

**Dawn Theater Governance Board
City of Hillsdale
Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA)**

**Thursday, January 23, 2024 at 5 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room**

AGENDA

- I. Consent Agenda
 - approval of Agenda
 - approval of minutes from last meeting
 - correspondence (Gail Mowry, Kelly Gelzer, Steven Hussey)

- II. Public Comment

- III. New Business
 - A.** Community Event Applications:
 1. Feb. 28th Greg Whalen Concert
 - B.** Discussion of Management Agreement Review

- IV. Old Business

- V. Theater Update – informational
 - A.** Organ Installation
 - B.** Other updates

- VI. Committee Members: Round Table Discussion

- VII. Adjournment



JANUARY 17, 2025

Hillsdale City TIFA
97 N. Broad St.
Hillsdale, MI 49242
ATTN: Drew Gelzer *Chairman*

Chairman Gelzer and Members of the TIFA Board,

Since March of 2022, The Keefer House Hotel, LLC has managed The Dawn Theater with Hotel Investment Services (H.I.S.) as subcontractor for the daily operations for events, concerts, and community entertainment.

As the Keefer House Hotel building approaches completion, H.I.S. needs to focus their full efforts and attention on successfully opening and operating the Keefer. A successful Keefer will have a transformational impact on the City of Hillsdale, especially in the Downtown business district. Our top priority is to make it a success for all.

We would like to discuss with TIFA the future management of The Dawn to ensure operations and activities remain smooth at the theater. Ideally a local based leaseholder and operator for The Dawn is a great way to continue that mission here in Hillsdale. Our team looks forward to working with TIFA through this process and through the ongoing development of the Keefer House Hotel.

Best Regards,

Steven T. Hussey

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven T. Hussey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Cc'd: Alan Beeker, Brant Cohen



Hillsdale Academy

VIRTUS ET SAPIENTIA

HILLSDALE COLLEGE

GAIL MOWRY

Director of Fine Arts

gmowry@hillsdale.edu

Dawn Theater Governance Board: J. Brandon, T. Sullivan, M. Braman, F. Ray-Finch, R. Scholl
110 N Broad Street
Hillsdale, MI 49242

Friends of the Dawn: P. Youngs
P.O. Box 67
Hillsdale MI 49242

December 12, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I write today to bring a recent experience I had as a renter of the Dawn facility. Our school worked out an agreement with Gianna Green in June of 2024 to rent the space in October 2024 for a week for our middle school production in addition to a drama program fundraising performance the following week. Gianna and I worked out an agreement with the understanding that operating expenses were increasing and came to an agreement that worked in our budget and we planned on increasing the fee for the following year to meet the demand of the higher expenses. When I was waiting for a contract to formalize the agreement there must have been a change in the management and I never received a contract. Kelly Gelzer reached out to me a week prior to the performance requesting a signed contract and lead to a conversation over email ending with her informing me that our original agreement would not be honored for the fundraising event.

I am disappointed in the breakdown in communication and the unwillingness to follow through on our agreement. It is apparent to me that the "company" that Kelly referred to in our correspondence does not understand or support small community arts. There was not much time given to relocate the event that our students worked very hard to prepare. I completely understand the business' prerogative to set a rental price and I do not argue that point. Kelly was also easy to work with and responsive. The issue I wish to highlight today is that I worked out an agreement and had started to develop a nice working relationship with the Dawn and now I cannot trust that what we agree to will be honored. The intent of this letter is to inform you of what happened in the hope that it does not negatively impact future relationships in our small community and our desire, as Hillsdale Academy, to partner with The Dawn for future events. I urge you to keep this in mind as you continue to welcome renters into your facility.

Sincerely,

Gail Mowry

Alan Beeker

From: Andrew Gelzer <adgelzer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 3:22 PM
To: Alan Beeker; James Brandon
Subject: Fwd: HIS Response to Hillsdale Academy Letter to TIFA RE: DAWN THEATER EVENT

Hi Alan and James,

Brant Cohen from CLRED sent me this email two days ago. In the body there is a response letter to a complaint that had been sent to the Governance Board previously.

Would you please include the letter in the next packet for the Governance Board? Thank you very much.

Happy 2025 to you both!

