

**Minutes  
Council Meeting  
March 10, 2022  
9:00 a.m.**

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts  
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS:** Chair Parks, Mr. Astorino, Representative Ciresi, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Ms. Vilayphonh, Mr. Warfield, Ms. Zaborney

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Mr. Alaquiva, Ms. Gunderson (proxy), Representative Labs, Mr. Lehr, Mr. West (proxy)

**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; Norah Johnson, Director of Public Awareness & External Affairs; Laura Kline, Executive Assistant; Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector; 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. Parks introduced Amanda Lovell, a new staff member.

**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**

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

**ITEM 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**December 2, 2022, Regular Council Meeting:**

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the December 10, 2022, 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:** Recommendations for Statewide Services: Engaging Under-Resourced and/or Under-Represented Artists, Organizations and Communities  
*Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage*

Chair Parks stated that is aware of the following Conflict of Interest: Council Member Gunderson for the Appel Center for the Performing Arts. Chair Parks noted that Ms. Gunderson is not present at the meeting, so two separate votes will not be needed.

Ms. Payne reported that in December of 2021, Council approved Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines for accepting proposals for the development of engagement models and best practices for reaching underserved and under resourced constituencies to increase access to arts.

Ms. Payne stated that 12 proposals were received in response to the RFP, and these were reviewed based upon published criteria which include quality and responsiveness of the project design, implementation plan and proposed budget, the degree to which the proposal advances PCA's cross cutting value of diversity, equity and inclusion and demonstrable expertise proven by the applicant's experience and applicable credentials.

Ms. Payne reported that PCA staff recommends the following four proposals for funding at \$25,000 each for a total of \$100,000. She also provided a brief overview of each proposal:

1. Appel Center for Performing Arts York County: Ms. Payne stated that this is to build upon a five-year plan of learning and community engagement focusing on a commitment to build deeper and more meaningful connections in the areas of K-12 education, public programs, social impact, and community partnerships.
2. Community partnerships RC&D located in Lewistown in Mifflin County will work with their own Latinx outreach specialist, a volunteer outreach specialist, and a community farm initiative volunteer Neustras Voces. Ms. Payne stated that is a project to engage and strengthen access for an underserved and under resourced community of Latinx people in the Juniata Valley area.
3. Genesis Collective located in Monica in Beaver County. Ms. Payne stated that this organization will launch a media institute that will teach media production skills to under resourced and underrepresented youth located in Beaver County.
4. Women's Coalition for Empowerment located in Philadelphia. Ms. Payne stated that this organization plans to launch the art economic empowerment initiative which is an integration of applied entrepreneurship technology and creative workforce development proficiencies and placement within the art sector.

Ms. Payne stated that a list of all the applicants is located on the last page of the memo and added that PCA staff recommends that Council approve the four proposals for funding at \$25,000 each for a total of \$100,000.

Representative Ciresi thanked Ms. Payne for her report and stated that every program that was discussed is important in underserved communities. Representative Ciresi stated that he would like to see results for the programs and services that are provided by the PCA. Ciresi explained that as requests are made for more money for this Council, it is important to communicate the results. Representative Ciresi indicated that he wants to see a report from the grantees on attendance and economic impact.

Ms. Payne stated that with this project, she will be meeting with the grantees quarterly to check in and see how projects are progressing. Payne also stated that all PCA grantees required to provide a final report and explained that she could provide these final reports to Rep Ciresi.

Chair Parks stated that the PCA has an opportunity to use a digital platform to get its word out in a better way and that includes a YouTube channel where PCA could post digital reports from these projects. He added that this includes blogs or other things that can be placed on the website. Chair Parks stated that PCA's new Prism podcast is an excellent example of how the Council can get out its word and its work. Parks agreed that PCA needs to get out get more exposure in the media and that we can devote resources to these digital platforms and get the word out in a much more successful fashion.

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

Chair Parks let the record show that while he has the proxy of Council Member Gunderson, he will not be exercising that proxy for this vote.

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

**ACTION ITEM 5 ACTION:** Recommendations for Long-Term Residencies  
*Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning*

Chair Parks stated that he is aware of a conflict noted by Vice Chair Gabel with the Adams County Arts Council.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the Long-Term Residencies Panel met on February 24, 2022, and she explained that the Long-Term Residencies are taking PCA's standard arts in education residency model and expanding them to be 60 days in length. Ms. Dunlap stated that these residencies can take place in school or community settings and can work with a variety of constituents, from students, veterans, and other community members.

