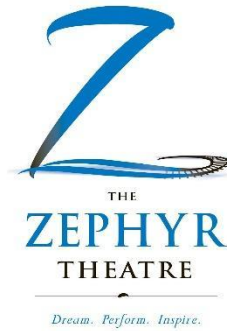


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Zephyr Announces Interim Executive Director**

Jim Weckwerth began leading the organization starting August 7th, 2023

Stillwater, MN – Jim Weckwerth (Weckwerth) has been named Interim Executive Director (iED) of The Zephyr Theatre (Zephyr). The Zephyr is a non-profit organization that provides inclusive, accessible, and high-quality arts education and entertainment experiences in the St. Croix Valley.

The decision is part of a plan by the Board of Trustees (BOT) to find a permanent successor after the resignation of past ED, Calyssa Hall, on October 7th, 2022. *“We chose to move forward with an Interim role to create the space and time we need to focus on the most effective, sustainable, and transformative work possible during this transitional period”* Nicole Bartelt, board chair stated.

Zephyr has endured struggles over the past 9 months and BOT finalized the [sale of the Zephyr facility](#) (601 Main Street) to Manitou Fund on Friday, June 9th 2023. Renovations are now underway for a shared space with River Grove Elementary School.

The sale put Zephyr in a significantly stronger financial position. Eliminating nearly \$2.2 Million in debt owed on the building, along with the ongoing operating expenses associated with managing the facility. Zephyr’s cash position allowed for payment in full on the organization's previous payroll obligations and unpaid federal payroll taxes incurred in 2022. Zephyr is working with a series of unsecured creditors and is currently on a sound pathway to eliminating its remaining obligations.

Responsibilities of Weckwerth as iED will oversee daily operations and work with the board, staff, and volunteers to continue developing the organization and prepare to hire a permanent ED.

Weckwerth is a resident of Stillwater, patron and past volunteer of Zephyr.

Weckwerth has training and experience in leadership positions as a teacher, Pastor, and consultant. As a consultant and coach, Weckwerth has worked with multiple leaders in many nonprofits and churches with a focus on strategic, leadership, and cultural development.

Weckwerth shared, *“I appreciate the arts as integral to being a community of fellow human beings. In collaboration with the St. Croix Valley community, local and regional talent, and our dedicated partners, I believe that The Zephyr will continue to play a key role in building community in the St. Croix Valley area”*. Weckwerth continued, *“To realize our vision for the Zephyr Theatre, we will all work together to prepare for and hire a permanent ED and provide quality education, arts, and entertainment experiences.”*

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