Received
JUL 24 2026
Derby, CT Town Clerk's Office

Sterling Opera House Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes
Date: Monday, November 10, 2025

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1. **Call to Order -** The meeting was called to order at **6:02 PM**.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance -** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. **Roll Call**

   Dana Florenza, Brian Coppolo, Gino DiGiovanni, Carleigh Paecht, Karleen Guluzzy.
   A quorum was declared with five members present.

4. **Approval of Minutes -** No prior meeting minutes were received.

   Motion: To table approval of minutes.
   - **Moved by:** Dana Florenza
   - **Second by:** Karleen Guluzzy
   - **Vote:** Unanimous approval

   Result: Motion carried.

5. **Public Portion**

   Marc Garofalo, Town Clerk for the City of Derby, addressed the Commission and raised the following points:
   - Mr. Garofalo commented on the Commission's use of elected officers and noted that, under Robert's Rules, the chair typically presides over the meeting
   - The Commission should work collaboratively with the mayor and administration, particularly regarding public disagreements aired during election season.
   - He encouraged the Commission to work cooperatively with the administration and the Mayor's Office in support of the Sterling Theater restoration effort, emphasizing the importance of bipartisan cooperation in the renovation effort.
   - He reminded the Commission of the need to obtain the proper permit for raffle fundraising and offered assistance with ticket sales through the Clerk's Office.

   No additional public comments were offered.
   Public portion closed.

6. **Committee Updates**

   Raffle Fundraiser
   - An Amazon gift card raffle is underway.
   - Total tickets sold to date: **7 tickets for $10 each ($70)**.
   - Cost of raffle prize: **$250**, resulting in a deficit.
   - Discussion being held regarding extending raffle deadline.

   Motion: To extend the raffle deadline to Monday, November 24, 2025, at midnight.
   - **Moved by:** Brian Coppolo
   - **Second by:** Karleen Guluzzy
   - **Vote:** Unanimous approval

   Result: Motion carried.

   It was agreed not to add bonus tickets for early purchasers due to cost concerns.

7. Reports

Twisted Vine Walking Tours

- Total attendance included 56 tickets sold, with additional walk-up attendees.

The public participation was strong and feedback was positive.

- The tour featured historical information in Derby as well as the Sterling Opera House.
- Gross revenue exceeded **$2,000**.
- Feedback from attendees was very positive, with many expressing appreciations for the historical component of the tours.
- Merchandise was also sold during the event.
- No safety or logistical issues were reported.
- The event generated significant community engagement, including the following:
- Community members and skilled tradespeople expressed possible interest in supporting the project.
- Interest from a professional magician in participating in a future fundraiser.
- Increased social media followers and continued interest in future tours, potentially in spring 2026.
- Commission members commended the committee on a successful event.

8. New Business

Holiday Fundraisers

- The Commission discussed Sterling Opera House holiday ornaments featuring the building and notable historical performers.
- Members considered selling the ornaments online and/or at the City's Christmas tree lighting event.
- Staff will determine whether vendor participation is permitted at the tree lighting event.

501(c)(3) Status Report

- Sterling Opera House Restoration, Inc. received **501(c)(3) approval on October 13, 2025**.
- Public charity status had been approved by both the State of Connecticut and the federal government
- The organization's fiscal year ends on **December 31**.
- Bank account summary: Opening balance: $100
  Walking tour deposits: $2,150
  Service charges: $45
  Ending balance: approximately $2,205
- Expenses paid personally totaled $1,800, as follows:
  EIN filing: $319 (donated)
  Connecticut corporate filing: $50 (donated)
  Bright Bridge Services: $1,300 (reimbursement to be requested later)
  Federal filing fee: $500 (reimbursement to be requested later)

Dave requested a full accounting of income, expenditures, merchandise sales, and donations raised to date so that proper records can be maintained. He also discussed next steps, including obtaining a construction estimate, establishing a construction budget, identifying non-negotiable

restoration components such as the fly system, recruiting additional board members for Sterling Restoration Inc., and creating a charitable account structure with the Valley Community Foundation

Future plans include:

- Development of a construction budget (target: first quarter of 2026)
- Establishment of an operating endowment
- Expansion of the 501(c)(3) Board
- Exploration of grant funding, foundations, and in-kind donations
- Future fundraising initiatives including auctions and ticketed events

Members discussed the importance of creating an endowment sufficient to support future operations and maintenance. Dave stated that a minimum of two years' operating costs should be included, along with funds for ongoing maintenance and upkeep. Members also discussed future theater operations, potential management models, naming opportunities, in-kind donations, and fundraising strategies.

Members discussed the possibility of including in-kind contribution requirements in future bid documents and noted that construction materials and services needed to meet applicable code and project requirements.

No formal action was taken.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM.

- **Moved by:** Dana Florenza
- **Second by:** Karleen Guluzzy
- **Vote:** Unanimous approval

Respectfully submitted
Jennifer Desroches