

**Minutes  
Council Meeting  
December 2, 2021  
9:00 a.m.**

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts  
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS:** Chair Parks, Mr. Alaquiva, Mr. Astorino, Representative Ciresi, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Gunderson, Representative Labs, Mr. Lehr, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Mr. West, Ms. Zaborney

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Catzie Vilayphonh, Tim Warfield.

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TEAMS:** Karl Blischke, Executive Director; Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director; Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning; Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration; Amy Bantz, Director of Access to the Creative Sector, Norah Johnson, Director of Public Awareness & External Affairs; Laura Kline, Executive Assistant; Sarah Merritt, Director of Creative Communities; Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage; and, Ian Rosario, Grants Liaison.

**GUESTS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS:** Rodney Akers, Chief Counsel

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER:** Karl Blischke, Executive Director, welcomed those in attendance and informed them that the meeting would be recorded for the administrative purpose of minute taking. Mr. Blischke then turned the meeting over to Chair Parks.

Chair Parks provided some general instructions for the virtual meeting and asked Executive Director Karl Blischke to call the roll.

**ROLL CALL:**

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established.

Chair Parks provided instructions on requests for public comments.

**ITEM 2: REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Chair Parks asked if the PCA received any requests for public comments. There were no requests for public comments.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

*Jeff Parks, Chair*

Chair Parks reminded the Council of the PCA's Conflict of Interest Policy.

**ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**October 7, 2021, Regular Council Meeting:**

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the October 7, 2021, Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 4 ACTION: Recommendation for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Grants**

*Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration*

Ms. Gabriele reported in that at the July 2021 meeting, Council approved the application guidelines for the federal ARP Act through which the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) received \$936,200 via the National Endowment for the Arts to support Pennsylvania arts organizations and programs affected by the spread of COVID-19.

Ms. Gabriele explained that through this action, guidelines were approved that provided one-time grant support to all Fiscal Year 2021-2022 awardees of the PCA's Arts Organizations & Arts Programs (AOAP) Track, Entry Track, or Preserving Diverse Cultures Strategies for Success Program (Intermediate or Advanced Level) who submit timely and complete applications and are able to meet the grant and federal reporting requirements. Gabriele added that Council also provided that grant amounts would depend on the number of eligible applications received, with all grantees receiving the same grant amount.

Ms. Gabriele stated that based on available federal funds, PCA staff recommends that Council approve each applicant for a \$3,671.37 grant and further recommends that awardees be required to sign their grant award agreements within 45 days of receipt from the PCA.

Ms. Gabriele explained that the goal is to process grant award agreements and subsequent grant payments as soon as possible and identify any awardees not able to accept the awards. She added that in the event that some awardees are unable to accept their awards, PCA will propose additional distribution options for Council's consideration during a future meeting.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the list of eligible can be found in the council book.

Chair Parks asked for any other addition questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Mr. Gabel made a motion to approve the recommendations. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 5 ACTION: Recommendations for Creative Communities Initiative Grant**

*Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities*

Chair Parks stated that he is aware of the following conflict of interest: Council Member West for Rivers of Steel.

Ms. Merritt reminded Council that the Creative Communities Initiative (CCI) was approved by Council in 2019 to support the PCA's strategic plan. Merritt stated that the program has been extremely successful in attracting over 160 letters of interest and hundreds of inquiries about the program. She explained that this heightened interest coupled with the program's modest budget allocation makes CCI very competitive.

Ms. Merritt stated that because of this, PCA staff recommend that Council allocate \$100,000 of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 waiver funds to offer additional grant awards to CCI applicants that demonstrated strong commitment to arts- based strategies for community development and received favorable review by the selection panel. Ms. Merritt explained that supporting additional applicants builds greater awareness of and participation in CCI and the Council's strategic plan.

Ms. Merritt stated that supported community projects may qualify for ongoing participation in CCI going forward based on their activities supported by these grant awards.

Ms. Merritt explained that the proposed use of funds would be five grants of \$7,000 to the five creative communities (listed below) that advanced to the application phase but did not get selected for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 grant cycle due to our program budget limitations.

- Lewisburg Community Partnership, Union County
- Berwick Arts Fund, Columbia County
- ARC Human Services, Washington County
- Barrio Alegria, Berks County
- GPAC/Arts Excursions, Allegheny County

Ms. Merritt stated that PCA staff is also recommending 18 grants of \$3,500 and explained that a list of the potential grantees is listed on the second page of the memo in the council book. Ms. Merritt stated that these organizations each received a favorable review by the panel but were not selected to advance to the application phase.

Ms. Merritt explained that these grant awards will support community engagement, visioning and planning activities; community asset mapping; and planning and execution of a community-designed and driven art project (temporary or permanent) that is part of the larger CCI project identified in the letter of interest.

