locally Grown Theatre.

B. The right to hold office or be a member of the board of directors of Locally Grown Theatre.
C. Any newsletter or other general mailings of Locally Grown Theatre.

D. The right to bring member concerns to the attention of the board by seeking agenda positions or requesting official action.

E. The opportunity to perform in a Locally Grown Theatre production. Any person auditioning for a part in a Locally Grown Theatre production shall not be required to be a member. However, any person wishing to perform in a Locally Grown Theatre production must become a dues-paying member of Locally Grown Theatre when accepting a roll.

F. Resignation and termination: Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the secretary. Resignation shall not relieve a member of unpaid dues, or any other charges previously accrued. A member can have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the board of directors. All terminated members will receive written notification that will be on file with the board.

Resignation from the board of directors must be in writing and received by the secretary. A board member shall be terminated from the board due to excessive absences or more than two unexcused absences in a year.

A board member may be removed for any other reason by a three fourths vote of the remaining board members or by a three fourths vote of the general membership.

ARTICLE 5 – Meetings. The annual meeting of Locally Grown Theatre shall be held during the month of October for the purpose of electing officers and directors, and to transact any other necessary business.

Additional general membership meetings shall be scheduled, as needed, by the board of directors, to carry on any other such necessary business as may be designated by the board. The board of directors of Locally Grown Theatre shall, in addition, meet at least four times per year, preferably in the month preceding an annual meeting or general membership meeting. Any other meetings of the board of directors may be set at the call of the president or the request of a majority of the board. Reasonable notice shall be given of all such meetings.

A majority of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum necessary to do business at meetings of the board; ten members, or one-fourth of all dues-paying members, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum necessary to do business at any general membership meeting.

ARTICLE 6 – Officers and directors. The affairs of Locally Grown Theatre shall be conducted by a board of directors composed of seven members: Chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer and three members at-large. The four officers shall serve two-year terms each except that in the first year the offices of vice-chairman and treasurer shall be one year so that said officers are elected in alternating years with chairman and secretary. The three members-at-large shall each serve three-year terms, except that for the first board one term shall be for one year and two terms shall be for two years so that thereafter no more than two members-at-large are elected each year.
**Nominations and Elections.** Nominations for election to the Board of Directors shall be submitted in the month preceding the annual meeting. Nominations must be accepted by the nominee and one other voting member. Those nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie vote, the standing officers of Locally Grown Theatre will make the tie decision.

The duties, responsibilities and qualifications of the officers and directors shall be as follows:

A. **Chairman.** The chairman shall preside over all meetings of the board of directors and of the general membership and be an ex-officio member of all committees of Locally Grown Theatre. The chairman shall be the official representative of Locally Grown Theatre for all functions, and shall specifically be responsible for the public relations of Locally Grown Theatre. Public relations include regularly informing all appropriate news media, local and civic organizations of the activities of Locally Grown Theatre.

B. **Vice-Chairman.** The Vice Chairman shall preside at all meetings and carry on all functions of the chairman in absence of inability to act of the chairman. In addition, the vice-chairman shall be responsible for all social activities of Locally Grown Theatre, for maintaining rosters of all current members, and recruitment of new members.

C. **Secretary.** The secretary shall be responsible for taking and preserving minutes of the board and general membership meetings, maintaining all official records, and distributing them to all board members as directed by the board. The secretary shall further be responsible for all correspondence and notices to all members.

The secretary shall prepare and distribute to the members, on a regular basis, the official newsletter of Locally Grown Theatre. The secretary shall also serve as historian for Locally Grown Theatre by keeping and maintaining an official scrapbook or archives of Locally Grown Theatre, documenting its activities.

D. **Treasurer.** The treasurer shall be responsible for collecting and disbursing all funds of Locally Grown Theatre subject to approval of the board of directors, and shall keep all appropriate financial records necessary thereto. The treasurer shall present financial reports at each meeting of the board or of the general membership, and shall submit profit and loss of balance sheet reports at the conclusion of each year of Locally Grown Theatre. The treasurer shall also be in charge of all fundraising activities for Locally Grown Theatre.

E. **Members-at-Large.** At least three of the members-at-large of the board of directors shall be chosen from the South Washington County area community with the intent that their skills and background may be utilized to promote growth and objectives of Locally Grown Theatre in the community. The members-at-large of the board of directors may be assigned any task by the board in its discretion in order to facilitate any of the purposes of Locally Grown Theatre. The board of directors is authorized to waive the dues required for any member at large.

