

BRANCH RIVER THEATRE



*P.O. Box 75
Marlborough, NH 03455*

BRT HANDBOOK

Compiled by G. Sherman H. Morrison

Greetings!

This handbook is meant to be used as a guide to people who are involved in Branch River Theatre, whether you are a member of the board of directors, a show director, or a producer. This is a work in progress that will be updated each season as we modify our operations, procedures, and policies. Here's what you'll find in this document:

Organizational Structure & Information

- The BRT Vision, Mission, and Goals
- BRT Articles of Incorporation
- BRT By-Laws
- Current List of Board Members
- Board Officers/Positions, Roles and Responsibilities
- Non-Profit Status (copy of IRS letter needed for sponsorships, donations, etc.)
- BRT Budget Examples (Current and Past Financial Reports)

The BRT Production Checklist – things to keep track of when working on a show

- Show dates
- Scripts
- Auditions
- Find a producer
- Find rehearsal space
- Keep expenses down
- Set design/construction
- Lighting
- Posters
- Publicity
- Playbills
- Costumes
- Ticket sales
- Concessions
- Lobby photos
- Community House sign
- Key to the Community House
- Box Office/Concessions management
- Performance night routines
- Post-show director's survey

BRT Vision/Mission/Goals

Vision: To be the community theatre of choice striving for...

- Financial strength
- Quality Performances

Mission: We are a community theatre committed to...

- Providing a high-quality and entertaining theatre experience
- Providing a theatre season designed to meet the taste of the community
- Providing entertainment at a reasonable cost
- Providing a venue for actors to perform

Goals:

- Gain financial strength
- Heighten awareness of BRT
- Increase the number of regular patrons
- Make improvements to the performance space

BRT By-Laws

Article I – Name: The name of the organization is Branch River Theatre, Inc./Keene Community Theatre, Inc.

Article II – Purpose: The purpose of Branch River Theatre is the production of and participation in theatre for the cultural enrichment and enjoyment of the group and community.

Article III – Policies:

- A. All policies of this organization are non-partisan and non-sectarian.
- B. All policies are set according to non-profit standards of federal and state laws.
- C. All policies reflect the goals set forth in Article II in order to enhance recreational and educational experiences of the public.

Article IV – Membership: Branch River Theatre shall have only one class of membership with the privilege of voting, and that is at present limited to the Board of Directors. Said voting members shall elect the Board of Directors of the organization and each elected director shall serve for a term of one (1) year or until their successors are elected and qualify. Voting members shall vote on such matters, including the election of officers, as the Board of Directors may from time to time submit thereto for action. Voting members shall have designations, rights, privileges, and be subject to such qualifications, obligations, dues, requirements and limitations as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine by resolution except as otherwise provided by these by-laws, by the Articles of Incorporation or by statute.

Article V – Structure:

- A. **Officers:** The executive officers of the organization shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, all of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting and shall hold office during the pleasure of the Board of Directors. The Officers may also be Directors and fulfill multiple Director roles, but this is not required. The President or his/her appointed delegate shall preside at all meetings of the voting members. When the Board is not in session, the President shall have general management and control of the business affairs of the organization.
- B. **Directors:** The number of directors comprising the full Board of Directors shall be at least 4 and may be as many as 15. There are the following Directors:
 - 1. Director of Set Design & Construction
 - 2. Director of Poster/Ticket Design & Production
 - 3. Director of Playbill Design & Production
 - 4. Director of Ticket Sales & Box Office
 - 5. Director of Costuming/Hair/Makeup
 - 6. Director of Concessions
 - 7. Director of Media Relations
 - 8. Director of Lighting
 - 9. Director of Playbill Advertising Sales
 - 10. Director At-Large
 - 11. Director At-Large
 - 12. Director At-Large
- C. **Meetings:**
 - 1. **Annual Meeting:** An annual meeting of the voting members for the election of officers and directors shall be held in the first month of the Fiscal Year, which is July.

2. **Other Meetings:** In addition to the annual meeting, the Board shall meet on a monthly basis at a time mutually agreed upon by the Board.
3. **Notice of Meetings:** Shall state the date, time and place and be provided to Board members not less than ten (10) or more than fifty (50) days in advance of the meeting.
4. **Special Meetings:** May be called by the President or Board on an as-needed basis, with the same notice requirements stated above.
5. **Voting Quorum:** At any meeting of the Board, a quorum is hereby understood to be at least five (5) voting members. Each vote, in order to pass, requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present.
6. **Election of Members:** Additional members to the Board may be elected by a majority vote of voting members present at any meeting of the Board at any time during the course of the year.