Ms. Dunlap reported that during the panel that met on February 24, 2022, the panelists used a 90-point scale that is listed in the Council memo. She explained the criteria used to review the 13 total applications and that all the applicants are listed on the table found in the memo.

Ms. Dunlap explained that PCA staff is recommending funding 8 of the 13 applications for a total of \$111,200. Ms. Dunlap added that a list of the four panelists who reviewed the applications are also included in the Council memo.

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 conflict of interest. Chair Parks asked to let the record show that Council member Gabel did not make a motion, second a motion or participate in any discussion or vote on the recommendation with which the Council member has a conflict of interest.

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

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendations of those grants with which Council member Gabel has a conflict of interest. Chair Parks asked to let the record show that Council member Gabel did not make this motion, second this motion or participate in any discussion of this motion or vote on this motion.

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

**ITEM 6 ACTION:** Recommendations for Creative Communities Initiative  
*Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities*

Ms. Merritt reported that during the December 2021 Council meeting, Council approved the allocation of FY 2021 waiver funds in amount of \$100,000 to provide grants to Creative Communities' applicants that demonstrated a strong commitment to their proposed project. Ms. Merritt explained that subsequent to Council approval, staff identified that some of the applicants had applied under a doing business as (dba)name rather than their legal name.

Ms. Merritt explained that to ensure timely execution of grant contracts and grant payments, PCA staff is requesting that Council approve the following corrections to grantee organization names to reflect their legal names.

- Lewisburg Downtown Partnership Inc.
- Central Susquehanna Community Foundation Dba Community Giving Foundation
- Altoona Renaissance Team Dba Arts Altoona
- Preservation Pottstown Dba Mosaic Community Land Trust
- Cultural and Arts Commission Ltd. Dba Nazareth Center for the Arts
- CultureTrust of Greater Philadelphia
- Westmoreland Human Opportunities Inc. Dba Westmoreland Community Action

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. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 7 ACTION:** Recommendations for Creative Catalysts

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

Ms. Dunlap reported that this action item is the last set of Creative Catalysts recommendations for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 year. Dunlap stated that PCA spent almost all of what was allocated into the creative catalyst line item this year.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the three recommendations as follows:

1. Cultured Communities Initiative, which is a program of the Community Arts Center of Cambria County (CACC): Dunlap explained that CACC requests support for the expansion of a program that they developed in response to Covid. She explained that they took a lot of the exhibits that they were promoting as well as a permanent collection at the Cambria County Museum as digital components. The grant will allow CACC to expand the reach of its exhibits throughout PA. Dunlap stated that the request was \$8,500 and PCA staff recommends \$8,500.
2. Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance for South Philly Food Co-op: Dunlap explained that this organization came to the PCA with a request for a grant to create a seasonal eating guide for Pennsylvania: *Phully Rooted in PA: A Guide to Eating Seasonally and Locally in Pennsylvania*. Ms. Dunlap added that the art component to the guide includes artist illustrations that will become part of this seasonal eating guide. Request for the art components of this guide is \$7,255. PCA staff recommend \$7,255.
3. Pennsylvania Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship Inc./The PA Wilds Artisan Collaborative: Ms. Dunlap stated that this is a larger than normal request for this type of grant. Dunlap explained that the Pennsylvania Wilds reached out to PCA because they are applying to the US Economic Development Administration for a \$75 million grant.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the PA Wilds came to the PCA with a request for \$50,000 to match a \$200,000 portion of its EDA request related to the arts. Ms. Dunlap explained that the PA Wilds is currently the only applicant in the pool of over sixty that has a focus on recreation and that they are innovative on how they promote the region.

Dunlap referred Council to the list of the 2021 creative catalysts grant recipients. She stated that there were 14 projects total that the PCA funded and that all align nicely with PCA's strategic plan goal areas. Dunlap added that she will be happy to follow up with an email that contains links to websites or images of grant recipients.

