

Metro Arts Commission
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
June 21, 2018
Metro Office Building 2nd floor, Davidson Conference Room
800 2nd Avenue South, Nashville

Attending Commissioners: Jane Alvis, Toby Compton, Jackie Daniel, Manuel Delgado, Bonnie Dow, Dr. Ruth Ross Edmonds, Mohamed-Shukri Hassan, Danielle McDaniel, Marielena Ramos, Jim Schmidt and Hope Stringer

Absent Commissioners: Niki Coffman, Clay Haynes, Larry Keeton and Marcus Whitney

Staff: Caroline Vincent, Rebecca Kinslow, Ian Myers, Lauren Fitzgerald, Tré Hardin, Anne-Leslie Owens, Van Maravalli, Laurel Fisher, Olusola Tribble, Malia Marcella and Emily Waltenbaugh

Guests: Carly Elliot (Metro Legal) and Alandis Brassel (Arts and Business Council; Member of the Antiracism Transformation Team)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary/Treasurer Edmonds called the June meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

B. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion to approve minutes from the May 17, 2018 meeting was offered by Commissioner Schmidt, seconded by Commissioner Compton, and the motion passed.

C. CONSENT AGENDA (ACTION)

Items on the consent agenda were as follows:

- The Scarf Project – Keep Shop Agreement
- Farmers' Market public Art Project Location and Budget
- THRIVE projects

A motion to approve all three items on the consent agenda was offered by Commissioner Ramos, seconded by Commissioner Alvis, and the motion passed.

UPDATE

Before moving on to the next item on the agenda, Interim Director Caroline Vincent gave some quick updates. Vincent reported that an agency wide google calendar has been created and will be a great tool for keeping track of events and happenings agency wide moving forward.

Vincent also reported that a calendar invitation for November 9th would be sent to the board for the upcoming board retreat.

Vincent reported that Learning Lab received recognition at the Americans for the Arts conference as one of the best public art projects in the country in the Public Art Network Year in Review awards.

D. GRANTS DISCUSSION AND ALLOCATIONS (ACTION)

- Funding Philosophy

After collecting conflicts of interest forms, Grants Manager Laurel Fisher reported that all FY19 grant applications were submitted in March of this year, each was checked for eligibility, and reviewed in community panels. Fisher reminded the board of the complete overhaul of the grants program in FY18 which identified points of improvement. This is reflected in the current funding philosophy which is a three year review process for Basic Operating Support recipients. FY19 is year two for this category, meaning Basic Operating Support applicants did a reverification this year instead of a full application. Fiscal year 2021 will be the next time grantees in this category are fully reviewed. Fisher also pointed out that Metro Arts' investment goes beyond money and gives broader support and guidance to all applicants.

- FY19 Applicants

Fisher reported that applicants this year were strong. The revised scoring rubric this year improved the quality of responses regarding grantee community engagement. Many applicants have participated in the Racial Equity in Arts Leadership program. She also reported that the applicant pool is growing with four new applicants for FY19.

- FY19 Panelists

Fisher reported that the panelists were strong as well. There were 26 volunteer reviewers representing 18 districts. Fifty percent were first time panelists, and fifty percent identify as people of color. Five panelists had gone through the REAL program and seven had participated in Crossroads two and a half day antiracism training. Each of six panels had at least one panelist with anti-racism training.

Commissioner Ramos shared that she had noticed a difference in the questions asked by panelists this year and that they were more intentional than ever. Commissioner McDaniel agreed.

- Funding Philosophy Continued

Fisher shared pie charts comparing the distribution of funds in FY13 to the proposed funding for FY19. Metro Arts has been receiving national attention for this impressive change in distribution. Fisher explained that has come about because of an intentional commitment to adjusting this distribution over time.

- FY19 Allocations Spreadsheet

Fisher passed out a copy of the proposed FY19 grant allocations with the scenario considered and voted on by the Grants Committee at their June 18, 2018 meeting. She then explained its layout.

Commissioner Compton asked for clarification on cases where a funding request had been filled for FY18 but not in FY19. Fisher explained that this was due to an applicant's failure to submit a reverification application for FY19.

