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Watertown Players Community Theatre

210 S. Water St., Watertown, WI 53094

**Information for Directors at Watertown Players Community Theatre**

August 2022

Due to the all-volunteer nature of Watertown Players Community Theatre, production directors here have extended responsibilities. The Technical Director and the Board of Directors are available to assist directors in any capacity. The following are guidelines for producing and directing a Watertown Players Community Theatre production:

**Financing**

Each production has a budget. This includes the cost of scripts, performance rights, printing of programs, costumes, props, set materials, and any other direct costs incurred by the show. The exact amount allocated for each production will be given at the Director Information meeting. Your Budget is created within your Proposal Form. The Proposal Form is located here: <https://www.watertownplayers.org/director-resources> Please email the completed Proposal Form to [info@watertownplayers.org](mailto:info@watertownplayers.org). Proposals are reviewed and approved by the Watertown Players Board of Directors.

The director will want to periodically monitor the production’s expenses. This is one of the most crucial aspects of the periodic “touch base” sessions with the production staff. Reimbursement for show expenses is handled through the Board Treasurer. Those wishing to be reimbursed will need to provide their name, address and phone number. All receipts for reimbursement need to be turned in to the treasurer prior to opening night.

**Auditions/Casting**

As soon as possible, determine an audition date by consulting with the director of the preceding show in production/performance to discuss potential scheduling conflicts. Create a Press Release for your show and the auditions and email that information to the attention of the Publicity Coordinator and Social Media Online Coordinator at [info@watertownplayers.org](mailto:info@watertownplayers.org). Notices need to be emailed at least three (3) weeks ahead of time. Include the show title, dates and times of auditions, where they are being held, if you will be reading from the script or want monologues, your name and phone number for further information. The Publicity Coordinator will send the press release to the local media (including the newspaper) and will post the audition information on the Watertown Players website. The Social Media Online Coordinator will create Facebook events and posts for the auditions. The Board will add audition dates to the Watertown Players Master calendar to ensure that there are no conflicts with the dates and times chosen for auditions.

WPCT auditions are always open auditions. WPCT does not allow pre-casting of roles. There are usually two to three production staff members who sit at the audition table—the director, the director’s apprentice, and either producer or technical director. At auditions, the director should let the auditioners know when casting decisions will be made and if/how those who are not cast will be notified. If at the end of auditions, the director does not feel that enough people have shown up to be able to successfully cast all roles, he or she may continue to recruit other actors until all roles are adequately filled.

WPCT typically does not utilize understudies. If the director is considering casting understudies, this should be noted in the original proposal for Board review. Should the use of understudies be approved, it is recommended that you choose understudies from the audition pool of the production.

We ask that directors either email the final cast list to all that auditioned or email the final cast list to the Publicity Coordinator and Social Media Online Coordinator ([info@watertownplayers.org](mailto:info@watertownplayers.org)) to be posted on the website and Facebook.

**Access to the Theatre**

Each director will receive a key to the theatre from a board member to use during rehearsal and production and will be required to sign a key contract. These keys will need to be returned to a Board Member at set strike. If a director needs access to the theater office/Costume Shop, please contact (or have your producer contact) a board member.

**Rehearsals**

Musical productions are given 8 weeks of rehearsal time in the WPT space, and plays are given 6 weeks of rehearsal time. Rehearsals at WPT typically run between 6:30 pm and 9:30 pm, three nights per week, or from 6:30-9:30 one night per week and four hours on a Sunday. Rehearsals during tech week may be extended until 10:30 p.m. All rehearsals during tech week should be run as dress rehearsals. The director may determine how many rehearsals before tech week should also be run as dress rehearsals. A brush-up rehearsal is to be scheduled for the Thursday preceding the second weekend of performances. The rehearsal schedule will need to be emailed to the Board of Directors to be added to the WPT Master Calendar to ensure that there are no conflicts with special events, future production auditions, etc.

Rehearsals up to and including tech week and dress rehearsals, are to be closed unless an exception has been granted by the Board. The only people allowed in the theatre during those times are director-chosen cast and crew, as well as current board members and their specified guests. Exceptions would be considered for a Community Theatre Community Thursday event to be held as a brush-up rehearsal and would need prior approval from the Board. It is recommended that the front doors of the theater remained closed. The theater is a non-smoking environment. Cast/crew need to exit the building if they are smoking.

