

ExCom Meeting: Strategic Planning  
**Saturday, September 10, 2011**  
 SOUTHEASTERN THEATRE CONFERENCE, INC.  
**Minutes**  
 Grand Ballroom B, Atlanta Hilton

ExCom Members in Attendance: President, Alan Litsey; Programming Vice-President, Steve Bayless; Administrative Vice-President, Dawn Larsen; Secretary, Mark Charney; Treasurer, Tom Booth; State Representative Rep, Leslie Dellinger; Past President, Chip Egan; Interim Secondary Division Chair, Bill Murray

Board Members in Attendance: Theatre for Youth: John Spiegel; College and University Theatre: Lesley Preston; Professional Theatre: Dewey Scott-Wiley; Secondary School Theatre: Bill Murray; Alabama: Michael P. Howley; Florida: Donna White; Georgia and Chair of the Wilson Committee: Dean Slusser; Kentucky: Kathi E.B. Ellis; Mississippi: Joe Frost; North Carolina: David Schram; Tennessee: Darren Michael; Virginia: Mike Hudson; West Virginia: Gregory Mach

Also in Attendance: Executive Director, Betsey Baun; Bylaws: David Thompson; Finance: Jack Benjamin; Leighton Ballew Award and Long Range Planning: Tiza Garland; Chair of Long Range Planning: Dennis Wemm; Playwriting: Steve Burch; Robert Porterfield Award: Patrick Gagliano; Halbach Scholarship, Denise Halbach; Stage Management Ad Hoc Committee, Patricia Crotty; Acting and Directing: Austin (Rex) Barrow; Cultural Diversity: Adanna Barton; Auditions Committee, Mike Hudson; Auditions Committee; Chair of C/U Director, Lesley Preston; Secondary School Scholarships, Jesse Bates, Voice and Speech, Vivian Majkowski; Teacher's Institute, Elaine Malone; Stage Movement, Cara Rawlings; Vice Chair of Stage Management, Lee Crouse; Vice Chair of College and University, Karen Brewster; Long Range Planning, Tony Haigh; Chair of Polly Holliday Scholarship, Gary Webly; Endowment, Duke Guthrie; Nominations: David Wohl; Alabama Conference of Theatre Executive Director: Sue Ellen Gerrells; Publications Committee, Jamie Bickerstaff; Chair of Undergraduate and Graduate Auditions, Joe Friedenber; Auditions, Mike Murphy; Chair of Professional Division, Dewey Scott-Wiley

1. Alan Litsey called the Ex Com meeting to order at 10:41 a.m.
2. Introductions
3. Chip Egan agreed to serve as Parliamentarian
4. Announcement of Taping (Secretary: *Mark Charney*)
5. Floor given to David Wohl, Chair of the Nominations Committee
  - a. Distributed Straw Ballot for Officers and Suzanne Davis Award Nominations.
6. Minutes approved from 3.2.11; 3.6.11; 5.21.11; 5.22.11
7. David Thompson, Chair of Bylaws, presented "**Bylaws or the Mistakes of a Night**," a succinct, interesting, detailed presentation to make the bylaws a bit more accessible, especially for new board members. Also led a discussion of manuals.
8. **Report from the Executive Director, Betsey Baun:**

Betsey thanked Magnum Companies Limited who supplied the lighting equipment for the fall auditions. They also sponsored the spring professional auditions. Reported that **membership numbers**, now at 4,311 total members, is up slightly from 2009 and 2010. She reported that college reps were delighted about quality of the potential graduate students auditioning this fall.

For those who missed the **Friday night training**, the Central Office staff can provide information for interested constituents.

**Marketing efforts** are improving with the new website and current method of distributing SETC News. Goals: to increase advertising in *Southern Theatre*, in spite of the fact that schools are reducing their budgets. FB and Twitter are also active, and Betsey encouraged us to add the SETC mission, website, FB and Twitter information to our email addresses. Revealed new T-shirt design.