- Discussion

After explaining the spreadsheet, Fisher reported that concerns had come up about funding a project in the Creation Project category, requested from OZ Arts for "The Papalagui." Because of this concern, a second scenario was made in the case that the commission decided that the OZ Arts creation project not be funded.

Community and Organizational Development Director Rebecca Kinslow explained that OZ Arts' proposal for a performance called, "The Paapalagui," was based off of a controversial book representing Samoan culture that has been debunked as fictional. She reported that if the board were to vote according to the grant committee's proposal, which took place prior to this information coming to light, it would require adding stipulations to the project to ensure that its themes are approached ethically. Kinslow reminded the board that no other applicants have had the opportunity to make changes and further explain their application after the panel meeting. Community and Organizational Development Coordinator, Olusola Tribble, aided in the discussion.

The following is a summary of the discussion that took place:

- Commissioner Alvis and Commissioner Schmidt asked to hold off on looking at the second scenario so that the board had time to discuss.
- Alvis showed concern for this being a slippery slope of censoring grantees and taking away from the voice of the citizen panel.
- Fisher shared that the issue was in the integrity of what was shared in the application versus what the actual material would be. She shared that significant research and discussion with the community was not a part of OZ Arts' process.
- Commissioner Dow asked if they had shared the story as an anthropologic account to which Tribble answered "yes."
- Tribble shared that through the book the author is appropriating his idea of the Samoan culture.
- Dow asked if they are treating the story as history.
- Kinslow shared that OZ Arts had stated the account was historical on their application and on their website description.
- Tribble and Kinslow reported that OZ Arts was aware of the controversy but did not disclose that in the application or panel review.
- Secretary/Treasurer Edmonds felt they should not fund anything controversial in this way.

- Dow asked if the play was to be a critical approach of this viewing of the Samoan culture.
- Kinslow answered no and shared that it was unclear how OZ Arts was going to tell this story without offending members of the Samoan community and other communities.
- Commissioner Daniel asked if the concern was their failure to disclose the controversy of the content in the application.
- Kinslow and Fisher answered yes.
- Commissioner McDaniel shared her concern for historical misrepresentation.
- Commissioner Delgado shared his concern for imposing beliefs about a culture that are simply not true.
- Secretary/Treasurer Edmonds expressed concern for the public paying for the perpetuation of stereotypes.
- Commissioner Hassan shared concern for this project telling a story that the Samoan community deems untrue. He felt that OZ Arts could have avoided this if they were paired with an organization representing the Samoan community. He offered that situations like this could be avoided if Metro Arts could pair the grantee applicant with appropriate organizations in the community who could inform the art.
- Delgado responded that although it would be a great idea, it takes away from the purpose of Metro Arts. He felt that in this situation OZ Arts was responsible to have sought out those community partnerships.
- Schmidt questioned if it might be a learning opportunity for OZ Arts if the project did get funding.
- Edmonds posed that they could come back next year with a rethought project.
- McDaniel shared that there is a possibility here for stipulations but that in a case like this it would be hard to oversee and measure.
- Daniel asked in what form the applicant used the word "historical." She mentioned the possibility of the story being historical fiction, a form of art. She suggested that if it were historical fiction and had accuracy in that way, the story should be told.
- Edmonds mentioned equivalency to using black face to which Tribble agreed.
- Fisher shared that OZ Arts will still be a grantee in the form of Basic Operating Support and asked the board to think if they want Metro Arts' name on this project specifically.
- Tribble shared that the project description on the OZ website had been changed from the day before.
- McDaniel mentioned the conflict that it would not be the project that was presented to the panel.
- Delgado asked why Intersection would lose its funding in the Creation Project Category in the second scenario.
- Fisher explained that this is because the difference of scores between one project to the next makes the cut off happen before Intersection.

- Kinslow also mentioned how this change would bring more organizations in to the pool of Core Operating Support.
- Edmonds asked for a motion to be brought forth.
- Fisher shared that a scenario must be chosen first and then the allocations will need to be voted on by category.
- The board chose to vote on the second scenario that did not include funding for the OZ Arts creation project.