Although the duties enumerated above shall remain the primary responsibility of the officer or board member to which they are assigned, such officer or board member may delegate one or more such
responsibilities to another member or members of the group to be carried out under the supervision of
the officer or board member.

The chairman and the treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks on behalf of Locally Grown Theatre in
payment of any authorized debts or expenses of Locally Grown Theatre; provided however that checks
in the amount of $500.00 or more shall require the signature of both the chairman and the treasurer. In
the case of vacancy in any officer or director position, the chairman, with approval of three-quarters of
the board members present at any board meeting where a quorum is present, may appoint a member
to fill the un-expired term of such officer or director. In the case of a vacancy in the office of chairman,
the unexpired term may be filled by the vice chairman, or by any other board member, with the
approval of three-quarters of the board members present at any board meeting where a quorum is
present.

The board of directors is hereby authorized to carry out any and all functions of Locally Grown Theatre
which, in its discretion it deems advisable to fulfill the purposes of Locally Grown Theatre or to support
and encourage any of the creative or performing arts in the South Washington County area. By example
only, and not by way of limitation, the board of directors is specifically authorized to establish
scholarship programs and award monetary scholarships for worthy members in any field of the creative
or performing arts, and to establish all necessary procedures to carry out this function.

**ARTICLE 7 - Play Selection.** It shall be the function and responsibility of the board of directors to choose
both the plays and directors for all productions of Locally Grown Theatre. All members of Locally Grown
Theatre are encouraged to take an active role in play selection. Any member interested in specific plays
or in directing a play may submit such proposals or suggestions in writing to the board of directors. The
board of directors is also authorized to select play selections or potential directors from among the
members, or elsewhere. The board may establish a committee to assist it in reading plays and reporting
to it on suitable selections and / or directors. The board is encouraged to first select a director and then
work closely with that director in choosing a play that is of interest and mutually acceptable to the
director, the board, and the membership. The board is further encouraged to select directors and plays
far enough in advance such that the complete season for Locally Grown Theatre’s year can be
announced at the time of the annual meeting.

**ARTICLE 8 - Compensation.** Locally Grown Theatre is intended to be a Volunteer organization. All
members of Locally Grown Theatre are strongly encouraged to donate their services in all functions of
Locally Grown Theatre so that a maximum amount of money is available for education and scholarship
purposes.

Officers, board of directors, and members of the Locally Grown Theatre are not authorized to receive
compensations in any form unless specifically approved by a majority vote of the membership. In the
event it is deemed necessary, however, the board is hereby authorized to pay reasonable compensation
to any person or persons whose services may be specifically required in furtherance of any Locally
Grown Theatre purpose. If compensation is authorized, it must be for skilled labor, not general labor.
ARTICLE 9 – Theatrical Productions. It shall be the function of the board of directors to establish a budget and production crew for each theatrical production staged by Locally Grown Theatre. Such budget and crew shall be set as early as possible prior to each production and shall be made known to the director of each production. The director shall have authority, unless otherwise limited by the board; to pay or incur expenses within the budget established by the board of directors. The board may place on the director any other spending guidelines, which it deems advisable.

The production crew for each show shall include all persons necessary to handle publicity, programs, ticket sales, house, set construction, and set painting and finishing. It shall also include necessary technical or directing assistants, including choreographer, musical director, orchestra director, technical director, assistant directors, lighting or sound, or any other necessary crew member as deemed by the board of directors but the board is specifically encouraged to consult directly with the director for each show for the appointment of any such persons.

Auditions and casting in any production of Locally Grown Theatre shall be open to all persons regardless of membership in Locally Grown Theatre. Persons who do not meet the age requirements set forth in Article 3 hereof may audition and be cast in a production of Locally Grown Theatre only when their age or ability is specifically required because of the part for which they are auditioning. Any persons cast in a production shall be required to join Locally Grown Theatre as a condition of casting in the show.