If a current board member and/or their guest needs access to the theater during your rehearsal for non-production reasons (for example, borrowing costumes and props), they should contact you prior to coordinate a time that will minimize the disruption to the rehearsal process. Efforts will be made by Board members to minimize the disruption to the rehearsal process. This policy ensures that the cast and crew are not distracted in the short time we have set aside for rehearsal.

**Timekeeping of Volunteer Hours**

The theater periodically applies for grants and many require an accurate account of hours spent by volunteers at the theater performing theater related business. There are time tracking sheets available that we ask all volunteers to use to record their hours spent at auditions, rehearsals, work days, performances, etc. This sheet is available at the ticket counter/entrance to the theater.

**Production Staff**

Every production will require at least some of the following technical positions, to be recruited by the director. **If the director does not have someone in mind, the Board of Directors can assist in the search and provide a list of options as needed.**

**Producer:**

It is recommended that you include a producer on your production team. Exceptions will only be considered for seasoned Watertown Players directors. Your producer may be a member of our Board of Directors. The producer may have any or all of the following responsibilities: Assist with scheduling and organizing production meetings; obtaining building access and key for director; assist with advertising by creating posters, in consultation with director; compile show programs with information obtained from director; consult with publicity coordinator about contacting Watertown TV to arrange an interview to promote the show; assist with writing press releases as the director sees fit and according to the publicity schedule. Attend rehearsals as needed to familiarize self with show and assist as needed. Take photos to be used for headshots and for the publicity photo shoot, and immediately email these photos to the social media coordinator. Arrange for the cleaning and/or return of costumes within one week after the show closes. Answer questions and provide support/guidance to costume, makeup, and props coordinators as needed. Make arrangements with Box Office Manager to have B.O. Mgr. present at a rehearsal to sell show tickets to cast and crew prior to tech week.

**Directing Apprentice:** All new directors that have not previously directed a show for the Watertown Players must first serve as a Directing Apprentice to one of our current directors before directing their own production. If a director has been matched with a directing apprentice, they will need to schedule a meeting with the directing apprentice prior to auditions to discuss and agree on production responsibilities and expectations. The apprentice is expected to observe the rehearsal and directing process and learn from the director. Directors may also wish to assign a scene for the apprentice to block and/or direct or have them work with individual actors on character and scene development. At the end of the rehearsal process, the director will be asked by the Board of Directors to provide an evaluation of the apprentice, either verbally or as a written survey. This evaluation will be used to assist the Board of Directors should that individual apply to direct a production in a future season. The directing apprentice will also receive a survey to evaluate their experience and the results will be used to improve the mentoring program in the future.

**Stage Manager:** Contact an individual to function as a stage manager. This individual may have any or all of the following responsibilities:

* Take down the director’s blocking
* Hold the script during rehearsals and serves as **Assistant Director** in the Director’s absence at rehearsals
* Create a contact sheet for the cast and crew
* Notify cast and crew of rehearsals, workdays, and other information
* Assist in the running of rehearsals by setting up furniture and monitoring the actors’ activity
* Contact cast members who are late or absent from a rehearsal
* Run the show during the performances including communicating with each evening’s house manager and the Technical Director.
* Other duties as mutually agreed.

**Set Design and Construction:** Contact an individual(s) to be responsible for the set design and construction. This person will be responsible for:

* Consulting with the Producer and/or Director prior to set design to avoid issues due to the unique staging space of the theatre.
* Establishing the requirements of the set and set dressing with the approval of the director.
* Consult with Director and/or Producer to determine the workdays for construction and painting. The most popular workday time for our volunteers is Saturday from 10am to 2pm, but this can be expanded as necessary.
* Selecting existing scenery and flats for reuse. Lumber and permanent set pieces are stored in the backstage area. Most of what you will need, like flats and jack braces, can be found in here. Other items include doors, platforms, windows, and columns.
* Consult with Director to select existing furniture and set dressing for re-use. Most of the furniture is stored in the upstairs prop and costume area.
* Consult with Director and Board Member to determine the configuration of the seating area. We strive for at least 80 seats, but we have 100 chairs available. The standard arrangement can accommodate 80. When the final number of audience seats has been calculated, contact the answering service at 920-306-4364, and let them know the number of chairs available. This should be done by Sunday tech rehearsal.