Representative Ciresi commented that the PA Wilds is a wonderful organization and that he has visited Elk County as well as Skybridge in Huntingdon County. Ciresi stated that he is engaged and wants to support wilds in any way we can.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the grant decision will be made in early September and that she has had a discussion with PA Wilds about what that would mean for creative catalysts

Dunlap added that the inclusion of arts in PA Wilds speaks to their inclusion of arts and artists in community development.

Ms. Goldberg thanked Ms. Dunlap for the report and had a question about farmer co-ops and opportunities for murals.

Ms. Dunlap stated that she will try to get more information about this and circle back with Council.

Judge Morgan stated that although the PA Wilds is in an area with beautiful national mountains, hills, and valleys, it is also an area with extreme poverty.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this is important to point out and agrees that there is also a lot of poverty in the region as a result of industries that have left.

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. Astorino seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

**ITEM 8 ACTION:** Recommendations for Preserving Diverse Cultures – Strategies for Success

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

Ms. Payne reminded Council that Strategies for Success is a multi-year, multi capacity building program. She explained that organizations submit applications each year. Payne also mentioned fiscal sponsorship requirements.

Ms. Payne stated that during the July 2021 Council meeting, Council approved funding for 34 organizations. Ms. Payne reported that one organization, Idiosyncrazy Productions, needed to submit their application through a sponsor had erroneously submitted their application for funding using an application of their own. Ms. Payne explained that PCA cannot make the grant award payment this way and must go through Headlong Dance Theater.

Ms. Payne stated that PCA Staff recommends that Council approve the payment of this grant to the fiscal sponsor, Headlong Dance Theater.

Chair Parks asked if Headlong Dance Theater is already a grantee and Ms. Payne responded that they are.

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

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

**ITEM 9 INFORMATION:** PCA Action Plan Update

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke reminded Council of the action plan that was created based on the strategic plan adopted by Council. Blischke stated that it was a way for PCA staff to specify actions that it would take to advance the plan and list the progress toward each of those listed item. Mr. Blischke explained that

the PCA action plan is outlined in the Council book on page 34 and stated that he was not going to go through each line item, but wanted to highlight some areas that PCA staff has been working on recently and provide an update on the following items:

Under Goal 1 – Community: Mr. Blischke stated that a big accomplishment for PCA that Sarah Merritt has worked on is the expansion of the Creative Communities Initiative. Blischke reported that PCA wanted to re-position this initiative to work with communities and cross sector partners and highlight and promote overall engagement and investment in arts. Blischke stated that the goal was to expand steadily and explained that we are up to 8 communities. He added that over the past few months, Ms. Merritt facilitated the addition of 23 projects that are supported at a lower level. Mr. Blischke explained that PCA has started to build a very interesting and robust community of practitioners that we are engaging with around Pennsylvania. Blischke added that when we get to the draft budget for next year, it will include additional plans to bring in more full community participation. Blischke stated that PCA has received a very high level of interest in the program.

Under Goal 1 – Advance Council's DEI Activities and Policies: Blischke stated that a committee was established to examine this policy and that it has been meeting over the past several months. Mr. Blischke explained that one of the big things that will be reviewed is the alignment of PCA's evaluation criteria with the values presented in the strategic plan. Blischke explained that the committee is looking at PCA's review criteria and the way that we are reaching Pennsylvania communities. Blischke added that Dana Payne has done a lot of work on engaging the committee and explained that Council should have a specific policy recommendation for Council to consider in July.

Under Goal 2, Mr. Blischke stated that PCA has made headway in this area and highlighted the ongoing new partnership with the healthcare system. Mr. Blischke reported that Jamie Dunlap and Amy Gabriele worked diligently to put together that new initiative with the Hospital and Health System Association of Pennsylvania in PCA's Resiliency Through the Arts for Health Care Workers. Blischke explained that site visits are scheduled to occur and added that Council members who wish to attend will be invited to see those opportunities going forward. Blischke added that there is a critical need here that is being addressed through the arts.

Under Goal 3: Mr. Blischke stated that as PCA rolled out its new plan, it needed to update its message. He reported that Norah Johnson worked very hard on this initiative and that PCA is looking at different ways to expand its message and brand, which includes PCA's new Prism podcast series. Mr. Blischke added that that PCA is looking at different ways to expand its message.