ARTICLE 10 - Miscellaneous. Unless otherwise set forth herein, all actions taken by the board of directors and by the general membership shall be authorized upon a majority vote. In the case of any dispute concerning qualifications to vote, the membership information maintained by the vice-chairman shall be controlling. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Locally Grown Theatre’s rules of order. Any amendments to the articles of Organization for Locally Grown Theatre must be submitted by or through the board of directors and be voted upon by a majority of the general membership. The board of directors, on its own, may submit proposed amendments to be voted upon by the general membership at any duly called meeting. Any member proposing an amendment to these articles of organization shall submit the same in writing to the board of directors which shall then report it to the general membership at the next duly called meeting with their report as to whether the board approves or disapproves of the proposed amendment. All records including, but not limited to the financial records of the organization, are public information, and shall be made available to the membership, board members, and the public. If any conflict occurs in any part or provision of these bylaws with laws of the state of Minnesota, the state statutes shall prevail.

ARTICLE 11 - Dissolution. In the event that the board, by vote of three-quarters of the board of directors, deems it necessary and proper to dissolve the organization, the board shall proceed as follows: the board shall call a membership meeting for the purpose of voting to approve dissolution. The dissolution shall be authorized only by vote of three quarters of the full membership.

A. The board shall see to it that any assets of the organization are first used to pay the debts and obligations of Locally Grown Theatre.
B. Any remaining monetary assets shall be donated and distributed to such local charitable or civic organizations, as the board deems appropriate. Preference shall be given to any such groups whose purpose is substantially similar to that of Locally Grown Theatre.

C. Any remaining non-monetary assets (props, scenery, costumes, etc.) shall be donated and distributed to such theater groups as the board shall deem appropriate.

D. The board shall see to it that the records and archive of Locally Grown Theatre shall be entrusted to the South Washington County Historical Society, or some other appropriate group for future reference.

E. The board shall do all things necessary under the laws and statutes of the United States or State of Minnesota to properly terminate the affairs of the organization.

Adopted by the board of directors of Locally Grown Theatre December 14, 2011.

Chairman: Tracy L.F. Caponigri
Vice Chairman: Pete Potyondy
Secretary: Wendy Blasy
Treasurer: Bill Larson
Member-at-Large: Laura Beard
Appendix G: Bylaws Template from *Community Theater Green Room*

Bylaws of the *(THEATER NAME)* Foundation

**Article I: Membership and Meetings of Members**

Section 1. The following shall be the By-laws of the above corporation, a non-profit corporation organized under the General Corporation Law of the State of *(State Name)*, and hereinafter called the 'Foundation.' Any of the sections or subsections conflicting with incorporation laws of the State of *(State Name)* shall be considered null and void.

Section 2. The members of the Foundation shall be the trustees then in office and additional persons who qualify in accordance with the following sections.

Section 3. Members

A. General Authorities. Except as may be otherwise provided by law, or by the Certificate of Incorporation, or by these By-Laws, the number, qualifications, rights, privileges, dues, fees, responsibilities, terms of membership, and the provisions governing the withdrawal suspension, and expulsion of members shall be decided by the Board of Trustees.

B. Classification of Members. Members of the Foundation shall be classified as follows:

1. **Active Members** - Those members who actively participate in the functions of the Foundation in accordance with the criteria established from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

2. **Sustaining Members** - Those persons who support the efforts of the Foundation as either Patrons or Archangels or in some other capacity in accordance with the criteria established from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

3. **Founding Members** - Those members who, through their efforts were instrumental in the founding of the Foundation.

4. **Honorary Members** - Any person who shall from time to time, be selected to be so honored by the Board of Trustees.

5. **Life Member** - Those members who, in each of at least ten (10) years, have actively participated in the Foundation by:

   Having paid annual dues or been a Founding Member, and having been one of the following:

   a) Active in at least one production

   b) A committee chairman for at least one production

   c) A member of the Board of Trustees

   d) An active member of a committee for an entire year
C. **Voting Qualifications.** In order to qualify as a voting member of the Foundation, a member must meet the following criteria:

(1) Must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

(2) Must have paid annual dues or be a Founding Member or a Life Member.

(3) Must have served the Foundation in some phase of production or served as a Trustee or member of an active committee during the twelve month period prior to the annual election.

(4) Must have attended at least one (1) general membership meeting of the Foundation during the preceding twelve month period.

D. **Termination of Membership.** Except as otherwise required by law or by the Certificate of Incorporation or by these By-Laws, any right of members to vote and any right, title, and interest of any member in or to the Foundation and its properties and franchises, shall cease and divest upon termination of his or her membership.