**Costumes**: Contact an individual to serve as costume coordinator. Costume coordinator will design, gather/thrift, and/or make the needed costumes. Time should be set aside at the end of the read-through for the costume coordinator to take measurements of cast members. Time should be set aside during a rehearsal within the first three weeks of rehearsing for actors to try on costumes that have been pulled from the WP costume shop or created for them (in preparation of the publicity photo shoot). **Please note that WPCT does not own a sewing machine**. Costumes are stored in the upstairs costume shop and it is preferred that costumes from our own collection be reused whenever possible. Costumes may be borrowed from several local theatres depending on their policies and production needs. Costume Coordinator should consult with Director to determine needs and options for specialty costumes. **Existing costume pieces may be altered WITHOUT CUTTING** **and should be returned to their original state at the end of the run.** Those costumes that can be laundered at home should be done so prior to tech week and then again after the run of the show by the costume coordinator or producer. Costumes that need to be dry cleaned should be cleaned with an at-home dry cleaning kit if possible. Costume coordinator should consult with Producer to determine a time for costumes to be returned after cleaning, within one week after the show has closed.

**Make-up:** For children’s and youth productions, the director should contact an individual to serve as makeup coordinator. Makeup coordinator will consult with director regarding any specialty makeup needs. Actors are responsible for purchasing their own individual makeup kits/supplies. Makeup coordinator should provide cast members with resources (online links, etc.) for purchasing these supplies/kits within the first four weeks of rehearsal. For adult cast shows, the actors may be responsible for doing their own make-up, with guidance from the director. Seasoned actors may assist new actors with makeup instruction for adult casts.

**Props**: Contact an individual to gather, make, or purchase/thrift props. Most of the prop storage is in the upstairs costume and prop area. Contact (or have your producer contact) a Board Member if you have any questions.

**Music Director:** Contact an individualto serve asMusic Director for musical production. Music Director will be responsible for obtaining musicians if a live pit orchestra is needed. Live musicians are typically present for the final two weeks of rehearsals and during tech week and the performances. Music Director will be expected to utilize the music provided in show kits if music is pre-recorded and will consult with Technical Director to determine needs for rehearsals, tech week, and performances. An electric keyboard, property of the WPT, is available for use during rehearsals and performances if needed. Consult with Director to determine scheduling of music rehearsals.

**Choreographer:** Contact individualto serve as choreographer for musical production.This person will consult with Director to determine schedule for choreography rehearsals. Consult with Music Director to obtain pre-recorded show music for use during rehearsals.

**Lighting Design and operation:** The WPCT has a Technical Director who may be available to assist with designing and running lights and sound during the production period. Contact individual(s) to design the light scheme and someone to run the light board during performances. This may be the same person. The lighting equipment at WPCT consists of a software based lighting controller running on a laptop (LightFactory), approximately 20 permanently mounted conventional fixtures running on portable dimmer packs, and a limited number of intelligent LED fixtures, all connected on one universe of DMX. We also have one spotlight and a limited selection of gels and frames.

**Sound Design and operation:** The WPT has a Technical Director who may be available to assist with designing and running lights and sound during the production period. Contact an individual(s) to design the sound and someone to run the sound during performances. This may be the same person. The sound equipment at WPCT consists of a Behringer X32 digital mixing console, 2-channel amplifier and 2 speakers mounted above the stage. Up to 16 body-worn wireless mics are available for musicals. There are 2 overhead mics onstage.

**Production Meeting**

The director will need to hold an initial production meeting with production staff to review the requirements for a show and identify any “gaps” in providing necessary elements. Additional meetings may be necessary. At the very least, the director should agree with all production staff that they will “touch base” with the director at least once a week during the rehearsal process. The director will communicate progress to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

**Communicating with Cast and Production Staff**

It is recommended that the director collect all of the contact information for cast members via the audition forms during auditions and the production staff during the production meeting. Give this information to the Stage Manager to create a contact sheet. The director can then create a simple email distribution list or have telephone numbers to contact the cast. The Director may consider creating a private Facebook group with all of the cast and crew as members as this will make it very easy to communicate any issues during production. Contact the Online/Social Media Coordinator if assistance is needed for setting this up.