Began new **qualifying auditions** for actors who are adjudicated, critiqued, and possibly passed on for the Fall Professional Auditions. Betsey thanked Lee Buckholz of Derby Dinner Theatre Stephen White of Harold Clurman Lab Theatre, and Patrick Rowan of National Theatre for Children for adjudicating the 16 auditionees this year. The online Job Contact Bulletin advertisers increased this year so far.

Betsey explored omitting the **professional registration cost for companies**, but keeping membership costs, hoping that reduced fees will encourage more companies to attend the Spring auditions. The Central Office is working to make **on-line registration** easier. SETC is experimenting with new **free workshops** in the business of acting and being camera-ready during the fall auditions.

**Convention Locations:** In 2013, SETC will be held in Louisville. The 2014 Convention has faced several declines and expensive bids. Two possibilities were discussed: Mobile in 2014 at the usual dates with high rates, or Coronado Springs on the Disney property a week later at a reasonable rate. No real interest from Raleigh, Myrtle Beach, Virginia Beach. Atlanta and Greensboro are looking at future years. Group interested in Coronado and exploring Greenville, SC as a possibility with the help and advice of Chip Egan.

Lunch: 12:40

Reconvene: 1:45

Betsey sought approval from ExCom to choose an unconventional week for the convention—such as March 12-16, 2014 in Coronado Springs if, indeed, we have trouble finding an affordable space (traditional dates are March 5-9).

**MOTION: Dawn Larsen moved that Betsey explore the option of a different week for SETC Meetings in 2014 within the region, if it's the most viable option. Approved.**

9. **Structure for Voting and Assembling:** Chip explained the history of the ExCom and the Board, pointing out that, because ExCom now transparently deliberates in front of the board, the Board can overturn ExCom at any time.

10. **PRESIDENT: ALAN LITSEY**

**Southeastern Theatre Executive Limitations** sheet: Alan led a discussion of the Executive Limitations Policy approved by ExCom in May. A friendly suggestion was made to revise part two of the policy, which currently reads, “Only the board, by majority vote, has authority over the Executive Director. Information may be requested by a board member or committee, but if such a request, in the Executive Director’s judgment, requires a material amount of staff time, it may be refused.” The revision reads, “The Executive Director is expected to respond to reasonable requests for information from Board Members, but if such a request, in the Executive Director’s judgment, requires a material amount of staff time, it may be refused.”

**MOTION: that we accept a friendly revision. Approved. (ATTACH THE NEW DOCUMENT AS AN ADDENDUM)**

**MOTION: To accept the Document Destruction and Retention Policy. Approved.** David suggested that we advertise that these policies are approved on the website.

**Conflict of Interest Policy: John Spiegel proposed we reconsider this document because pro division folks (by definition) have an indirect financial interest.** Alan explained details of the policy, and will take John’s concerns to SETC’s attorney. He also explained that we adopted the policy so that SETC is in compliance with current IRS regulations.

11. **DAWN LARSEN, ADMINISTRATIVE VP:**

**AUDCOM MANUAL:** Will be voted upon at the winter meeting.

**BYLAWS MANUAL: MOTION: To accept the Bylaws Manual. Accepted.**

**FINCOM MANUAL: MOTION: To approve changes to the Finance Committee Manual. Accepted**

**DENISE HALBACH AWARD MANUAL: MOTION: To approve that the manual be accepted. Approved.**

12. **TOM BOOTH: TREASURER: AMENDED BUDGET—primary changes pointed out and budget amended based on audit. “Transfer” of 9,211.87 from restricted funds to balance the budget. Has submitted to ExCom the budgets with salary detailed, and FinCom will send the redacted version.**

**MOTION: To accept the amended budget. Accepted.**

**FinCom recommends the acceptance of the audit (which illustrates that we are in good financial standing). MOTION: To accept the audit as it stands. Accepted.**

**FinCom MOTION: On behalf of the members of the financial committee, we wish to send a letter of commendation, noting the outstanding fiscal stewardship of the Central Staff under the leadership of Betsey Baun. Under exceptionally trying fiscal conditions, their diligence has allowed SETC to remain financially strong.**