Section 4. **Annual Meeting for the Election of Trustees.** The annual meeting of the members for the election of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation shall be held at the office of the Foundation or at such other place within or outside the State of *(State Name)* as may be determined by the Board of Trustees. and as shall be designated in the notice of said meeting on the second Thursday in the month of April of each year not a legal holiday (or, if said day be a legal holiday, then on such other day as determined by the Board of Trustees), for the purpose of electing Trustees and for the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting.

Section 5. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the members may be called by the Board of Trustees or by at least five (5) qualified voting members of the Foundation by written petition to the Board of Trustees. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Board shall call a special meeting within ten (10) days which shall be held at the office of the Foundation or at such other place within or outside the State of *(State Name)* as may be designated in the notice of said meeting. Business at said special meeting shall be limited to that stated in the notice or petition.

Section 6. **Notice of Meeting.** Notice of the purpose or purposes and the time and place of the annual and any special meeting of members shall be in writing and signed by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary, and a copy thereof shall be served either personally or by mail upon each member of record entitled to vote at such meeting not less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Such further notice shall be given as may be required by law. No notice of an adjourned meeting of members need be given unless it shall be expressly required by statute. Annual or special meetings of members may be held without notice and without the lapse of any period of time provided that said requirements are waived in writing by the person or persons entitled to receive said notice.

Section 7. **Quorum.** At all annual or special meetings, a majority of the members entitled to vote shall except as otherwise provided by law or the Certificate of Incorporation, constitute a quorum. If there be no such quorum, a majority of such members present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.

Section 8. **Meeting Chairman/Secretary.** Meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees or, in his/her absence, by the Vice Chairman or, in his/her absence, by any other member chosen by the membership present. The Recording Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall act as the Recording Secretary of the meetings or, in his/her absence, the Chairman shall appoint another to so act.

Section 9. **Voting at Annual or Special Meetings.** At the annual or special meetings of the Foundation, each qualified member will be entitled to one vote. The voting may, but need not be, by ballot and plurality of the votes cast shall elect. Those members qualified to vote but unable to be present at the
time of elections, may request an absentee ballot which must be in the hands of the Secretary prior to the time elections are held. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

**ARTICLE II: Board of Trustees**

Section 1. **Constitution and Membership.** The property, affairs, and business of the Foundation shall be managed by its Board of Trustees, consisting of not less than seven (7) trustees, each of whom shall be a member during his or her Trusteeship.

The members of the first Board of Trustees shall be those persons elected by the incorporators of the Foundation. The Board of Trustees shall consist of seven (7) trustees until changed by an amendment to these By-Laws. Except as hereinafter provided, trustees shall be elected at the annual meeting of the members of the Foundation, and each trustee shall be elected to serve for one year and until his successor shall be elected and shall qualify; provided, however, that failure to elect trustees at the time designated therefore shall not work any forfeiture or dissolution of the Foundation. If and when the number of trustees shall be increased, the additional trustees shall be elected by a majority or the trustees in office at the time of the increase or, if not elected prior to the next annual meeting of the members of the Foundation, they shall be elected by said members.

Section 2. **Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Board of Trustees when acting at a meeting duty assembled, but in no event less than one-third of the number of trustees authorized shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If any meeting of the Board of Trustees there shall be less than a quorum present, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting without further notice from time to time until a quorum shall have been obtained.

Section 3. **Vacancies.** In case of one or more vacancies shall occur in the Board of Trustees by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining trustees, although less than a quorum may, by a majority vote, elect a successor or successors for the unexpired term or terms. A vacancy in the Board of Trustees for the purposes of this section shall be deemed to exist whenever the members of the Foundation shall fail to elect trustees.

Section 4. **Meetings.** Meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such place within or outside of the State of (State Name) as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees, or as may be specified in the notice of the meeting. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such times as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees, and special meetings may be held at any time upon the call of its Chairman by oral, telegraphic, or written notice duly served, sent or mailed to each trustee not less than two days prior to such meeting. A meeting of the Board of Trustees may be held without notice immediately after the annual meeting of the members of the Foundation at the same place at which such meeting is held. Notice need not be given of regular meetings of the Board of Trustees held at times fixed by resolution of the Board of Trustees. Meetings may be held at any time without notice if all the trustees are present or if at any time before or after the meeting those not present waive notice of the meeting in writing.