Ms. Gunderman asked what the dollar figure be for an organization that received the full grant.

Ms. Merritt explained that CCI is a multi-year program for up to four years and each organization receives up to \$25,000 per year. Merritt added that all of the current organizations are planning on staying in the program for all four years.

Ms. Gunderman asked if this happens every two years and asked if Council should be allocating more to the Creative Communities program.

Ms. Merritt replied that because this is a waiver fund, that currently this is a one-time grant.

Mr. Blischke stated that the PCA's intent is to build interest in the program. He added that PCA staff has had conversations within state government about this program and the need for additional resources. Blischke added that one of the program's selling points is that a critical mass of interest is being built.

Chair Parks stated that the CCI is the lead program that demonstrates the support of communities, and it has generated a lot of interest in the Governor's office as well as with members of the legislature. Parks added that he is hopeful that the program will be receiving more revenue in support of developing more creative communities and stated that this will allow communities to develop interest and get more communities to apply for this program.

Ms. Goldberg stated that the addition of more communities is exciting. Goldberg added that she is interested in seeing how the program is growing and thanked Ms. Merritt for her hard work.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any additional questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendations as presented except for the conflicts of interest. Chair Parks asked to let the record show that Council Member West did not make a motion, second a motion, participate in any discussion or vote on the recommendation of Council with which the council member has a conflict of interest.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Gunderson seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation for the grant with which Council Members West has a conflict of interest. Chair Parks asked to let the record show that Council Member West did not make the motion, second the motion, participate in any discussion on this motion or vote on this motion.

Mr. Stull made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 6 ACTION: Recommendations for Creative Catalyst Grant**

*Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning*

Ms. Dunlap directed Council to the memo in the Council book that lists recommendation for the Creative Catalyst Grants for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the applicant is The Enterprise Center for Community Development (TED-CDC), an organization that is based in Philadelphia. Dunlap explained that this organization wants to develop a toolkit for creative art entrepreneurs and small business that will provide a three-pronged approach:

1. Providing folks with best practices with online digital components.
2. Providing access to resources related to Coronavirus relief funds.
3. Providing one on one virtual assistance related to business coaching and technology matters.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this toolkit will be disseminated in the Philadelphia region and added that the TED-CDC plans on working with existing community development organizations across the state. Dunlap added that the toolkit will be shared with these organizations and will be shared with BIPOC organizations across the state

Dunlap explained that with support from PCA the TEC-CDC plans to produce a creative business tool kit that can be disseminated for use across PA through new and already existing economic development partners with TEC-CDC; provide 40 creative businesses, with a focus on BIPOC entrepreneurs, with business technical assistance, including workshops, 1:1 virtual consultancy; and connect creative businesses with best practices and resources.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this aligns with PCA's community development work and PCA's Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program.

Ms. Dunlap stated that TEC-CDC is requesting \$10,000 and PCA staff is recommending \$10,000.

Ms. Goldberg asked if the information that will be provided will be different from what is already out there and if the information will be provided online. She also asked if there will be coaching and what the cost will be to the organization that is requesting assistance.

Ms. Dunlap replied that it will all be online and that is how TEC-CDC is able to provide the toolkit to their economic development organizations across the state.

Ms. Dunlap added that TED-CDC is currently providing Coronavirus related resources and they will continue to update it with a focus on economic development aspects. The toolkit will provide additional resources and tools to help with e-commerce development and strategies.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the TED-CDC will also provide one-on-one consultation which is unlimited, and which will be on an as needed basis.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this initiative has an economic development focus and gave the Lehigh Valley Arts Council as an example of TED-CDC's work assisting creative entrepreneurs. Dunlap explained that TED-CDC is a player that hopes to provide unique opportunities to creative small businesses and will provide Council with more information as it develops.

Ms. Goldberg asked if organizations need any criteria in order to receive help.

Ms. Dunlap explained that they do not need to complete an application and that the online toolkit will be free of charge and available to anyone.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any additional questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Gunderson seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 7 ACTION: Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Funding**

*Amie Bantz, Director of Access to the Creative Sector*

Ms. Bantz reported that during February 2020 Council meeting, staff proposed the idea of providing support for creative entrepreneurs in alignment with the PCA's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

Ms. Bantz stated that during the December 2020 Council meeting, staff recommended that Council approve implementation of the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program using \$577,260 previously allocated for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts project grants.

Ms. Bantz reminded Council that the purpose of the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator (CEA) Program is to support Pennsylvania's creative entrepreneurs to grow their business, audience, and revenue.