Under Goal 3: Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program: Mr. Blischke explained that this connects its partners with the small business development organizations such as the Small Business Development Centers and Community Development Financial Institutions. Blischke reported that this program was launched last fall and added that there are about 250 entrepreneurs and small businesses that have already started their participation in the program, which includes hands on consultation and business plan development and review along with modest financial assistance up to \$2,000. Blischke stated that there was some question from both sides of the collaboration: one from the small business development side and one from the arts side about whether artists were working in an entrepreneurial way, and the answer is yes. Blischke added that we have started to change the perceptions of both sides.

Mr. Blischke added that with this program PCA will be able to provide metrics by tracking new business formation, occupying new space in local communities as well as increased sales, the creation of jobs, and access to additional capital for these businesses, beyond financial assistance from the PCA.

Ms. Goldberg congratulated Mr. Blischke as well as the entire staff. She stated that it is thrilling to see these initiatives coming to life and is wonderful to see PCA moving along and making great progress.

Representative Ciresi thanked Mr. Blischke and stated that he wants the rest of the state and his

colleagues to know what the PCA does and added that metrics will be very helpful in getting that message across. He added that if regular updates about PCA progress can be provided to Council members, they would be able to share that information with the other boards they serve on and provide taking points that they can provide to colleagues.

Chair Parks thanked Mr. Blischke for the update. He stated that the speed at which these programs have been developed and the way this Council does business in terms of being a state agency has been impressive. Chair Parks added that he cannot say enough about the way in which the staff has pivoted and has embraced the policies that have been set by the Council and the fact that PCA is delivering these services and support for so many communities in the state is amazing.

**ITEM 10 INFORMATION:** Survey of Grantees

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

Mr. Poppy reminded Council that staff developed a survey of grantees that was included in the most recent operating support grant programs. The survey collected information about the grantees' confidence levels related to their programs, access to human resources, financial position, and local economy.

Mr. Poppy explained that the survey was deployed to applicants in the Arts Organizations & Arts Programs (AOAP) program and the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) Program Stream, both of which are operating support grants. Poppy explained that program stream organizations are those with budgets under \$200,000 and AOAP are the mid-size to large organizations.

Mr. Poppy stated that there were 607 responses in total and explained that there were three sections with multiple choice categories that were asked as well as a short narrative.

Mr. Poppy stated that PCA staff will continue to ask these questions in future AOAP and Program Stream applications and will be able to track responses and changes over time. Poppy added that PCA will be able to package this information and present it to arts organizations.

Mr. Rosario reported that he did an analysis of the text responses regarding the issues of most importance. Mr. Rosario shared a slide of a word cloud that analyzed all of the responses that were received and took the response that were received in a higher frequency and put them into a cloud.

Ms. Goldberg commended Mr. Poppy and Mr. Rosario. She stated that the survey reinforced what she is seeing in Philadelphia and other areas.

Mr. Gabel thanked Mr. Poppy and Mr. Rosario. He indicated that he is surprised and delighted by some of the results. He stated that it seems that we didn't lose many of the organizations over the past two years.

Chair Parks thanked Mr. Poppy and Mr. Rosario for their informative presentation.

**ITEM 11 INFORMATION:** Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Draft Budget

*Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration*

Ms. Gabriele referred to spreadsheet in Council book which shows the draft for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget. Ms. Gabriele explained that the spreadsheet shows a comparison of the draft budget and next year's budget. She stated that the Governor's grants budget proposal from February is the same amount as this year.

Ms. Gabriele stated that before Council meets in July to approve this budget, applications will be evaluated, and panels will take place to make recommendations for funding. Ms. Gabriele explained that much more detail about projects and amounts for funding will be shown during the July 2022 Council meeting.

Representative Ciresi stated that we cannot continue down same path especially with the \$7 billion surplus that the state has and with what the arts do in this state. Representative Ciresi stated that as a legislator he plans to send a letter to his colleagues as well as the Governor asking for an increase for the PCA. He also stated that all arts organizations across the Commonwealth need to contact their legislators and state the importance of the arts.

Chair Parks encouraged the use of personal social media to encourage people to connect with their legislators.

**ITEM 12: Chair's Report**

*Jeffrey Parks, Chair*

Chair Parks reported that the August Wilson Center in Pittsburgh is doing its first ever exhibition dedicated to its namesake and that the exhibition will open in April. Chair Parks also stated that August Wilson's Fences, will be presented by the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival in the Lehigh Valley this summer.

