

**Minutes**  
**Special Council Meeting**  
**May 6, 2021**  
**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, Ms. Colón, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Representative Labs, Mr. Lehr, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Mr. Warfield, Mr. West

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Mr. Alaquiva, Ms. Vilayphonh, Ms. Zaborney

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT VIA SKYPE:** 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; Sarah Merritt, Director of Creative Communities; Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage; Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services; and, Ian Rosario, Grants Liaison.

**GUESTS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS:** Rodney Akers, Chief Counsel; Pam Snyder Ethers, Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania; Susan Sherwood, Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania.

**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.

**ROLL CALL:**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established

Chair Parks welcomed those in attendance and provided Council with some instructions regarding the meeting proceedings and requests for public comment.

**REPORT FROM CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS IN PENNSYLVANIA:**

Chair Parks welcomed Pam Snyder Ethers, Executive Director of Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania, and asked Ms. Snyder Ethers to provide Council with a brief update on Citizens' activities.

Ms. Snyder Ethers thanked Council for allowing her to provide the update of what is happening with Citizens for the Arts in PA.

Ms. Snyder Ethers reported that Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania is finalizing its position statement for the year and stated that Citizens is excited to be continuing to support the line item for grants to the PCA this year and is seeking a possible increase.

Ms. Snyder Ethers stated that Citizens is also working on its Virtual Arts Advocacy Day planning, which is scheduled to take place on Monday, May 24. She added that Citizens is looking at plans to provide activities during the week prior to May 24, which will include opportunities for training sessions as to how to do arts advocacy and how to navigate the platforms for such. Citizens is also looking to continuing its

work with the Statewide Services Grant. She explained that Citizens will be conducting a webinar as well as a town hall program that will include three topics: art as business, which will include a presentation by a representative from Artist U; a program on equity and inclusion; and a presentation regarding community cultivation which will be led by Kelly Gibson with the Cultural Alliance of York County.

Ms. Snyder Ethers explained that Citizens is trying to work with organizations throughout the state and will be offering breakout sessions based on geography so that people that work together will have the opportunities to collaborate regularly and have the opportunity to speak to each other specifically based on the topics which came out of a study conducted by Fourth Economy following the town halls they conducted. Ms. Snyder Ethers stated that the underlying goal is to help these community organizations to start to build bridges and cultivate relationships with local and county governments and start a grassroots consideration so that they will be able to advocate locally and then continue that advocacy at the state level and then even further into the federal level.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

*Jeff Parks, Chair*

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

Representative Ciresi indicated that he had a conflict of interest with the Kimmel Center.

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

Chair Parks asked if the PCA has received any requests for public comments. There was no request for public comments.

### **ITEM 3 ACTION: Recommendation for Statewide Services Grant – Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke indicated that this recommendation is for an award to the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF).

Mr. Blischke explained that the MAAF is a regional arts organization, recognized and established by the National Endowment for the Arts, with the participation of state arts agencies in the Mid-Atlantic region. Blischke stated that MAAF is a conduit for federal and private funds and that MAAF receives those funds and distributes them in the mid-Atlantic region, including in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Blischke stated this is a recommendation to provide a \$70,000 award for the support of MAAF and added that this recommendation includes a provision that the funds will be non-matching, however, PCA recognizes that in support of MAAF, PCA is supporting the distribution of funds far in excess of \$70,000 to Pennsylvania and this will support MAAF's distribution of those funds.

Mr. Blischke reported that historically, PCA, along with other states in the mid-Atlantic region provide annual support to the MAAF.

Mr. Blischke added that in terms of this application process, based on updates to state management directives regarding the process for applications and grantmaking, grants are to be openly solicited on a competitive basis. Blischke stated that PCA staff submitted a request to waive that requirement with respect to MAAF, and a waiver was granted because of the unique nature of MAAF and the benefit to Pennsylvania in terms of receiving federal and private funds being regranted into the state.

