

Tonight, I'll share highlights from 2023 and offer a look ahead to 2024. After this short report, we'll elect four board members.

First let's thank Andy Nelson and Lowell Larson for their creativity and enthusiasm teaching us all how to be better musicians.

I would also like to recognize board members who work behind the scenes to manage and plan the band's operations. The board members are Patric Lewandowski, vice president; John Creasy, treasurer; Vicki Johnson secretary; John Platenberg, Katie Johnson and Harvey Binder. Nonvoting members are business manager Joe Fox and conductors Andy Nelson and Lowell Larson.

At the beginning of the year, we moved our music library to where the board believes a long-term location. We moved across the street from the now demolished Media Services Building to City Hall. Ironically, the City Hall library space is where the band room was when I was in high school.

We are renting the space for \$100 a year.

The city of St. Cloud is again providing financial support but with a different plan. The city is paying us \$1,500 per event for a maximum of 10 concerts. The same funding plan is included in the city's 2024 budget, which is up for final approval in December.

We applied for and received a \$4,000 grant from the Central Minnesota Arts Board to buy carts for storing and moving stands and chairs and for outdoor chairs.

Our 2023 concert schedule included a nursing home concert, spring and fall performances at the Paramount, Memorial Day, Fourth of July and three dry and one wet concert at Barden Park. We'll wrap up the year with a joint performance Nov. 27 with the Central Lakes College Wind Symphony and a Dec. 14 holiday concert at Whitney.

Now for the year ahead.

I've asked the board to develop two plans....one for a detailed marketing/fundraising effort to increase our audience and provide dependable long-term financing. Secondly, I want to address board committees. Even before the pandemic, the committee structure needed attention. There's even more of a need now.

I proposed a committee structure and I hope the board will act on it. We need participation from more band members to help us operate.

As a part of our engagement discussion, board member John Platenberg suggested high school band ambassadors...high school students who will join the band for three rehearsals and perform several selections with us at our fall concert.

Andy has agreed to lead this effort and plans to contact about a dozen area band directors and ask them to nominate two students. Musicians will be selected based upon ability, commitment to rehearsals and instrumentation.

The board is considering moving one of the Paramount concerts to the auditorium here at Tech. We've just begun to explore the logistics and costs of that possibility.

Next June some members of our band will join with the Meire Grove Band for a trip to Germany and the Czech Republic. We'll spend three days in Spalt, Germany, our sister city, and play a concert with their band. We last visited Spalt in 2018. We'll also visit Holdorf, Germany, for a concert.

We are planning a collaboration with Stearns History Museum to mark 40 years in their building. Plans call for us to present a Breakfast Club program and perform music from 1984 in a concert next September.

Now it's time for our election. You will be electing four people to serve two-year terms.

The board has nominated these candidates:

Shelly Ziemer-Gehrls (clarinet)

John Creasy (percussion)

Patric Lewandowski (bari-sax)

Katie Johnson (clarinet/soprano sax).

Are there any nominations from the floor?

Hearing none, all in favor of the slate nominated by the board.

Mike Knaak, president