D. **Vacancies/Removals:** Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by a majority vote of voting members at any meeting of the board. Any officer or director may be removed by a majority vote of voting members at any meeting of the board.

E. **Powers:** The management of all business, property and affairs of the organization shall be vested in the Board of Directors. The Board may exercise all of the powers of the organization and do all lawful acts and things, including the adoption of such rules and regulations for the conduct of its meetings, the exercise of its powers and management of the organization as it may deem proper, consistent with the statutes, articles of incorporation and these by-laws, not thereby conferred upon or reserved to the members.

F. **Fiscal Year:** The organization's fiscal year shall consist of twelve (12) months which shall close annually on June 30.

G. **Checks:** All checks, drafts or other orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the organization shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other officer of the Board.

Article VI – Amendments: Amendments to these by-laws can be proposed at any meeting of the Board of Directors and adopted by a simple majority vote of voting members present at the meeting.

BRT Board of Directors

As of May, 2006

With e-mails &/or home phone numbers

OFFICERS

- President – Sharon McHugh – ewalther78@hotmail.com or ewalther@cswg.com, 363-8033
- Vice-President – Gail Connelly – spice7147@verizon.net, 585-6648
- Secretary – Debbie Pickering – debbiepickering@verizon.net, 876-9005
- Treasurer – Sherman Morrison – gshm50@hotmail.com, 357-9613

DIRECTORS

- Set Design & Construction – Vacant
- Poster/Ticket Design & Production – Sherman Morrison – see above
- Playbill Design & Production – Sherman Morrison – see above
- Ticket Sales/Box Office – Heather Morrison – monadnockhike@hotmail.com, 357-9613
- Costuming – mlynott@shamrockre.com, 352-7756
- Concessions – Vacant
- Media Relations – CJ Cummings – snowcasa@sover.net, 802-254-5426 (for print)
Jennifer Bond – Jennifer.bond@verizon.net, 357-4446 (radio)
- Lighting – Sharon McHugh – smchughnh@aol.com, 924-0131
- Playbill Ad Sales – Eric Walther – ewalther@cswg.com, 381-8099 (cell)
- At-Large – Tracy Flower – tflower@SavingsBankofWalpole.com, 357-4280
- At-Large – Jeff Repko – jmcr6157@ptcnh.net, Jeffrey.Repko@imagistics.com, 381-7853
- At-Large – Cindy Elmour – 876-4899 (380 Roxbury Road, Marlborough, NH 03455)
- At-Large – Nancy Coutts – 876-3338 (175 ½ Jaffrey Road, Marlborough, NH 03455)

Current number of PEOPLE on board = 14

NOTE: We are starting to think of each director's specific role/position as the head of a committee comprised of folks who are willing to volunteer to get the jobs done that need to be done. We'll be working to fill out the folks who can help with each area of responsibility.

BRT Board of Directors

Roles and Responsibilities

President

- Overall responsibility for coordination of Branch River Theatre (BRT) operation.
- Liaison between BRT and the Marlborough Community House for securing the use of the facility for auditions, set construction, dress rehearsals and show dates. ***NOTE: right now this is being handled by Jeff Repko.***
- Coordinate the resolution of conflicts through the use of other Board members.
- Preside over the monthly board meetings.
- Initiate and coordinate annual elections (July/August).
- Signature authority for BRT checking account.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Vice-President

- Assist the President as liaison between BRT and the Marlborough Community House for securing the use of the facility for auditions, set construction, dress rehearsals and show dates.
- in the absence of the President, assume all responsibilities of the President.
- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- In the absence of the President, preside over the monthly board meetings.
- Signature authority for BRT checking account.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Secretary

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Function as scribe at all BRT monthly meetings.
- Maintain up to date mailing list and generate/mail periodic newsletters.
- Forward newsletter printing/ mailing expense receipts to Treasurer.
- Provide copies of meeting minutes at subsequent meetings.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.
- Signature authority for BRT checking account.