Mr. Blischke indicated that just because PCA received a waiver this year does not mean that a waiver will be granted in future years and added that he thinks that this will require an on-going discussion with MAAF and other regional arts organizations as to how PCA may be able to receive and evaluate proposals from them.

Blischke stated that he will be having these conversations with MAAF along with other PCA staff and will keep Council members apprised.

Chair Parks asked for any questions from the council. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendations as presented.

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

**ITEM 4 ACTION: Recommendations for Statewide Services - Resiliency through the Arts for Frontline Healthcare Workers**

*Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration*

Ms. Gabriele reported that at the March meeting, Council approved the solicitation for a request for proposals to provide statewide services to support resiliency through the arts for frontline healthcare workers through a grant for up to \$500,000.

Ms. Gabriele explained that the PCA received two proposals and stated that the applicants were the Hospital and Healthcare Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) and the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine.

Ms. Gabriele reported that a three-person panel reviewed the applications based on the criteria listed in the council book. Ms. Gabriele stated that the names of the panelists are listed in the memo on page 9 in the Council Book.

Ms. Gabriele reported that the panel recommended the PSU College of Medicine and added that this recommendation was based on their arts and healthcare experience and assessment plan. Gabriele explained that PCA staff carefully considered the panel's recommendation and assessed the degree to which both of the applicants could meet the Council's objectives for this initiative: specifically, the implementation and reach of the program across the commonwealth; utilizing a team of therapists throughout the commonwealth; the amount of administrative dollars being spent; and the number of facilities benefitting. After assessing the Council's objectives, PCA staff made an alternative recommendation for the Council.

Ms. Gabriele reported that the recipient of the Statewide Services - Resiliency through the Arts for Frontline Healthcare Workers grant of \$500,00 is recommended to the Hospital Association of Pennsylvania (HAP.) Gabriele added that PCA staff also recommends the PSU College of Medicine to apply in the Creative Catalyst for certain components of their application.

Ms. Gabriele also added they PCA recommend that Council waive the requirement that the funds cannot be used for performances and exhibitions not available to the general public. She explained that this is in order to deliver services to healthcare workers within healthcare settings.

Ms. Goldberg stated that when the amounts on the chart are totaled, they do not add up to \$500,000 and asked for clarification.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the chart does not actually reflect the grant amount but reflects how much each organization was proposing to spend in administrative costs.

Ms. Goldberg asked Ms. Gabriele to give a more detailed explanation about the spending and Ms. Gabriele stated that this was the main reason that staff developed an alternative recommendation. PCA staff was concerned about the PSU College of Medicines' administrative costs and explained that when the proposed administrative costs of each organization were added up, PSU College of Medicine's was higher in terms of their salaries and their overhead. Ms. Gabriele also explained that PSU normally charges 60% of any grant they receive to administrative costs. Ms. Gabriele stated that PSU College of Medicine did ask for a waiver for that from their administration, which was received; however, their administrative is still 46% compared to 20% for HAP. She further explained PCA staff's main concern was with Penn State College of Medicine was about the amount of admin going to their organization rather than the cost going directly to the art and music therapists.

Ms. Goldberg also asked if hospitals apply to PSU or HAP or is it within their own system and if individual hospitals apply and who makes the selection.

Ms. Gabriele stated that HAP's program will serve the entire commonwealth. The program would start in southeast Pennsylvania, then would move to Western PA and eventually the rest of the state. She added that it is a two to three year program and HAP would serve many different types of hospitals and certainly Penn State would be in there. Gabriele added that any hospital would be able to apply.

Ms. Gabriele explained HAP's plan is to have webinars to educate hospitals as to what they are offering and then any hospital can apply to the program.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the Penn State application was only for Penn State's five hospital facilities.

Mr. Gable asked Ms. Gabriele to provide some examples of what art therapy services are going to be provided and if there are any projections of how many front-line health care workers will be reached.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the program will most be virtual initially. She added that HAP will be focusing on music therapy and will be working with the Pennsylvania Music Therapy Association. Gabriele stated that programs such as drumming circles would be something that would be provided.

