

**New Deal Café Board of Directors Meeting (online)**  
**Monday, March 22, 2021**

MINUTES

**Attendees**

Board of Directors: Michael Hartman (President), Mark Cheater (secretary), Dorian Winterfeld (treasurer), Aileen Kroll

Audit Committee: Carla Monardes, Mike Stark

Staff (furloughed since March 2020): Amethyst Dwyer

FONDCA: Peter May

Visitors: Connie Davis, Johanna Goderre, Tom Jones, Tom LeaMond, Lore Rosenthal, Stuart Johnson, Susan Harris, Maria Silvia

**Call to order** – 6:32 pm

Approval of minutes of 2/22/21 board meeting

*Dorian W. / Mark C – 2<sup>nd</sup> / approved unanimously*

**Reports**

President: Thank you to members for your support over the past year. The board has been meeting regularly to work on securing loans, grants, and donations.

Treasurer: Dorian W reviewed the Cafe's bank balance report: we have about \$222,000 in bank balances, and about \$219,000 in debts (government and member loans, etc.). We plan to apply for Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan forgiveness, and we are preparing to apply for the federal Shuttered Venues Operator Grant program as soon as that opens up. There was a discussion about how to use PPP money and the conditions to qualify for loan forgiveness.

Secretary: Mark C. reminded everyone to renew their Cafe memberships, or to join if they're not already members.

Audit Committee: Mike S. said the board has been doing a good job.

Music Manager: Amethyst D. said that PG County has ended its ban on live entertainment, but still has numerous restrictions on capacity and social distancing that will make it challenging to host large/popular bands. Hopefully these restrictions will be eased as vaccinations increase and case rates go down, so that we can resume the music program sooner rather than later.

FONDCA: Peter May said FONDCA is looking to create a digital library of art exhibited at the Cafe, and asked folks to submit any photos they have. In response to a question from the board, he said that it is unlikely FONDCA will organize any outdoor festivals in 2021 because pandemic-related restrictions and uncertainty make it impossible to plan.

**Old Business**

Cafe renovations and improvements: Dorian W. said that previously authorized work on restoring the Cafe's terrazzo floors had begun, and would take about two weeks to complete. He noted that this work had been discussed for almost 20 years, and it's finally happening. Michael H. said that volunteer Nancy Melandry is organizing some other much-needed upgrades on aging, stained and broken ceiling tiles, inefficient and harsh lighting, and chipped and dirtied wall paint and bar varnish.

Mark C made a motion to authorize spending up to \$15,000 for materials, supplies and miscellaneous costs related to ceiling, lighting, painting and bar refinishing. Dorian W. seconded the motion, and noted that Cafe W-2 employees would undertake the projects and their labor will be paid from PPP funds. Aileen K. noted that this work is sorely needed and that if we want the Cafe to stay in business, we need to invest in it. Given that the Cafe is closed because of the pandemic, it's in our best interests to do the work now. Michael H said that some donations from members had been earmarked for renovation work.

Two members raised questions about the wisdom of undertaking these projects when the Cafe is not bringing in income. Mike S pointed out that the best time to undertake these renovations is when the Cafe is closed, because otherwise they would interrupt business, and that the projects were designed to address long-standing problems such as complaints about noise levels.

The motion was called, and passed by a unanimous 4-0 vote of the board members present.

Search for New Food Vendor: Aileen K said the board has been delighted by the quantity and quality of applicants for this position, and that it has taken time to carefully winnow down the long list of well-qualified people. She noted that the board will shortly be choosing three finalists, and then making a final selection. After that comes the process of negotiating a new contract, and working with the vendor on the timing and process of re-opening the Cafe.

There were questions from members about the timeline for re-opening the Cafe, and the possibility of soliciting member input on the final selection. Board members noted that it's impossible to set a hard date for re-opening when we're still in the middle of a pandemic--with case numbers currently increasing and government regulations changing from day to day--plus being in the middle of several renovation projects. Board members also noted that Cafe members had already provided helpful input, through the recent membership survey and other avenues, on what they would like to see in a new vendor, and that it was logistically unworkable (and would violate confidentiality agreements that applicants requested) to involve the entire membership in the vendor selection process.

Annual Meeting: Michael H said the board was looking at the possibility of holding the meeting in May or June. Ideally, we'd like to be able to do it in-person, but that will depend on how the pandemic progresses. When the meeting occurs, all five board positions and all three audit committee positions will be open, since we weren't able to have a meeting in 2020 and thus everyone on the leadership team will have completed their terms. Member Johanna G. suggested using a platform called OPA vote, which allows for online, ranked-choice voting, proxies, etc.

**Next Meeting:** scheduled for April 26.

**Adjourned at 7:41pm**

*Submitted 4/20/21 by M. Cheater*