Treasurer

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Receive all money and receipts from ticket sales, concessions and donations.
- Maintain BRT checking account balance.
- Provide cash boxes and change for concessions and "at the door" ticket sales.
- Initiate payment for all BRT debts and expenses.
- Maintain BRT financial balance sheet.
- Signature authority for BRT checking account.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Concessions

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Purchase and sell refreshments for each production.
- Maintain responsibility for concessions cash box and forward money and expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Provide coverage at concessions and provide for alternate coverage as needed.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Lighting/Sound

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Coordinate the rental, setup, operation and return of lighting/sound equipment for each production.
- Work with the Show Directors and/or Show Producers on specific lighting/sound requirements.
- Forward lighting/sound rental expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Provide lighting/sound coverage at each show and arrange alternate coverage as needed.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Set Design & Construction

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Initiate repairs and/or replacements for damaged set components (i.e., flats).
- Work with Show Directors and/or Show Producers on set needs.
- Coordinate the construction of all sets and arrange for alternate construction coverage as needed.
- Forward set expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Ticket Sales & Box Office

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Distribute show tickets at satellite sales locations and to cast and board members for sale.
- Distribute complementary tickets as deemed appropriate to individuals or businesses that provide donations to BRT.
- Maintain responsibility for tickets cash box and reconciling cash box, and forward money and expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Provide coverage for at-the-door ticket sales or arrange for alternate coverage as needed.
- Contact appropriate parties about upcoming performances and try to sell blocks of tickets. E.g., Theatre departments at the local high schools and colleges; teachers who might want to bring their classes.
- Determine head count for each show (count ticket stubs)
- Keep track of any reservations made through our dedicated phone line, providing a list of reservations to anyone who will be staffing the box office.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Poster/Ticket Design & Production

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Design posters and clear design with Show Director before mass production.
- Get appropriate number of posters made. Also make postcards for mailing or for handouts.
- Distribute posters to local communities. Provide posters and postcards to the Board and cast so they can help with distribution as well.

- Make 150 tickets for each night of a performance. Each night should have a unique color and each ticket should be numbered.
- Get tickets to the Director of Ticket Sales.
- Forward expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Media Relations

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Send out press releases for auditions and shows to local papers and periodicals and radio stations.
- Set up and remove billboard for each show.
- Coordinate photography needs for each show.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Costumes/Hair/Makeup

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Work with the Show Directors and/or Show Producers on costuming needs.
- Coordinate costumes/hair/makeup for each production.
- Forward costume expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Director of Playbill Advertising Sales

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Coordinate the soliciting of show program advertising.
- Develop and provide show programs for each production.
- Coordinate the placing of ads in local periodicals and newspapers.
- Forward advertising/programs expense receipts to the Treasurer.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Directors At Large

- Attend monthly BRT meetings on a regular basis.
- Assist other BRT Board members in their responsibilities.
- Voting authority for all BRT business.

Responsibilities for All Board Members

- Promote BRT as a positive asset to the Marlborough community.
- Strive to support the best in community Theatre quality.
- Ensure that the Marlborough Community House is maintained in a neat and clean condition.
- Contribute your energy and talents to every BRT production possible.
- Make every effort to attend every production that BRT presents.
- Assist in the promotion of every show that BRT presents. This can be accomplished through distribution of posters, ticket sales and word of mouth.
- Strive to cross-train into other areas of interest or need.
- Volunteer for special assignments that you are qualified for. These special assignments may include cast and production photography, set construction support, providing baked goods for concessions, soliciting sponsors, locating or providing props and costumes, etc.

Other Roles and Responsibilities

Show Director

- A Show Director is a volunteer assignment and the Director does not have to be a BRT Board member. Any interested individuals are encouraged to present their ideas for a production to the Board for consideration. All Show Director assignments are approved at the monthly board meetings.
- Recruit a Show producer if desired.
- Hold auditions in accordance with the BRT charter and select the cast.
- Inform individuals not selected and encourage them to audition for future BRT shows.
- Schedule rehearsal location and dates as needed.
- Recruit any desired stage, makeup or hairdressing support.
- Work with the Director of Sets on specific set construction requirements.
- Work with the Director of Lighting/Sound on specific requirements.
- Work with the Director of Costumes/Hair/Makeup on specific requirements.
- Obtain cast biographies and provide a Show Director's message for inclusion in show programs.
- Attend monthly BRT meetings as requested to resolve any open issues and provide show progress update to the Board.
- Fill out the BRT director survey after your show so we can all learn how to do better!

Show Producer

This is an optional assignment that is not required for every production. The decision to utilize a Producer lies solely with the Show Director. A Producer is a volunteer assignment and the Producer does not have to be a BRT Board member.

- Coordinate with the Show Director in the areas of set construction, lighting/sound needs, props, technical requirements, stage-managing, pictures, pre-show announcements.
- Handle advertising, deciding how much to buy and where.

Either the Director or the Producer should pay close attention to the following BRT Production Checklist!