Ms. Dunlap stated that between 15 or 20 different facilities will be participating over the course of 2 to 3 years and that this will include certified music therapists working with hospitals for approximately 20 hours during a period of 10 weeks. She added that the program will be customized for each facility and will vary based on hospital needs and will include one-on-one and group sessions. Dunlap explained that one of the strengths of the HAP application is that they partnered with the PA Music Therapy Task Force. Dunlap explained that this organization will utilize certified music therapists across the state and will be able to connect these hospitals with a variety of therapists using a variety of musical approaches. Ms. Dunlap added that the Pennsylvania Music Therapist Task force will work closely with that therapist to customize a program for their facility.

Chair Parks asked for any questions from the council. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendations as presented.

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

**ITEM 5 ACTION: Recommendation for Creative Catalyst Grants**

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

Ms. Dunlap provided Council with a background on the creative catalyst program and explained that recommendations are brought to Council at quarterly or special meetings.

Dunlap stated that creative catalysts grants are 1 to 1 matching grants that offer some sort of statewide benefit or reach for the arts sector. Dunlap explained that these grants need to align with at least one of PCA's strategic planning goals: strengthening communities through the arts, access to lifelong learning through the arts, and the promotion of public awareness of the arts.

Ms. Dunlap explained that this will be last set of recommendations for Fiscal Year 2021 and then listed the four projects that PCA staff is recommending:

- **Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations and its project: ArtPowered Places.** Ms. Dunlap stated that this is a collaboration with their partner, JustAct. Ms. Dunlap explained that this project would expand on the pilot phase of ArtPowered Places (APP), a participatory engagement and planning methodology using arts strategies to build neighborhood planning and organizing capacity. Ms. Dunlap stated that they would like to expand on their pilot to focus on a portion of the Philadelphia region. PACDC will be sharing the curriculum and guide development through a series of online postings, lectures, and workshop presentations at PACDC's region-wide Equitable Development Conference and at convenings hosted in partnership and/or collaboration with partners such as the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations, Americans for the Arts, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and the National Endowment for the Arts best practices guides and newsletters.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the request is for \$10,000 and PCA staff's recommendation is \$10,000.

- **Pasion y Arte - Ancestral Healing** Ms. Dunlap stated that this is an ancestral healing project that focuses on Bolivian indigenous ancestors through music and memory. Ms. Dunlap explained that this production is about the heritage and the culture that will be culminated in a performance which will be recorded, as well as program notes and an accompanying discussion. Dunlap added that this will be shared with their network and that PCA will share it as well. Ms. Dunlap stated that Pasion y Arte has also collaborated with the PA Commission on Latino Affairs and will be sharing the video and accompanying information through that group as well.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the request is for \$3,000 and PCA's staff recommendation is \$3,000.

- **Kassia Ensemble - Songs from the Uproar** Ms. Dunlap reported that this is a production which will produce and disseminate information on the experiences and challenges that women face in various facets of the opera industry. Ms. Dunlap explained that this organization plans to create an all women created, led, directed, performance that will be performed in the Pittsburgh area, possibly at Three Rivers Arts Festival. Dunlap added that this performance will be recorded and that a talk back session about that topic will occur following the performance. Ms. Dunlap stated that this will broadly be shared across the commonwealth through their network and added in addition to their session. They are going to compile a database of women professionals in the opera field to show the diversity of women professionals that are connected to the opera industry as well as to connect women in the industry to potential employment opportunities with companies and organizations.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the request is for \$7,000 and PCA's staff recommendation is \$7,000.