**Publicity**

The Publicity Coordinator and Social Media Online Coordinator will help you manage all publicity for your production. The director will need to provide Press Releases for the show using as a guideline the Publicity Schedule found on the Watertown Players website: <https://www.watertownplayers.org/director-resources>. Press releases should include a brief synopsis of the show.

Watertown Community Theater also uses many different types of media and sponsorships to promote productions, and the publicity committee may have specific ideas to promote the show (refer to publicity photo shoot information under Costume Coordinator section above). The director may have a promotional idea they would like to use. Communication of these ideas and requests should be directed to [info@watertownplayers.org](mailto:info@watertownplayers.org) The director may be contacted by the Publicity Coordinator or Social Media Online Coordinator to schedule interviews with local media about the production.

**Website and Social Media**

In additional to publicizing productions through traditional media, WPCT also publicizes productions on its website, Facebook page, YouTube and Instagram. The Online Social Media Coordinator will create a Facebook event for the production.

Please send a synopsis of the show, using the Publicity Schedule as a Guideline, to the attention of Social Media Coordinator and Publicity Coordinator ([info@watertownplayers.org](mailto:info@watertownplayers.org)) to be posted to the website and on the Facebook event.

The director may also be contacted by the Online Social Media Coordinator to schedule taping of videos to be uploaded to Watertown Players’ social media platforms.

**Posters and Programs**

The director and Board Member Designee will design the show poster, programs, and show announcement email. The Producer may be designated to assist the director with the development and completion of these tasks. **A show logo must be designed prior to auditions. This logo should be shared with the Social Media Coordinator and Publicity Coordinator as early as possible for use in social media and other publicity posts and releases and should be used for posters and programs. The show logo must be in accordance with all requirements as stated on the licensing contract regarding use of images, font size, acknowledgments, etc.** (Licensing contract will be forwarded to director by the WP Board Treasurer as soon as rights have been acquired.) Posters should be finalized for printing at least three weeks prior to opening night. Show programs should be ready for printing prior to the start of tech week. Posters will be printed and distributed throughout the community by the House Manager.

Please contact the Board of Directors with the cast list, list of scenes, cast and crew bios and headshots, and any notes from the director. Also include a list of special thanks if outside assistance has been negotiated, or borrowed from another theater or individual. Ads are available in the program. Please check with the Board of Directors for the cost of ads. Ad sizes include: business card size, half page, and full page. Please make sure to get this information to the Board of Directors by the mutually agreed due date.

**House Management**

A board member is assigned to the production as the House Manager to coordinate the Box Office, printing off the box office/snack bar work schedule, printing off programs, filling in when there are volunteer shortages, handling any theater emergencies and counting of proceeds after each show. The House Manager will set up house seating arrangement, and will be responsible for sweeping the house, box office and snack bar areas before opening night. The House Manager will also be responsible for taking inventory of the snacks and beverages both before opening night and after the final show. The House Manager will run the Box Office during the run of the show. The House Manager will ensure that all noise and commotion in the hallways outside of the Theater be kept to a bare minimum during all performances.

The Board of Directors will coordinate cleaning the theater and restrooms before opening night. However, it is very important that cast and crew maintain a tidy environment as much as possible throughout the rehearsal process. The building is old, and pests can enter if the environment is enticing enough. After each performance, the production crew needs to make sure the theater and restrooms are clean.

The House Manager will coordinate soda delivery and candy supplies.

**Box Office and Snack Bar**

The director, House Manager and the Board of Directors will contact volunteers for running the Snack Bar and selling 50/50 Raffle Tickets for the production. The House Manager may run the Box Office during performances. The Watertown Players host a 50/50 Raffle at most productions. Volunteers sell these tickets. The proceeds are split between the Watertown Players and the Ticketholder.

The House Manager, as the Box Office, or the Box Office Manager independently will have the following responsibilities:

Get the money for the box

Help fold programs if necessary

Be available to sell tickets and mark reservations off the reservation list and track walk-ins.

The Snack Bar volunteer will have the following responsibilities:

Get the money for the snack bar from the House Manager

Stock the soda, water and snacks/candy from the shelf in the office.

Be available to sell snacks during intermission

If the **Box Office Manager** is separate from the House Manager, then the Box Office Manager should work with the Producer to determine a date for B.O. Manager to sell tickets to cast and crew during a rehearsal prior to tech week.