Andrew Gelzer
HJ Gelzer & Son Inc.
115 East Carleton Road
Hillsdale, MI, 49242
517-437-7439

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Brant Cohen** <brant.cohen@cl-red.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 6, 2025 at 4:47 PM
Subject: HIS Response to Hillsdale Academy Letter to TIFA RE: DAWN THEATER EVENT
To: Andrew Gelzer <adgelzer@gmail.com>
Cc: Brian Barton <Brian@hishotels.com>

Hi Chairman Gelzer,

I received a copy of a letter sent to TIFA regarding an event held at the Dawn Theater by the Hillsdale Academy. I've asked our operator, Hotel Investment Services (H.I.S.) to provide a written response for TIFA's record. We appreciate Hillsdale Academy's interest in booking the Dawn Theater and hope that if they decide to book us again, that the process will be smooth and work out well for all parties. Please see the letter below.

Thanks,

Brant

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to the letter that was sent by Hillsdale Academy to the Dawn Theater Governance Board with regard to the Hillsdale Academy rental which occurred this fall.

When I was hired and began to help Gianna at the Dawn in July of 2024, one of my very first assignments was to send the rental contract that Gianna had drafted for the Hillsdale Academy production to Gail Mowry. I did so on July 16th, guaranteeing their organization full access to the Dawn Theater from Monday, October 28th through Saturday, November 2nd.

I attempted to reach a representative from the Academy in the months leading up to the event, as the Dawn had not received the required deposit or a signed contract from the client. I was not aware of any proposed additions to the original contract until an email exchange on October 17th. Gail was earnest, apologized for the delay, and explained to me that she had been waiting for an updated contract that included the following Friday, November 8th at a heavily discounted rate. November 8th had been booked by Gianna months before we sent our original contract to Gail, by local music producer and showrunner Eddie Crouch. The Dawn was to be the venue for a large rock concert featuring the local band Full Moon on November 9th. The 8th was part of their booking for setting up the elaborate audio and lighting equipment necessary for their show.

The contract that Gianna had arranged for the Academy's rental included a \$2,250 discount, as well as no additional charges for our staffing costs (set-up, tear-down, and cleaning) for the week of this rental. I held that week free for this rental for months with no communication and turned down inquiries for the time to make sure we honored our contract.

I learned later that Gail and Gianna had continued to communicate, and that the addition of Friday, November 8th for \$500 had been agreed to between the two of them. Our booking rate for a peak Friday is \$1,500. After discovering that, I understood Gail's frustration when we could not accommodate the 8th, and I apologized profusely. I explained the double booking and offered a rate of \$1,000, which would have covered the extra staffing costs.

Again, I understand and appreciate Gail's frustration with this situation. However, I disagree with the diagnosis that myself or my company doesn't support small community arts. We honored the contract that we had, and there were numerous opportunities to address this issue between mid-July and mid-October. I could not afford to contribute additional Dawn funds to absorb the loss, nor risk burning out my limited staff the day before a longstanding, extremely busy event. As a side note, the Full Moon concert would go on to be one of the highest attended, most profitable events in the Dawn Theater's history.

We were glad to partner with Hillsdale Academy for their middle school production of Alice in Wonderland, and would be delighted to continue to develop our relationship as we work to foster the arts in downtown Hillsdale.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gelzer
Kelly Gelzer
Operations Manager
The Dawn Theater



www.thedawntheater.com

phone. 517-312-2300
email. kelly@thedawntheater.com
110 N. Broad Street
Hillsdale, MI, 49242, USA

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Application Form for Community Events at the Dawn Theater*

Name of the Sponsoring Organization or Individual:

Primary Contact:

Contact Information:

Is the Sponsor a non-profit Organization? Yes _____ No _____

Preferred Date of the Community Event: _____

Please describe the Event: (Use additional pages if necessary)
Please include who will be managing the event and who will be on-site during the event.

Is the Event open to the public? Yes _____ No _____

Is the event expected to generate proceeds? Yes _____ No _____

If proceeds are generated, how will they be used?

How will this Event benefit the Hillsdale community?

Will there be food served at this event? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, who will be catering this event? _____

Will children be present at this Event? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, who will be supervising children? _____

Upon completion of application, send to:

Alan Beeker, Zoning Administrator
City of Hillsdale
97 N. Broad Street
Hillsdale, MI 49242
abeeker@cityofhillsdale.org

Approved by Dawn Theater Governance Board (DTGB) _____ Date _____

Approved by TIFA & DTGB Chairs _____ Date _____

*Community Events in the Dawn Theater must be approved by the Dawn Theater Governance Board (DTGB)
Contact the Dawn Theater Governance Board: 810-844-1396
For fee information, contact the Dawn Theater: 517-312-2300