- **Attack Theater Incorporated - Hope in Hardship** Ms. Dunlap stated that this is a request for support for the production and distribution of “Hope in Hardship,” a short film made in collaboration with the non-profit organization, Shining Light. Dunlap stated that the purpose of the production is to raise awareness of teaching artists and artists working opportunities within the Pennsylvania state prison system. Dunlap reported that a panel discussion to discuss the importance of art for those incarcerated will be held following the production and the panel will include individuals who had been incarcerated. Dunlap explained that the project will continue beyond the film being produced to include some professional development workshops for teaching artists across the state and will provide opportunities for performers and teaching artists across the state to get involved within the Pennsylvania state prison system.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the request is for \$10,000 and PCA staff recommends \$10,000.

Ms. Goldberg commented that these all sound very exciting and asked Ms. Dunlap to share links to websites, when appropriate, for these organizations. Mr. Dunlap stated that she will be happy to share information for all of the organizations once the events take place. She also stated that information will be included with their final reports and will also be shared with our networks and partners.

Chair Parks asked for any questions from the council. Hearing none, Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the recommendations as presented.

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

#### **ITEM 6 INFORMATION: PCA Updates**

*Karl Blischke, Executive Director*

Mr. Blischke shared news about the American Rescue Plan Act and explained that it has implications for the PCA. Blischke stated that the National Endowment for the Arts was appropriated an additional \$135 million through the act. Mr. Blischke explained that through the CARES Act, an additional \$75 million was appropriated to the endowment, so in this round it is up to \$135 million. Blischke reported that in the endowment’s guidelines 40 percent of their appropriations go to the states and regional arts organizations and jurisdictions. Mr. Blischke explained that of that \$135 million, \$52 million will go to the states and that Pennsylvania and PCA will receive approximately \$936,000.

Mr. Blischke stated that within these guidelines, the NEA is going to continue to support operating costs and that is a change from their typical funding pattern which focuses on projects. Blischke added that this is a non-matching grant.

Mr. Blischke reported that in the coming weeks and months, PCA staff will be presenting Council with proposals for how to distribute our portion of the American Rescue Plan funds.

Mr. Blischke reported that the National Arts Endowment will also be distributing funds directly and explained that their guidelines will be available in June. Mr. Blischke stated that one big change from the past is that previously, the NEA had restricted eligibility for direct grants to those organizations that had previously received funds from the arts endowment and explained that this is no longer going to be the case and that it will be open, and their direct grants will also cover operating costs.

Blischke stated that there will be more information to come on this he will let everybody know about these opportunities. Blischke added that this is good news because there will be more eligible applicants for arts endowment funding this go-round.

Mr. Blischke reported that in addition to that direct appropriation of the Arts Endowment, there are additional support funds coming to state and local governments as part of that plan. Blischke stated that approximately \$4.9 billion will be coming to county and local governments within Pennsylvania and a bit over \$7 billion coming to the state. Blischke explained that this is an opportunity for the creative sector to have conversations in their local communities with local governments on how the creative sector plays into the recovery and the vitality of communities and should be an essential strategy to community development going forward. Mr. Blischke added that PCA staff will be having a lot of conversations in Pennsylvania around the creative sector and the American Rescue Plan.

Mr. Gabel asked if the funds will be distributed at the county or borough level?

Mr. Blischke stated that these funds are going to all local municipalities including at the county and borough level. He added that he will be sending Mr. Gabel a link that will show an estimate of what every municipality in the country and including Pennsylvania should expect to receive.

Mr. Blischke explained that these funds are in the context of various Covid related needs, but among the factors that are eligible could be a recognition of support that is needed for the creative sector. Blischke added that this is an important conversation to be had and that he would go back to the CARES Act, and he knows that some Pennsylvania municipalities and counties dedicated a portion of those funds to make grants locally on top of anything PCA were doing. Blischke added that he heard that in some cases, decision makers in the local government indicated that nobody came to talk to them. Blischke stated that all of those conversations are important and that the education process from those conversations are critical at this time.

Chair Parks stated that it is important for Council to get out to all of the arts organizations because in most cases, the arts are critical to downtown revitalization efforts. Parks added that local officials must be made aware of this so that they have the opportunity to support this need and know that by supporting the arts they are supporting the restoration of small businesses.

