

April 1, 2004

Mayor, City Council, and City Manager
City Hall, Church Street
Gardiner, ME 04345

RE: Second-year funding for Johnson Hall/ City of Gardiner partnership

Dear Mayor Rines, Members of the City Council and City Manager Kobrock:

Thank you for providing funding in the current fiscal year to Johnson Hall to strengthen our role in economic and cultural growth in Gardiner. Thank you also for creating the City of Gardiner/Johnson Hall Task Force to study how to strengthen Johnson Hall's role as a cultural institution and a community asset. Its work is moving forward productively. Excitement about the possibilities involved in a renovated downtown theater is palpable at task force meetings. To continue this process of collaboration, the Johnson Hall Board of Directors is formally requesting a \$25,000 grant for fiscal year 2004-05.

The City is providing funds in FY 2003-04. Johnson Hall has accomplished a number of the goals set for this period. The foremost purpose, to search for and hire an executive director, has been successful. A search committee advertised for the position and then interviewed a series of applicants. Finalists were then interviewed by a larger search committee, composed of City Council members, City staff, Gardiner Main Street staff, community representatives, and Johnson Hall board members. Judy Lloyd was chosen unanimously by the committee for the new, full-time executive director position. She was hired in January, and began work on February 2. Judy is a highly-qualified professional, with extensive experience in non-profit management, the arts, fundraising, marketing, volunteer recruitment, and financial oversight. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees.

Ms. Lloyd has joined Johnson Hall at a very busy time in programming, and has also been working with the City/Johnson Hall Task Force. In two months, since her hiring, she has planned, managed, and promoted the Teen-Elementary School Shows (Winnie the Pooh) in Pittston and Riverview Schools (also to take place in two more schools in May); the "Alive! At Johnson Hall" concerts on Friday nights in March and continuing in April, which are drawing some of the largest crowds in their history; the very successful Portland Chamber Music Festival concert on March 7; two sold-out "Magic of Books" shows by Open Book Players and Lynn Plourde on March 13; and is now planning future teen band shows, a dance performance, and the Summer Shenanigans Theater and Art camps. Judy has also been developing a signage plan, meeting business and community leaders, helping to develop a programming plan, managing hall rentals, and has been working closely with the City Task Force, providing research and information about other theaters in New England, and possible uses of Johnson Hall for

performances and other arts, as well as business meetings, conferences, retail, and educational operations. She has brought media attention to Gardiner through an article in the *Kennebec Journal*, an interview on Channel 9's "Our Towns" show, an article in Brunswick's *Times Record*, and she will be featured in a *Capital Weekly* article next week.

Johnson Hall is providing its first promised report, a Programming and Marketing Plan for 2004-05, on April 1. This reflects an expanded schedule of new programs serving many segments of the community: children, families, adults, teens, and senior citizens, and continued collaborations with Gardiner Boys and Girls Club, the Rotary Talent Show, the Gardiner Main Street Downtown Celebration, SAD #11, and Open Book Players. (It is clear that Johnson Hall programs and shows already bring hundreds of people into Gardiner. While here, they buy gas, eat at restaurants, and shop at local stores, supporting the local economy.) A new Fundraising and Development plan will follow on May 1. As noted in the October, 2003, request, the Executive Director and the bookkeeper will attend a two-day training on April 21 and 22 in GiftmakerPro, the fundraising software purchased with a grant last summer. Ms. Lloyd attended the Maine Philanthropy Partners conference on March 31 to meet foundation grantmakers and to make connections that often lead to funding proposals. She has also written a grant to the Oak Grove School Foundation for support for the Teen Bands Program (submitted today, April 1). A Building Committee is now re-convening to work on an updated building renovation plan, which we expect to be shaped by the Task Force process.

In the year covered by this funding request, all of Johnson Hall's activities will be informed by the Task Force discussion and recommendations and the City Council's deliberations and decisions. We are strengthening our organization through the hiring of professional staff with expertise and experience, and developing the above-mentioned plans for programs, fundraising, and building renovation. The City's involvement with Johnson Hall is key to helping the organization continue to progress and move toward realizing its potential as an economic boon to the City of Gardiner and a key piece of its economic and cultural development. Of prime importance is the ability to compensate the executive director fairly for full-time work. The City's grant makes this possible. Based on the Task Force report, Johnson Hall will develop appropriate reports to Council. We will provide updated versions of the three plans for next year's budget process.

Thank you again for your support of Johnson Hall Performing Arts Center, a current community asset and potential community jewel. We are delighted to be working in collaboration with City staff and councilors for the strengthening of our city. We welcome your input, and invite you to visit Johnson Hall for a tour if you have not yet done so. Please contact board members or the executive director if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

John D. Shaw, Jr.
President, Board of Directors, Johnson Hall, Inc.

cc: Chris Paszyc, Economic Development Director