



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Metro Arts Commission

Minutes of the Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 17, 2021 12-2:00 p.m.
Metro Southeast Building
Green Hills Auditorium
1417 Murfreesboro Pk.
Nashville, TN 37217

Commissioners Present: Jim Schmidt (Chair), Matia Powell (Vice Chair), Will Cheek (Sec. /Treasurer), Jane Alvis, Dexter Brewer, Bonnie Dow, Clay Haynes, Sheri Nichols Bucy, Marielena Ramos, Paula Roberts, and Campbell West

Commissioners Absent: Ellen Angelico, Marianne Byrd, Hope Stringer, David Jon Walker

Staff: Caroline Vincent, Emily Waltenbaugh, Janine Christiano, Marysa LaRowe, Ian Myers, Grace Wright, Anne-Leslie Owens, Tre Hardin, Atilio Murga

Guests: Derrick Smith (Metro Legal)

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

A. Call to Order & Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 12:09 a.m.

B. Approval of Minutes: May 20, 2021

Chair Schmidt asked if there were any questions or proposed changes to the minutes.

A motion to approve Arts Commission minutes from May 20, 2021 was offered by Commissioner Alvis, Commissioner Dow seconded, and the motion passed.

C. Arts in Action

Emily Waltenbaugh gave the Commission an update on finalized FY21 Thrive projects including:

- Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRCC) Welcoming Mural by Woke3
- Creative Girls Rock Mural with Elisheba Mrozik
- *Andrew, A Boy Called Hair, and the Edgehill Polar Bears Use Their Superpowers to Save Their Community* comic launch and awards ceremony

She also gave the Commission an update on the Art Lending Library:

- The opening receptions for the collections will be:
 - Monday, July 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for the Madison Branch Library
 - Friday, July 30, 6:30-7:30 p.m. for the Southeast Branch Library
- The paintings will be available to borrow at both Madison and Southeast branch libraries starting August 1, 2021.

D. Action Items:

Chair Schmidt asked for a review of the Metro Arts/Arts Commission Cultural Equity Statement at the recommendation of the Committee for Antiracism and Equity given the significant allocations being decided at this meeting of the Arts Commission.

1. FY22 Restorative Arts Awards

Janine Christiano presented the Committee with an overview of the FY22 Restorative Arts applications and the community review panel process:

- The total amount requested was \$136,200.00
- The proposed total award amount: \$113,060.00
- The proposals include the following genres: theatre, dance, writing, visual art, music, performing arts, literary arts
- The proposed hours across the department as follows:
 - Juvenile Detention Center: 408
 - Probation: 42
 - Diversion and Prevention: 334
 - Family and Community Partnership: 10

The Community review panel and staff recommended the following awards:

- **Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC):** Creating Positive Self Identity Through Community
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Probation

- **Hours:** 42 hours
- **Recommended Award:** \$13,050
- **From the Heart:** Music for LIFE Mobile Studio
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Juvenile Detention Center*
 - **Hours:** 100
 - **Recommended Award:** \$14,030
- **Southern Word:** Shaping Identity & Purpose Through Words & Music
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Juvenile Detention Center
 - **Hours:** 62
 - **Recommended Award:** \$15,980
- **Global Education Center:** Passport to Prevention and Recovery
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Juvenile Detention Center; Instruction & Mentorship: Diversion and Prevention*; Family and Community Partnership*
 - **Hours:** 424
 - **Recommended Award:** \$22,500
- **Nashville Repertory Theatre, Inc.:** Building Community through Theatre
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Diversion and Prevention*
 - **Hours:** 70 hours
 - **Recommended Award:** \$22,500
- **Oasis Center**
 - **Funding Category:** Instruction and Mentorship: Diversion and Prevention*
 - **Hours:** 96 hours
 - **Recommended Award:** \$25,000

*Conditional Acceptance

The Commission acknowledged the support expressed by Metro Councilmembers for this program.

Chair Schmidt opened the floor for discussion.

The Commission asked for clarification about applications not funded. Staff clarified that restorative practice elements were missing. If a training program is developed, staff would invite unfunded applicants to participate.

A motion to approve the Restorative Arts FY22 Awards was offered by Commissioner Bucy, Commissioner Ramos seconded, the motion passed. Commissioner Dow abstained due to a conflict of interest.

2. FY22 Grant Allocations

Janine Christiano gave an overview of the FY22 Grants applications process and the applicant requests:

- FY22 grant budget: \$2.4 M
- Total applicant requests: \$5.4 M
- 54 organizations applied for funding; 5 additional arts organizations applied
- 19 organizations had increased requests (35%)
- Proposed award floor of decreases of no more than 10%

Chair Schmidt thanked the Mayor and Metro Council. He noted that there are developing funding challenges that the Arts Commission should consider including an increase in applicants and increases in financial need due to organizational growth. He recommended that the Commission explore ways to increase or establish dedicated funding.

Chair Schmidt thanked Commissioner Bucy and the Grants and Funding Committee for their review and insight.

Commissioner Bucy seconded Chair Schmidt in her concern over the upcoming challenges for arts nonprofits.

The Commission asked for a pause to review the allocations.