Chair Parks reported that Emma Alaqua and the PCA staff recently visited the Hill District in Pittsburgh, one of the participating communities in the PCA's Creative Communities initiative. Park explained that the lead in this project is the Hill Community Development Corporation and separate projects will make up the development of the New Granada on Center Avenue, which is the heart of the Hill District.

Chair Parks stated that arts advocacy is gaining momentum and there are seven bills that were introduced over the last year to support the arts. Chair Parks asked PCA staff to send out a list of those as well as a list of congressmen and senators.

Chair Parks reported that the July Council meeting is the annual meeting to develop the budget. He explained that, assuming that there are no new variants that crop up over the next few months, we are going to schedule a hybrid in person meeting. Parks stated that his hope is to see if we can enhance live meetings with more information and input from actual grantees. Chair Parks asked everybody to consider to be prepared for meeting in Harrisburg.

Chair Parks stated that in line with what Representative Ciresi was talking about, Council has been very forward thinking in its initiatives and has blazed a national trail with a lot of the things has been accomplished in the last three years. Parks stated that PCA has had preliminary conversations about the Governor's Awards for the Arts and that since PCA has not received an increase in staff over the last several years, we want to take another look at the Governor's Arts Awards and how this can be done in a more cost effective but also inclusive manner.

Chair Parks stated that PCA also needs to think about how technology can be used to create a recognition system for the arts, artists, arts administrators, donors in Pennsylvania that reaches out to all the communities that are served in the state.

Parks added that this goes along with the thinking that was mentioned about how PCA shares information. Parks stated that the partnership with Keystone Edge in how we created a podcast is a model for how PCA needs to be thinking.

Chair Parks asked Council members to offer thoughts on any digital ideas that PCA might be able to do or form partnerships and asked these ideas to be funneled through Karl Blischke. He also asked Council members to pass along thoughts about a re-inventing of the Governor's Arts Awards in a way that leverages technology and that doesn't require physical gathering other than perhaps a ceremony in Harrisburg.

Chair Parks encouraged Council to attend the July meeting in person and if able, meet the evening before for dinner.

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

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke stated PCA is in the middle of an in-depth community outreach program, systematically meeting with every county's community and economic development professional. So far PCA staff has visited over a third of Pennsylvania Counties.

Mr. Blischke stated that the headline is that increasingly communities in Pennsylvania are recognizing the importance of a placed-based strategy when it comes to economic development, and that is where we align. Increasingly, communities are not asking us why we are having this conversation, they are increasingly saying we must have this conversation.

Mr. Blischke explained that the Council will be making its first session presentation in April at the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association conference. Karl stated that he and Sarah Merritt will be joined by Bridgeway Capital and will be presenting an in-depth view on how strategies can be employed in communities and will also be talking about creative businesses and entrepreneurship.

Mr. Blischke stated that PCA will be presenting a new data tool called the Creative Vitality Suite, which will be piloted this year. Mr. Blischke explained that this is a program that will allow PCA to talk about labor information throughout Pennsylvania as well as data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Blischke also stated that this tool provides data from the IRS, state labor departments, and economic modeling specialist, Inc. which is the gold standard for economic development advisors. Blischke stated that PCA will have access to all these tools.

Mr. Blischke reminded Council about submitting their Statement of Financial Interest.

Representative Ciresi inquired about PCA's change in funding strategy that was made during the pandemic and asked if Council is planning to continue that change or if larger fundings would become available for larger organizations? Representative Ciresi suggested that PCA send out a memo to the larger arts organizations with that information.

Parks stated that PCA used the opportunity of the pandemic budget to raise a formula that better serves the entire state. Chair Parks stated that the budget that we now have was cut from \$15 million to \$9.5 million, while the number of applicants and grantees has dramatically increased.

Mr. Blischke stated that PCA reached out to grantees that were most impacted individually by the new funding strategy, but he thinks that was about one year ago, so having that conversation again is a good idea.

Mr. Blischke reported that Sarah Merritt conducted a webinar about accessing American Rescue Plan federal relief money at the community level and that he will provide the presentation for Council to share. Ms. Merritt stated that she has received responses from communities who have indicated that they would be pursuing this opportunity.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.