Section 5. **Removal.** At any special meeting of the members of the Foundation, duly called as provided in these By-Laws, any trustee or trustees may, by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the members entitled to vote, be removed from office, either with or without cause, and his or her successor or successors may be elected at such meeting or the remaining trustees may, to the extent the vacancies are not filled by such election, fill any vacancy or vacancies created by such removal.

Section 6. **Nominations and Elections.** Nominations for election to the Board of Trustees shall be made at a special meeting held for said purpose in the month preceding the annual meeting. Nominations shall be received from the floor. Only qualified voting members shall be able to nominate and each nomination must be seconded. Those (7) nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie vote, election shall be decided by a toss of the coin.
Section 7. **Qualifications.** In order to qualify for election to the Board of Trustees, a nominee must be a qualified voting member and must have attended at least two (2) general and/or special meetings during the preceding twelve month period.

Section 8. **Term of Office.** The members of the Board of Trustees shall serve for a term of one (1) year. Said term of office shall run from the first day of May in the year in which they are elected to the thirtieth day of April of the following year.

Section 9. **Election of Officers.** The newly-elected members of the Board of Trustees shall, as soon after their election as possible, elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, to serve as the officers of said Board. Further, the Board of Trustees may, from time to time elect such other officers as it deems necessary.

Section 10. **Duties and Responsibilities of Officers.** The duties and responsibilities of the offices of the Board of Trustees shall be as follows:

- **Chairman.** - As principal executive of the Board of Trustees, coordinates and manages the activities of the Foundation; presides at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and all general specific or annual meetings of the Foundation.

- **Vice Chairman.** - Assumes the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman in his or her absence.

- **Secretary.** - Responsible for recording the minutes of all meetings of the Foundation and of the Board of Trustees and maintaining all official records and correspondence.

- **Treasurer.** - Maintains the financial records of the Foundation in accordance with generally acceptable accounting procedures; has authority to receive and disburse funds in order to satisfy authorized expenditures and is responsible to the Board of Trustees for all financial transactions of the Board of Trustees.

**ARTICLE III: Committees**

Section 1. **General Authorities.** The Board of Trustees shall, in its discretion, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members, establish such committees and appoint such Chairmen as it shall from time to time, deem necessary in order to conduct or perform the various duties, functions and responsibilities of the Foundation. Said committees shall have and may exercise such powers as shall be conferred or authorized by the resolutions appointing them. A majority of any such committee, if the committee is composed of more than two (2) members, may determine its action and fix the time and place of its meetings, unless the Board of Trustees shall otherwise provide. The Board of Trustees shall have the power at any time to fill vacancies in, to change membership of, or to discharge any such committee.

Section 2. **Terms of Office.** The term of office of the Committee Chairmen appointed by the Board of Trustees shall be one year and shall coincide with the term of office of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. **Vacancies.** In the event a vacancy shall occur in the chairmanship of any committee by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, the unexpired term of said chairman may be filled by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. **Duties and responsibilities.** The committee chairmen appointed by the Board of Trustees shall have the duties and responsibilities as may be, from time to time, established by said Board.

**ARTICLE IV: Indemnification**
Every person who is, shall be, or shall have been a trustee or officer of the Foundation and his personal representatives shall be indemnified by the Foundation against all costs and expenses reasonably incurred by or imposed upon him in connection with or resulting from any action, suit or proceeding to which he may be made a party by reason of his being or having been a trustee or officer of the Foundation or of any subsidiary or affiliate thereof, except in relation to such matters as to which he shall finally be adjudicated in such action, suit or proceeding to have acted in bad faith and to have been liable by reason of willful misconduct in the performance of his duty as such trustee or officer. Said costs and expenses shall include but without limiting the generality thereof, attorney’s fees, damages, and reasonable amounts paid in settlement.

ARTICLE V: Informal Action

Any action required or permitted to be taken at any meeting of the Board of Trustees or any committee therefore may be taken without a meeting if, prior to such action, a written consent thereto is signed by all members of the Board or of the committee, as the case may be, and such written consent is filed with the minutes or proceedings of the Board or the committee.