Ms. Bantz stated that since October 2021, ten of PCA's PPA Partners have launched the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program and four will be launching the program by November 29, 2021. Bantz added that there has been a large influx of applications.

Ms. Bantz stated that Since October 10, all of the partners were able to roll out the program and as of earlier this week. All 14 have successfully rolled out the CEA program and it is live.

Ms. Bantz stated that PCA staff recommends that Council approve use of 2021-2022 funds in the total sum of \$367,171 to support additional applicants to the program. She explained that partners have expressed a need for additional, immediate funding as they anticipate receiving an influx of applications within the first few months of program implementation. Ms. Bantz added that this requested amount has been calculated based on per capita support, with each region receiving \$0.03 per capita with a minimum of \$15,000 and maximum of \$75,000 in funding.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendations. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 8 ACTION: Community Engagement Request for Proposals (RFP)**

*Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage*

Ms. Payne reported that the Community Engagement Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed in alignment with a recommendation from the Council's Committee to Review the Funding Formula Report. Ms. Payne stated that this report recommended that the PCA identify and build relationships with under-served and under-resourced constituencies through the support of the work of qualified organizations, including non-arts organizations, who serve as essential connectors, especially in areas where formal arts organizations do not exist.

Ms. Payne reported that funds to support this initiative would be allocated from Fiscal Year 2020-2021 waiver funds. Ms. Payne stated that PCA staff recommends that Council approve the following RFP guidelines for accepting proposals for the development of engagement models and best practices for reaching under-served and under-resourced constituencies to increase access to the arts.

Ms. Payne stated that PCA Staff may recommend up to four applicants with an award of \$25,000 each. Ms. Payne added that the proposed guidelines are outlined in the memo in the Council book.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Gunderson seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 9 ACTION: Transitions from Preserving Diverse Cultures Division**

*Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage*

Ms. Payne stated that Strategies for Success is a multi-year, multi-level capacity-building program offered by the Preserving Diverse Cultures Division and explained that the program addresses and supports organizational development and stability for BIPOC organizations through implementation awards, technical assistance, long-term consultation, and professional development workshops and conferences.

Ms. Payne explained that participation in the program is based on three (3) levels of organizational readiness - Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. She stated that funding at each level is dependent on panel and staff recommendations and an annual evaluation. Ms. Payne explained that participating organizations may receive funding at the Basic and Intermediate levels for up to four (4) years each and up to three (3) years at the Advanced level.

Ms. Payne PCA staff recommends that council approve the transition of Hill Dance Academy theater and the Legacy Arts project from strategies for success to the Arts Organizations and Arts Program (AOAP) track, which provides ongoing general operating support.

Ms. Payne stated that Usiloquy Dance Designs has exhausted eligibility at the Intermediate level and is not eligible to proceed to the Advanced level of Strategies for Success due to not meeting the average annual income requirement. Ms. Payne explained that PCA staff recommends that Council approves the organization to transition from Strategies for Success to PA Partners in the Arts (PPA) Program Stream.

Ms. Goldberg asked if Usiloquy Dance Designs would have been approved if it had not been for their financial success and because her understanding is that they are a quality organization.

Ms. Payne stated that this organization met every criteria except for the financial requirement. Ms. Payne explained that each year she meets with each organization to help guide their progress and added that sometimes a different viewpoint is helpful. Payne stated that at times, some sense of organizational stability is also needed, so maybe that means that hiring a development consultant would be helpful.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any questions. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Vice Chair Gabel made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 10 INFORMATION: American Rescue Plan (ARP) Grant Survey**

*Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services and Ian Rosario, Grants Liaison*

Mr. Poppy reported that PCA staff collected impact data for the sector as a whole in order to follow trends in the sector and created an impact survey. Mr. Poppy stated that data development used by Ian Rosario was used for the development of the survey.

Mr. Poppy stated that applicants were asked to look at their revenue using data development by Ian Rosario. Mr. Poppy explained that applicants looked at their revenue and were also asked to provide an overview or snapshot. Mr. Poppy explained that PCA staff saw a trend where 40 percent of the applicants reported that they had a 25% decrease in revenue. Poppy stated that a higher percentage remained even. He explained that there were incremental changes but stated that there are signs that recovery is beginning to happen.

Mr. Poppy stated that there are plans to include this survey as part of the AOAP application. He explained that within that group, there are much smaller rural organizations and much larger urban organizations.

Mr. Rosario stated that the main components of this survey will be part of the application moving forward. He explained that currently, this is just a look at the ARP applicants and that PCA staff is currently in the process of surveying AOAP applicants.

Mr. Blischke stated that the survey is a streamlined and quick information gathering tool. He added that those who fill out applications will get a state of the sector annual report.