**Director Attendance at Run**

It is highly recommended that the director attends every show of the run. If this is not feasible, a dependable stage manager may be designated for any concerns that may come up.

**Curtain Speech**

Before each performance, the director or a board member will welcome the audience with a short speech before the show begins. Key items to mention are the length of each act, the length and presence of an intermission, The 50/50 Raffle, and any upcoming auditions and special events. Curtain Speeches can be pre-recorded.

Sometimes there are also sponsorship mentions. Please contact the Board of Directors prior to the opening of the show to verify what mentions need to be made at the curtain speeches.

If there is a chance of inclement weather that night, mention the severe weather action plan to the audience.

**Strike**

Due to the next production having to go into rehearsal shortly after the show closes, it is essential to strike the set in an organized fashion. Strike attendance is required of all cast and crew and performed on closing night. Negotiate, in advance, with the next director on what set pieces may remain. If you have not been able to communicate with the next director, please strike the entire set. Make certain the dressing room and other backstage areas are clean and organized. Return all costumes (after cleaning) and props to their storage areas. If any damage has occurred, inform the Board of Directors so these items can be repaired or replaced.

**Miscellaneous**

Performances typically held over the course of two consecutive weekends—Fri/Sat evenings at 7:00 and then Fri/Sat evenings at 7 and a 2 p.m. Sunday matinee. Changes to this performance schedule need to be indicated on the production proposal and approved by the Board.

The house lights are in the corner of the southeast wall of theater. Use these lights for rehearsals rather than stage lights. All lights need to be off when leaving the theater and the ghost light should be lit on the stage.

The designated smoking area for actors during rehearsal and production and patrons is outside of the building. The theater is non-smoking.

Per Watertown City Fire Code, during the performances, all exterior doors need to be unlocked. Be sure to re-lock all doors before leaving.

**Watertown Players Community Theater Mission Statement:**

The Watertown Players Community Theater is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of those in this and surrounding communities by providing quality live theater performances and educational outreach opportunities that will entertain our audiences and engage our participants of all ages, from children to senior citizens.

**Watertown Community Theater Vision Statement:**

By developing relationships and partnerships based on integrity and mutual respect, we are committed to fostering and promoting a theater and arts enriched community.

**Watertown Community Theatre Values:**

Nurturing self-expression, creativity, and fun in all aspects of participation.

Developing a welcoming and inclusive environment within the Watertown Players Theater.

Producing a broad range of affordable entertainment.

Theater education and outreach program development.

Finding opportunities to give back to our community.

Financial stewardship.

**WATERTOWN PLAYERS Board Contact Information:**

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|  | **Watertown Community Theater Executive Board** | | |
| Name | Title | Responsibilities | E-mail Address |
| Jim Steffl | President and  Technical Director | Runs monthly board meetings, facilitates strategic planning, Emergency point-of-contact, Vote tie-breaker | jim@watertownplayers.org    (414) 651-3360 (mobile) |
| Juanita Edington | Vice-President | Runs monthly board meetings in absence of President, point-of-contact for external communication via phone/email. | juanita@watertownplayers.org    (920) 988-2416 (mobile) |
| Annette Weirick | Treasurer | Creates yearly budget, pays monthly bills, point-of-contact for financial decisions and rights-holding organization | annette@watertownplayers.org  (920) 988-9866 (mobile) |
| Linda Ewert | Secretary and  Publicity Coordinator | Takes and distributes minutes from monthly board meetings, keeps board directory up-to-date, disperses press releases to media outlets per publicity schedule | linda@watertownplayers.org    (920) 2486203 (mobile) |
| Heidi Flannigan | Member-at-Large | Ticket Coordinator, Poster distribution, Point-of-contact for community relations, various other tasks as needed | heidi@watertownplayers.org    (920) 988-6494 (mobile) |
| Lisa Steffl | Member-at-Large | Social Media Coordinator, grant writing, various other tasks as needed | [lisa@watertownplayers.org](mailto:lisa@watertownplayers.org)  (920) 253-9363 |
| Blaine Landowski | Member-at-Large | Marketing and Web Specialist, various other tasks as needed | [blaine@watertownplayers.org](mailto:blaine@watertownplayers.org)  (715) 697-8453 |