ARTICLE VI: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Foundation shall begin on the first day of May in each year and shall end on the thirtieth day of April next following, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VII: Corporate Seal

The official seal of the Foundation shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Foundation and the year of its incorporation and shall be in such form and contain such other words and/or figures as the Board of Trustees shall determine. The official seal may be used by printing, engraving, lithographing, stamping, or otherwise making, placing or affixing, upon any paper or engraved, lithographed, stamped or otherwise made, placed or affixed, upon any paper or document by any process whatsoever, an impression, facsimile, or other reproduction of said official seal.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended, altered, or repealed, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all the qualified voting members present at a special meeting called for said purpose, provided a quorum is present and written notification stating the purpose of said meeting has been made to all qualified voting members at least ten (10) days prior to said meeting.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of the By-Laws of the aforementioned Foundation, a (State Name) corporation, as is in effect on the date hereof.
Appendix H: Bylaws of Hartford Players, LTD

BYLAWS
OF
HARTFORD PLAYERS, LTD.
(Adopted August 22, 2010)

ARTICLE 1 – Name. The name of the group shall be Hartford Players, Ltd.

ARTICLE 2 – Purpose. The purposes of Hartford Players, Ltd., shall be to promote theatrical arts in the Hartford, Wisconsin area through presentation of theatrical performances; to afford opportunities to learn and develop theatrical skills; and to encourage participation in theater and other creative and performing arts through educational programs, scholarships and other similar benefits.

ARTICLE 3 – Membership. Membership shall be open to all persons, without geographic restrictions, who are either at least 19 years of age or high school graduates. Membership is granted after completion and receipt of a membership application and annual dues. All memberships shall be granted upon a majority vote of the board.

ARTICLE 4 – Dues. Dues shall be $5.00 per year, per member. UNLESS, CHANGED BY A MAJORITY OF THE FULL MEMBERSHIP. A family membership in the amount of $7.50 shall also be available to all members of the same family who reside at the same mailing address. Dues payments shall enroll a person as a member of Hartford Players, Ltd. for the balance of the year, except that dues paid within the last three (3) months of any year shall be deemed to enroll the person as a member for the balance of that year and the next complete year. The Hartford Players, Ltd.’ year shall begin on September 1 of each year and conclude on the following August 31. The Hartford Players, Ltd.’ fiscal year shall begin on February 1 and conclude on the following January 31. Continued membership is contingent upon being up to date on membership dues.

Persons who have paid their dues shall be deemed active members and shall be entitled to the following:

A. A vote at all general meetings of Hartford Players, Ltd.

B. The right to hold office or be a member of the board of directors of Hartford Players, Ltd.

C. Any newsletter or other general mailings of Hartford Players, Ltd.

D. The right to bring member concerns to the attention of the board by seeking agenda positions or requesting official action.
E. The opportunity to perform in a Hartford Players, Ltd., production. Any person auditioning for a part in a Hartford Players, Ltd., production shall not be required to be a member. However, any person wishing to perform in a Hartford Players, Ltd., production must become a dues-paying member of Hartford Players, Ltd., within one (1) month prior to the opening of the production.

F. Resignation and termination: Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the secretary. Resignation shall not relieve a member of unpaid dues, or any other charges previously accrued. A member can have their membership terminated by a majority vote of the membership. Resignation from the board must be in writing and received by the secretary. A board member shall be terminated from the board due to excess absences, more than two unexcused absences in a year. A board member may be removed for any other reason by a three fourths vote of the remaining board members or by a three fourths vote of the general membership.

ARTICLE 5 – Meetings. The annual meeting of Hartford Players, Ltd. shall be held during the month of August for the purpose of electing officers and directors, and to transact any other necessary business. Additional general membership meetings shall be scheduled, as needed, by the board of directors, to carry on any other such necessary business as may be designated by the board. The board of directors of Hartford Players, Ltd. shall, in addition, meet at least four times per year, preferably in the month preceding an annual meeting or general membership meeting. Any other meetings of the board of directors may be set at the call of the president or the request of a majority of the board. Reasonable notice shall be given of all such meetings.

A majority of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum necessary to do business at meetings of the board; ten members, or one-fourth of all dues-paying members, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum necessary to do business at any general membership meeting.

ARTICLE 6 – Officers and directors. The affairs of Hartford Players, Ltd. shall be conducted by a board of directors composed of nine members: President, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and five members at-large. The four officers shall serve two-year terms each except that in the first year the offices of president and treasurer shall be one year so that said officers are elected in alternating years with vice-president and secretary. The five members-at-large shall each serve three-year terms, except that for the first board one term shall be for one year and 2 terms shall be for two years so that thereafter no more than 2 members-at-large are elected each year.