BRANCH RIVER THEATRE



BRT *Production Checklist*

- Double-check show dates!** Check with the BRT Jeff Repko, who is the scheduling person, to make sure you have the right dates for the show. We typically try to do two weekends, Fri-Sat. Your tech week starts on the Sunday prior to opening night. That's when the Director of Lighting will start attending rehearsals.
- Scripts!** If you don't already have copies of scripts, call Sherman Morrison and he will get them ordered for you. You'll need enough copies for the cast, the director, the producer (if there is one), the lighting person, and anyone else you think needs one. The BRT account at Dramatists Play Service is 105378.
- Auditions!** Again, check with the Jeff Repko to see if auditions have been scheduled. You **MUST** have open auditions for your show, as it is required in our contract with the Community House. You are responsible for coming up with your own audition forms and copying the portions of your script you plan to have actors read from. Save your receipts and turn them in to the BRT *Treasurer* for reimbursement.
- Find a producer!** Your life as a director will be much easier if you find a producer. The rest of this list could then essentially be turned over to that person and you can focus on directing rather than producing. It is your responsibility to recruit a producer.
- Find rehearsal space!** We prefer to keep rehearsals at the Community House to a minimum since it costs \$15 for each rehearsal and that adds up quickly. There are lots of different spaces that can be used. You probably know of one yourself. If you're having trouble with this, contact any BRT board member for some help.
- Keep expenses down!** Each show is unique in its budgetary needs, but our rule of thumb is to beg, borrow and steal before buying. If any single item or service that you need will cost more than \$50, be sure to check with the *Treasurer* before purchasing!
- Set design/construction!** If you need to have a set built, it is your responsibility to contact the BRT *Director of Set Design and Construction* as early as possible to discuss your needs with him/her. Don't let this go until the last minute, or you may find you have to do it all yourself.
- Lighting!** Again, contact the BRT *Director of Lighting* early on to discuss your needs.
- Posters!** If you want to design your own show poster, feel free to do so, otherwise contact the BRT *Director of Poster/Ticket Design and Production* to handle this for you. It is the responsibility of you and your cast to get posters up in the area.

- Show publicity!** Get in touch with the BRT *Director of Media Relations* to come up with the wording for press releases about your show. You will need to take some photos of a rehearsal. In addition, there are two people in the community who can help get stories into local papers. In Keene you would want to track down Frank Behrens, and in Brattleboro, track down Bill Menezes (he works at Keene State College in the Redfern Center for the Arts).
- Playbill!** It is your responsibility to forward all the information to the BRT *Director of Playbill Design and Production*. This information includes: The cast, the crew, cast/crew/director bios, a description of the setting of the play, a director's note, and any people or groups that need to be given special thanks for helping out with the show.
- Costumes!** Contact the BRT *Director of Costuming* early on to discuss your needs.
- Ticket Sales!** Please encourage/require your cast/crew to sell as many tickets as possible to the show, because that's how we fund future productions.
- Concessions!** It's important that you let your cast know prior to tech-week that they are expected to bring in some baked goods for concessions during intermission each weekend of your show.
- Lobby photos!** We have a file of photos for many of our regular actors that can be used for the easel in the lobby. Contact *Sherman Morrison* for that. Otherwise, you will need to make arrangements to have head shots taken of your cast for that purpose. In the past we've tried to use Karevy Photography so the photos are all the same style, but he's expensive, so keep that in mind.
- Community House sign!** When your tech-week starts, you can use the letters in the kitchen of the Community House to spell out the show name, dates, etc. on the sign in front of the Community House.
- Key to the Community House!** As you approach tech-week, get in touch with the BRT *President* to get a copy of the key to get into the Community House. **AND DON'T LOSE IT!!!**
- Box Office/Concessions management!** You don't have to worry about this – the BRT Directors of Ticket Sales and Concessions will line up the volunteers needed to handle these tasks.
- Performance night routines!** You should get to the house 1.5 hours or more before curtain to get things opened up. Make sure the elevator door is open from the outside for handicap access. Turn outside lights on. Be sure to only use the areas we rent – the auditorium and the dining room (which is our "green room." Don't use the basement unless you've scheduled it. Tell your cast not to park in the Community House lot or the street spaces in front of the theatre. Those are for patrons. There is a large municipal parking lot behind Doody's. Be sure someone makes a pre-show announcement in which you thank any special helpers/sponsors, ask folks to turn off the cell phones and pagers, ask for donations to BRT (which are tax-deductible), have them sign up for newsletter (usually a sign-up sheet is in the back by lights/sound or box office – they can provide a street address or e-mail address), and tell about upcoming BRT shows. At the end of the night, do a general picking-up of all areas used.
- Post-show director's survey!** We've developed a simple survey for directors to fill out so they can voice how they thought things went and how we can do better as a theatre group in the future.