The Commission asked for a review of the grants scoring and allocation process. Staff gave an overview of the community panel review process and allocation formulas.

The Commission asked for clarification regarding the 3-year adjudication process for the Basic grant categories. Staff provided an overview of the process. Basic category grantees are scored every three years but each year allocations are adjusted based on request and budget.

The Commission asked for clarification about how much the pandemic influenced the grant allocations this year and whether there has been any accommodations for that taken into the allocation process. There was the suggestion that pre-pandemic data should potentially be adjudicated again given the significant financial and mission-oriented changes to arts nonprofits. Staff did poll Basic grantees about whether they would like to be adjudicated again in FY22 before the application process began, and the majority said they would not. Staff invited the Grants and Funding Committee to review this issue for the FY23 grants process now that there is

some hint of stabilization. It was suggested that staff and the Commission continue to be in conversation with grantees to see what their needs and preferences are in terms of adjudication.

The Commission asked staff about how the proposed allocation percentages compared to historic allocations. Staff responded that the percentages reflected a funding evolution over the years with the goal of funding more smaller organizations while providing stability for larger organizations. The Commission noted that arts organizations are foundational to the city and that their growth is a good sign while also forecasting larger grant requests.

The Commission asked if there had been any decrease in applications or organizations that had not applied. Staff clarified that there was an overall increase in applications but that a few organizations had chosen to withdraw their applications due to organization review and reevaluation.

The Commission asked for clarification on how staff was funding the 10% awards floor. Staff clarified that the allocations were rebalanced in withing the category.

The Commission proposed a review of funding caps, budget calculations, and percentage equations for FY23 allocations with a particular equity and arts-related focus.

A motion to approve the FY22 Grant allocations for the Basic 1 category was offered by Commissioner Dow, Commissioner Alvis seconded, the motion passed. Commissioners Cheek and Brewer abstained due to conflict of interest.

A motion to approve the FY22 Grant allocations for the Basic 2 category was offered by Commissioner Haynes, Commissioner Ramos seconded, the motion passed. Commissioners Cheek, Dow, Alvis, and Roberts abstained due to conflict of interest.

A motion to approve the FY22 Grant allocations for the Basic 3 category was offered by Commissioner West, Commissioner Roberts seconded, the motion passed. Commissioners Alvis, Bucy, and Powell abstained due to conflict of interest.

A motion to approve the FY22 Grant allocations for the Core category was offered by Commissioner Powell, Commissioner Bucy seconded, the motion passed.

3. FY22 Thrive Guidelines

Janine Christiano gave an overview of the Thrive program and the proposed changes to the FY22 Thrive Guidelines:

- The addition of more complete details of the process for applicants
- The switch to 2 focused cycles:
 - Cycle 1 supports projects led by experienced community practice with well-developed partnerships and projects
 - Cycle 2 "Community Practice Artist Incubator" will be focused on emerging artists or artist teams and will provide additional supports and also the opportunity to exhibit with our Metro Parks partner Parthenon West Gallery.

Marysa LaRowe updated the Committee about the public art-specific changes to the FY22 Thrive Guidelines including:

- Defining "Public Art": For the purposes of Thrive, public art is defined as a **temporary artwork that exists in a public space (accessible to the general public)**, including privately owned property such as a local business or organization."
- Providing a clearer overview of process and timeline for Thrive Public Art projects
- Defining lifespan of Public Art Projects: "**Thrive funds are intended to support the creation and maintenance of public artworks with a lifespan of no more than 18 months.** No additional Metro Arts funding is provided beyond this 18-month lifespan window."

Chair Schmidt asked if there were any questions or discussion.

The Commission noted the evolution of the program over the years and appreciated the conversations about making sure that all the targeted recipients are included.

The Commission suggested the review be an ongoing annual process. It was additionally suggested that this could be applied to other programs like Grants and Restorative Arts. Staff agreed and noted that there were human resource limitations this year but that staff is working on a draft Equity Lens to help in these reviews.

A motion to approve the FY22 Thrive Guidelines was offered by Commissioner Cheek, Commissioner Brewer seconded, and the motion passed.

E. Executive Director's Report

Caroline Vincent gave the Commission updates on the following programs:

- Racial Equity in Arts Leadership (REAL)
- Opportunity NOW
- Diversity in Arts Leadership (DIAL)

She updated the Commission on the Metro Council budget approval. The budget included funding for additional positions as well as an increase to the Restorative Arts budget with particular thanks to Councilmember Suara and the Minority Caucus.

She updated the Commission on a proposal for American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for the Mayor's Office at their request. The proposal will cover a number of avenues for supporting the arts in Nashville including operating support for organizations, support for artists and creatives, community investments in healing, and investments in affordable housing and cultural space for artists and creatives. Additionally, the guidelines reference addressing communing violence and youth employment so there could potentially be further funds for the Restorative Arts program.

In addition to ARP funding, guidelines for NEA funding for arts organizations will be published soon. While Metro Arts is very appreciative of the general fund budget, the department is continuing to look for as much external funding as possible to support recovering arts organizations.

F. Adjourn Meeting

Chair Schmidt announced that he had appointed Commissioner Powell to Chair the Strategic Planning & Funding Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m.