The president shall appoint a nominating committee of up to three members who shall propose a slate of at least one nominee to fill all vacant positions. The slate of proposed nominees shall be approved by the board of directors at its July meeting and presented to the general membership at the annual meeting in August. Any additional nominees may be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. All nominees must be or agree to become members. Officers and directors will be elected by majority vote of the general membership at the annual meeting. Terms of office commence September 1, except during the first year, wherein the terms of office shall commence immediately upon election and terminate August 31 of the applicable year following. The duties and responsibilities and qualifications of the officers and directors shall be as follows:

A. President. The president shall preside over all meetings of the board of directors and of the general membership and be an ex-officio member of all committees of Hartford Players, Ltd. The president shall be the official representative of Hartford Players, Ltd. for all functions, and shall specifically be responsible for the public relations of Hartford Players, Ltd. Public relations
include regularly informing all appropriate news media, local and civic organizations of the activities of Hartford Players, Ltd.

B. Vice-President. The Vice President shall preside at all meetings and carry on all functions of the president in absence of inability to act of the president. In addition, the vice-president shall be responsible for all social activities of Hartford Players, Ltd. for maintaining rosters of all current members, and or recruitment of new members.

C. Secretary. The secretary shall be responsible for taking and preserving minutes of the board and general membership meetings and distributing them to all board members of as directed by the board. The secretary shall further be responsible for all correspondence and notices to all members. The secretary shall prepare and distribute to the members, on a regular basis, the official newsletter of Hartford Players, Ltd. The secretary shall also serve as historian for Hartford Players, Ltd. by keeping and maintaining an official scrapbook or archives of Hartford Players, Ltd. documenting its activities.

D. Treasurer. The treasurer shall be responsible for collecting and disbursing all funds of Hartford Players, Ltd. subject to approval of the board of directors, and shall keep all appropriate financial records necessary thereto. The treasurer shall present financial reports at each meeting of the board or of the general membership, and shall submit profit and loss of balance sheet reports at the conclusion of each year of Hartford Players, Ltd. The treasurer shall also be in charge of all fundraising activities for Hartford Players, Ltd.

E. Members-at-Large. At least three of the members-at-large of the board of directors shall be chosen from the Hartford area community with the intent that their skills and background may be utilized to promote growth and objectives of Hartford Players, Ltd. in the community. The members-at-large of the board of directors may be assigned any task by the board in its discretion in order to facilitate any of the purposes of Hartford Players, Ltd. The board of directors is authorized to waive the dues required for any member at large.

Although the duties enumerated above shall remain the primary responsibility of the officer of director to which they are assigned, such officer or director may delegate one or more such responsibilities to another member or members of the group to be carried out under the supervision of the officer or director.

The president and the treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks on behalf of Hartford Players, Ltd. in payment of any authorized debts or expenses of Hartford Players, Ltd.; provided however that checks in the amount of $750.00 or more shall require the signature of both the president and the treasurer. In the case of vacancy in any officer or director position, the president, with approval of three-quarters of the board members present at any board meeting where a quorum is present, may appoint a member to fill the un-expired term of such officer or director. In the case of a vacancy in the office of president, the unexpired term may be filled by the vice president, or by any other board member, with the approval of three-quarters of the board members present at any board meeting where a quorum is present.

The board of directors is hereby authorized to carry out any and all functions of Hartford Players, Ltd. which, in its discretion it deems advisable to fulfill the purposes of Hartford Players, Ltd. or to support and encourage any of the creative or performing arts in the Hartford area. By example only, and not by way
of limitation, the board of directors is specifically authorized to establish scholarship programs and award monetary scholarships for worthy area students in any field of the creative or performing arts, and to establish all necessary procedures to carry out this function.

**ARTICLE 7 - Play Selection.** It shall be the function and responsibility of the board of directors to choose both the plays and directors for all productions of Hartford Players, Ltd. All members of Hartford Players, Ltd. are encouraged to take an active role in play selection. Any member interested in specific plays or in directing a play may submit such proposals or suggestions in writing to the board of directors. The board of directors is also authorized to select play selections or potential directors from among the members, or elsewhere. The board may establish a committee to assist it in reading plays and reporting to it on suitable selections and / or directors. The board is encouraged to first select a director and then work closely with that director in choosing a play that is of interest and mutually acceptable to the director, the board and the membership. The board is further encouraged to select directors and plays far enough in advance such that the complete season for Hartford players, Ltd.’ year can be announced at the time of the annual meeting.