13. **DIVISION REP: BILL MURRAY FOR LYNN NELSON: MOTION: For every eight students, a school must purchase a chaperone pass at a rate of 15 dollars. Additional adults attending the conference must register for the conference as an individual. A chaperone pass is good for the festival and exhibit hall only. Accepted.**

**MOTION: SETC will offer high school festival session passes to accommodate non-conference attendees supporting their schools at a rate of 20 dollars per session. Accepted.**

14. **PRESIDENT: REFERS TO STEVE BAYLESS TO DISCUSS BOARD SUMMARY REPORT (Distributed)** In response to the information gathered from Alan's poll, distributed to all Board Members, Steve recommended that we address training, communication, specific documents that need to be created, ideas to consider, meetings, and strategic planning (**ATTACH SETC BOARD PROCESS REVIEW 2011**). He assigned bullet points to particular groups for exploration.

Alan thanked David Horth for mentorship with this particular group of questions.

15. **DENNIS WEMM: LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE: MOTION: The Long Range Planning Committee moves to make the following amendment to Bylaws Article X Section 6, striking the phrase, "two members to be appointed by the President each year for a three-year term" and substituting "three to be appointed by the President from the members of the Board of Directors, and three to be appointed from the general membership. All appointments will be for a term of one year, renewable." Also striking the sentence: "Any vacancies will be filled by appointment by the President for the balance of the unexpired term." This sentence will be replaced with "The Executive Director shall serve as an active consultant."**

**Current language:**

**Section 6. The Long Range Planning Committee shall consist of six members, ~~two members to be appointed by the President each year for a~~**

~~three-year term.~~ The chair shall be appointed from the committee by the President. ~~Any vacancies will be filled by appointment by the President for the balance of the unexpired term.~~ The duty of the Long Range Planning Committee shall be to make recommendations to the Executive Committee with regard to long range goals and specific objectives of the Corporation.

New language:

**Section 6. The Long Range Planning Committee shall consist of six members, three to be appointed by the President from the members of the Board of Directors, and three to be appointed from the general membership. All appointments will be for a term of one year, renewable. The chair shall be appointed from the committee by the President. The Executive Director shall serve as an active consultant. The duty of the Long Range Planning Committee shall be to make recommendations to the Executive Committee with regard to long range goals and specific objectives of the Corporation.**

The committee also requests that the President's Manual be amended with language to indicate that the President should pay close attention to both continuity of tenure and representation of a wide range of constituencies within the organization.

Also, the LRP Committee requests that a forum be scheduled on Friday afternoon of the March convention, to solicit from all committees comments from their vice chairs with requests for strategic organizational goals or specific actions or objectives in expediting future planning.

A revised manual will be forthcoming after the March meeting.

16. Alan asked if there was interest in an Ad Hoc Committee to be in touch more with the constituency to work in a liaison capacity. Kathi, Tony, and Alan agree to constitute this committee. They will communicate with theatre organizations, semi professional and small theatres among other members of the constituency.

Adjourned as ExCOM: 4:27

Reconvene as Board: 4:28

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1. David Schram encouraged the Board to vote on 2014. He encouraged constituents to reconsider the benefits of Orlando and Disney for our students. **Moved that the board vote to enter into negotiations with exploring Orlando 2014 now.** After healthy discussion, Alan recommended that we support Betsey in her ability to discern what is best. Lesley: **MOVE that the board support Betsey including authorizing a move for the dates in 2014 in her search for a site. Approved. One opposed.**

**2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Programming Vice President Steve Bayless:** Reported that we may have landed Richard Robechaux as Thursday's Keynote and Dudley Knight as the Voice and Speech Featured Guest Artist. We are currently working on our other VIPs.

We are looking for another featured movement performer. We have a new flying master class, in which professors and students can experiment on the ropes. This involves three companies and maybe interesting banquet ideas. Chattanooga Choo Choo Kids are opening the convention with a 45-minute set. Same night, an event at the Choo Choo Hotel sponsored by Open Jar Institute will specifically involve the high school population for opening night, and a pool party the next. Claire Wisniewski will introduce the presenter and highlight the convention highlights.