FY18 Basic Operating Support Awards (ACTIONS 1, 2 and 3)

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Basic 1 Operating Support category was offered by Commissioner Ramos, seconded by Commissioner Delgado, and the motion passed with Commissioner Stringer abstaining.

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Basic 2 Operating Support category was offered by Commissioner McDaniel, seconded by Commissioner Compton, and the motion passed with Commissioner Dow, Commissioner Schmidt, Commissioner Stringer and Commissioner Alvis abstaining.

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Basic 3 Operating Support category was offered by Commissioner Schmidt, seconded by Commissioner Compton, and the motion passed with Commissioner Alvis and Commissioner McDaniel abstaining.

Core Operating Support (ACTION 4)

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Core Operating Support category was offered by Commissioner Ramos, seconded by Commissioner Dow.

Creation Project Support (ACTION 5)

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Creation Project Support category was offered by Commissioner McDaniel, seconded by Commissioner Delgado with Commissioner Stringer abstaining.

Catalyst Project Support (ACTION 6)

Fisher explained that there were two contingencies in the Catalyst Project category. The panel suggested that there be monitoring of both the Nashville Symphony and Actors Bridge Ensemble as both projects will be addressing issues of equity in the arts. The panel was clear that, if funded, contingencies should be put in place.

The following is a summary of the discussion that took place:

- Schmidt asked for clarification on funding \$17,000 for Crossroads training.
- Fisher responded that it would go to paying the Crossroads consulting fees and a portion of staff wages for this mandatory training.

- Delgado shared that the Grants Committee had agreed that it was important that their employees get compensated.
- Schmidt expressed concern for public funding being used to pay wages.
- McDaniel shared that these concerns had been seen but that the project did fit this year's definition of Catalyst as it is important to have staff participation in the process of shifting organizational culture.
- Ramos shared that the Grants Committee has agreed that they need to redefine this grant for next year to add more clarity.

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Catalyst Project Support category with contingencies was offered by Commissioner McDaniel, seconded by Commissioner Delgado with Commissioner Alvis abstaining.

Youth Arts and Arts Access Project Support (ACTION 7)

A motion to approve FY19 recommended grant awards for applicants in the Youth Arts and Arts Access Project Support categories was offered by Commissioner Delgado, seconded by Commissioner Ramos with Commissioner Alvis abstaining.

McDaniel shared appreciation for Fisher's work to help them make a thoughtful decision.

E. ANTIRACISM TRANSFORMATION TEAM UPDATE AND EQUITY DISCUSSION

Kinslow acknowledged the board for their conversation at May's Commission Meeting. She shared that Antiracism Transformation Team (ARTt) had held open office hours and thanked Schmidt and Compton for attending. She shared that they are planning a conference call for the board with Crossroads. One on one meetings will continue to be made available to commissioners and the dates of the upcoming training days will be shared soon. Kinslow also announced that space is being created in staff meetings for further equity/antiracism discussions.

F. NEW BUSINESS

- Learning Lab

Vincent reported that Metro Art's Learning Lab was recently honored as one of the Public Art Network Year in Review awards best public art projects in the country at the Americans for the Arts Conference. A press release was provided in the Commission meeting packets.

- Build Better Tables

Vincent reported that programming for Build Better Tables is continuing and has gone well so far.

- Budget

Commissioner Stringer asked for an update on the budget to which Vincent reported that Metro Arts will receive a flat budget in FY19 with no budget cuts.

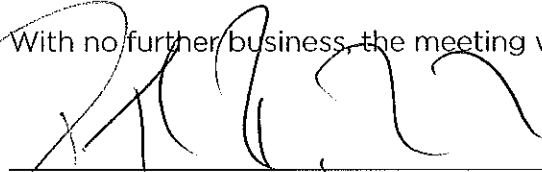
Vincent reported that Council communications will continue and happen year round to share our impact. Vincent thanked Emily for her hard work in telling Metro Arts' story.

- Congratulations to Delgado

Schmidt congratulated Delgado on recently becoming a part of 2018-19 Leadership Nashville's 2018-2019 class.

G. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:24 PM.



Dr. Ruth Ross Edmonds (Secretary/Treasurer)

7-19-18
Date