**ARTICLE 8 - Compensation.** Hartford Players, Ltd. is intended to be a Volunteer organization. All members of Hartford Players, Ltd. are strongly encouraged to donate their services in all functions of Hartford Players, Ltd. so that a maximum amount of money is available for education and scholarship purposes. Officers, directors, and members of the Hartford Players Ltd. are not authorized to receive compensations in any form unless specifically approved by a majority vote of the membership. In the event it is deemed necessary, however, the board is hereby authorized to pay reasonable compensation to any person or persons whose services may be specifically required in furtherance of any Hartford Players, Ltd. purpose. If compensation is authorized, it must be for skilled labor, not general labor.

**ARTICLE 9 – Theatrical Productions.** It shall be the function of the board of directors to establish a budget and production crew for each theatrical production staged by Hartford Players, Ltd. Such budget and crew shall be set as early as possible prior to each production and shall be made known to the director of each production. The director shall have authority, unless otherwise limited by the board; to pay or incur expenses within the budget established by the board of directors. The board may place on the director any other spending guidelines, which it deems advisable. The production crew for each show shall include all persons necessary to handle publicity, programs, ticket sales, house, set construction, and set painting and finishing. It shall also include necessary technical or directing assistants, including choreographer, technical director, assistant directors, lighting or sound, but the board is specifically encouraged to consult directly with the director for each show for the appointment of any such persons.

Auditions and casting in any production of Hartford Players, Ltd. shall be open to all persons regardless of membership in Hartford Players, Ltd. The director of any show shall be informed, however, that when casting a show if two or more persons are equally capable of performing the part for which they are auditioning, preference shall be given to members of Hartford Players, Ltd. or to those who have rendered prior service to Hartford Players, Ltd. Persons who do not meet the age requirements set forth in Article 3 hereof may audition and be cast in a production of Hartford Players, Ltd. only when their age or ability is specifically required because of the part for which they are auditioning. Such persons shall not be required to join Hartford Players, Ltd. as a condition of casting in the show.

**ARTICLE 10 - Miscellaneous.** Unless otherwise set forth herein, all actions taken by the board of directors and by the general membership shall be authorized upon a majority vote. In the case of any
dispute concerning qualifications to vote, the membership information maintained by the vice-president shall be controlling. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order. Any amendments to the articles of Organization for Hartford Players, Ltd. must be submitted by or through the board of directors and be voted upon by a majority of the general membership. The board of directors, on its own, may submit proposed amendments to be voted upon by the general membership at any duly called meeting. Any member proposing an amendment to these articles of organization shall submit the same in writing to the board of directors which shall then report it to the general membership at the next duly called meeting with their report as to whether the board approves or disapproves of the proposed amendment. All records including, but not limited to the financial records of the organization, are public information, and shall be made available to the membership, board members, and the public. If any conflict occurs in any part or provision of these bylaws with laws of the state of Wisconsin, the state statutes shall prevail.

ARTICLE 11 - Dissolution. In the event that the board, by vote of three-quarters of the directors, deems it necessary and proper to dissolve the organization, the board shall proceed as follows: the board shall call a membership meeting for the purpose of voting to approve dissolution. The dissolution shall be authorized only by vote of three quarters of the full membership.

A. The board shall see to it that any assets of the organization are first used to pay the debts and obligations of Hartford Players, Ltd.

B. Any remaining monetary assets shall be donated and distributed to such local charitable or civic organizations, as the board deems appropriate. Preference shall be given to any such groups whose purpose is substantially similar to that of Hartford Players, Ltd.

C. Any remaining non-monetary assets (props, scenery, costumes, etc.) shall be donated and distributed to such theater groups, as the board shall deem appropriate.

D. The board shall see to it that the records and archive of Hartford Players, Ltd. shall be entrusted to the Hartford Historical Society, or some other appropriate group for future reference.

E. The board shall do all things necessary under the laws and statutes of the United States or State of Wisconsin to properly terminate the affairs of the organization.

Adopted by the general membership of Hartford Players, Ltd. this 22nd day of August 2010.

Fred Wittenberger, President
Howard Husslein, Vice-President
Jovon Serrano, Secretary
Jo Husslein, Treasurer