An SETC postcard advertising the conference will soon be mailed. Tiza Garland recommended a block of graduate student panels. Cara Rawlings pointed out that ATHE that makes it possible for transitional folks and graduate students to attend at a reasonable price that we may want to use as a model.

**Past President Chip Egan:** Reported that the Personnel Advisory Committee is in the process of updating the Personnel Manual Policy.

**States Rep Rep Leslie Dellinger** asked Steve Bayless to consider moving the state meeting from 4:00 to 5:30 so it won't interfere with high school and community festivals. Proposed a possible high school teacher discussion blog for questions, answers, suggestions, not unlike one that is supported in South Carolina. Also proposed Arkansas joining SETC, but David Thompson explained that the Bylaws would have to change completely, even necessitating refilling the Articles of Incorporation. Denise Halbach brought up efforts made to do the same with Louisiana.

Leslie encouraged state reps to visit each other's states. Also explained a need possibly to streamline adjudication training. Finally, Leslie praised Alan Litsey for all the excellent work he has done to make SETC a more supportive environment, heartily supported by ExCom and the Board.

**Division Rep Bill Murray:** Thanked John Spiegel for putting together a directory for producing theatre for youth, and for the international dimensions as well.

**Theatre for Youth John Spiegel** presented \$610 dollars from the Board and ExCom to the endowment fund, 95% participation.

**Motion: To change the Bylaws specified in item 15 above by Dennis Wemm. Accepted. SUGGESTION: AMEND THE BYLAWS ARTICLE X SECTION 6 AS PRESENTED TO EXCOM BY DENNIS WEMM:**

**The Long Range Planning Committee moves to make the following amendment to Bylaws Article X Section 6, striking the phrase, "two members to be appointed by the President each year for a three-year term" and substituting : "three to be appointed by the President from the members of the Board of Directors, and three to be appointed from the general membership. All appointments will be for a term of one year, renewable."**

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Dean Slusser moved that the Board of Directors send the proposal for session passes back to ExCom for further consideration and refinement based on the following observations.

- Patrons of the High School Festival who are not members of the organization are receiving a benefit that is not available to patrons of other festivals, who, according to the motion as approved, would need to become full members of the organization and pay convention registration fees to support their festivals;

- **If there are six sessions in a festival (morning, afternoon and evening over a two day period) patrons who use the session passes are able to attend both days of the festival for a total of \$120 (compared to \$200 for full individual membership and registration);**
- **While it appears that festival venues have adequate seating for the next two years, the policies approved by ExCom do not address one of the underlying issues that the division appears to be trying to resolve – i.e., that people who are NOT a part of convention are displacing people who are. When we move to smaller venues again, the existence of a session pass may well recreate the problem.**

**Dean Slusser suggested, “If ExCom moves forward with the spirit of the proposal passed in their session, I would encourage them to establish a cost for session passes to attend the full festival that exceeds the total cost of registration. I would also suggest that ExCom refer the proposed policy to the Bylaws Committee in the context of Section III, Rule 8 under Rules of the Association, which appears to state in an explicit manner those individuals who are exempt from payment of all or part of convention registration and membership.”**

**Motion did not pass.**

**Betsey Baun** proposed that the chaperone fee actually become the membership fee, allowing chaperones to attend workshops. They become members when registering, and have easy access to the festival.

**Alan Litsey** explained that we would be receiving a board self-assessment link. Looking to the future: Changes in the wording of the Bylaws for the definition of treasurer and possibly asking someone else to transcribe minutes to free up the Secretary to be a more active participant. Reminds us that Winter Meeting is ExCom only.

**Steve Bayless** announced that Quiana and he would be available from 9-12 tomorrow, Sunday morning if we had any questions about programming. Alan encouraged everyone to be involved.

**Meeting Adjourned: 5:43**