Ms. Gunderson asked Mr. Rosario if there is a way to reduce the double counting of those results by simply asking the participants if they've already completed it as part of another process.

Mr. Rosario stated that the overlap will only occur right now with the ARP application and explained that since PCA does not expect another ARP application, moving forward, the survey will be given only to the AOAP applications.

Ms. Goldberg asked if it would be possible to get a copy of the questions.

Mr. Rosario stated that he will provide a link of the form with the questions.

Mr. Poppy stated that PCA staff wanted to make sure the survey was not an administrative burden and is a quick way of selecting where people are.

Mr. Blischke thanked Mr. Poppy and Mr. Rosario for their work on their project. He thinks the information gathered in these surveys will help PCA to create an annual report that can be provided to the applicants.

**ITEM 11 INFORMATION: Arts Community Conversations**

*Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services*

Mr. Poppy stated that PCA staff is planning on beginning a series of arts community conversations at the start of the new year.

Mr. Poppy explained that prior to pandemic, the number one thing that people asked for is opportunities to convene to network, share and learn. Poppy stated that during the pandemic, PCA conducted community conversations with different artistic disciplines.

These conversations were a virtual show and tell event designed to provide arts organizations with the chance to share their story with the PCA, council members and each other in a way that they are not able to as part of the grants process. Poppy added that these events are a great opportunity for PCA to reach out to see what is going on and ask arts organizations to share in a voluntary manner.

Mr. Poppy asked Council members to contact him if interested in participating in these meetings.

Ms. Goldberg asked if these will be more than just a conversation and asked if the arts organizations would be permitted to show videos of vignettes.

Mr. Poppy replied that the main feature is the ability of these arts organizations to present a vignette, working with a four-minute time slot. The organizations will be given four minutes to present with the hope of getting creative and interesting responses. Mr. Poppy added that the organizations would hopefully be able to repurpose these vignettes and come up with a tool to share and celebrate what is going on.

Chair Parks thanked Mr. Poppy and stated that he is excited to hear more about this initiative.

**ITEM 12: Chair's Report**

*Jeffrey Parks, Chair*

Chair Parks took a moment to publicly recognize Andy Mathis of NEA who is retiring. He stated that Andy is a longtime friend and colleague of the PCA and is retiring after 24 years of state and regional partnerships. Parks stated that the PCA will miss her breadth of knowledge and dedication to state arts agencies.

Chair Parks discussed a recent article that reported that attendance at movie theater is down 50% still from the same period in 2019. He explained that the financial viability of movie theaters is truly in question and is sure that is reflected in what's happening in many of our arts organizations, as well.

Chair Parks stated that he is hoping there will be an opportunity to gather in person during the next year. He added that regardless of what is decided, virtual attendance will be allowed.

Parks reported that there will be a Governors Awards for the Arts in September of 2022 and work is being done to set up a date and time.

Mr. Alaquiva asked when will the nominations for the Governors Awards go out.

Mr. Blischke stated that Heather Doughty and Norah Johnson will be having a meeting on that presently and that a public release should be coming out soon.

Mr. Alaquiva stated that he would be happy to help.

**ITEM 18: Executive Director's Report**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke stated that he had positive news to report. He reported that a few months ago, Council authorized an arts and arts resilience for health care worker award in partnership with the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania (HAP.) Blischke explained that the award put together a large-scale partnership of bringing music therapy to front line health care workers.

Blischke thanked Mr. Gabriele and Ms. Dunlap for the phenomenal job in putting this together and reported that he is excited to say HAP has moved very quickly and has identified initial starting locations for the following front line health care workers: Einstein Medical Center, Jefferson Health, Penn State Hershey, Pottstown Hospital and Temple University Hospital.

Mr. Blischke commended PCA staff for its work putting all partners together for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator program. Blischke explained that this doubled the number of partners that the PCA works with that that the program is drawing attention. Blischke stated that he recently spoke with York County Economic Alliance and stated that not only are they supporting the program, but they will also provide services and will bring in additional investment. Blischke added that the York Country Economic Alliance brought this program to the foreground and that it really gives great visibility for the PCA.

Mr. Blischke reported that the National Endowment for the Arts made two extraordinary awards important to Pennsylvania. Blischke explained that two of PCA's PPA partners received grants from the NEA to re-grant in their region. Blischke stated that this is the first-time regrating funds came into Pennsylvania other than from the PCA. Blischke reported that the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council received \$500,000 to re-grant and Erie Arts and Culture received \$250,000 to re-grant.

Blischke stated that he is happy to give good news and is hoping to have more good news to share and hopeful of seeing everybody in person next year.

Chair Parks thanked those who participated in the meeting and stated that hopefully, the pandemic conditions will allow Council to gather personally soon.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.