Mr. Blischke reminded council of their approval of the statewide service research project to assess the impacts of COVID on the creative sector and proposed recommendations for policies and interventions going forward. Blischke stated PCA has been working very closely with Fourth Economy on this project and added that they have looked at labor and market information from the Bureau of Economic Analysis as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Blischke stated that Fourth Economy has conducted regional town halls as well as surveys and are working on putting together a report. Mr. Blischke expects to see a draft later this month and stated that as that comes to completion, we will schedule time for the Council to be briefed on the findings and recommendations.

Mr. Blischke also reminded council members submit their annual statements of interest if they have not already done so and asked them to reach out to him if they had any questions.

Chair Parks asked if there were any updates on the progress of the marketing project.

Mr. Blischke responded that there have been several planning and mood board sessions with Bravo Group, and they now have produced a couple of iterations with brand and design concepts. Blischke added that they are currently in the process of making some tweaks on these concepts and that Bravo is working on getting us a product that is ready for us to look at in very short order. Blischke added that PCA will invite council members who helped initially, back to review the final tweaks.

Ms. Johnson stated that Bravo is hoping to have the plan finalized in early June and that they are looking to develop the look and feel of the PCA brand and how to incorporate it into our identity. Ms. Johnson

added that PCA will start being able to roll this plan out as soon as the materials are finalized and added that this will visually align with where we have been trying to go over the past few years.

Chair Parks asked Mr. Blischke to share news with Council about the grant application that PCA has been invited to submit to the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Mr. Blischke reported that this year, as PCA staff was working on developing an initiative to specifically recognize and support Pennsylvania's creative economy and in particular creative entrepreneurs, PCA staff has also used this an opportunity to leverage Council's investment to get additional funds and additional investors. Blischke explained that this is a first time move for PCA to apply for the Appalachian Regional Commission dollars and added that PCA applied for a \$500,000 grant that would help support PCA's creative entrepreneur initiative. Blischke reported that PCA did a lot of work on this and stated that it was interesting to be on the other side of the application process. Blischke explained that the final submission was quite long and took a lot of effort; however, it gives us the framework for our work now being relevant cross sector and added that 52 counties across Pennsylvania are part of the Appalachian region and receive significant federal investment to help address the Appalachian region including out-migration, deindustrialization, and impacts to coal industry. If approved, Blischke explained that PCA will have leveraged an additional \$500,000 and that would come into play, if awarded, next fiscal year.

Chair Parks stated that this is a unique and first-time effort on behalf of the Council to see an external grant like this and it will have an impact in terms of PCA's arts and creative industries initiative.

Chair Parks also shared that two years ago, Council established new goals and guidelines for PCA's work. Parks stated that Council creative diversity, equity, and inclusion as an overriding value.

Chair Parks explained that in the context of all of this, that the history of the funding of the Council by the state legislature greatly reduced in 2008 during the great recession issues and that the annual funding for grants for the Council was reduced from approximately \$14 million to \$9,500,000. Parks explained that the decreased funding amount has never been restored; however, the number of agencies funded by the PCA has grown by about 25%. Park stated that Council has been confronted with not being able to reasonably support all of these agencies that deserve funding with its current guidelines and was stuck with some legacy funding for larger organizations based on size of budget.

Chair Parks explained that Council made a dramatic change in the past year of saying that if you were an arts organization that deserved funding, the standard funding is \$13,000 per year, but if you were an arts organization that was engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion communities, the funding would be \$26,000 per-year.

Mr. Blischke stated that PCA has been the subject of several national conversations and that five or six states have reached out separately and have requested to have a discussion and have stated they are interested in how we are doing grant making in our state.

Chair Parks stated that he is a follower of a blog called the Daily Yonder which talks about rural communities throughout the country and learned that Pennsylvania has either 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> largest rural population in country and stated that he is very proud of the work that the Council has accomplished.

Chair Parks indicated that he would like to meet in person and maybe it would be once per year from here on out.

Representative Ciresi reported that he now serves on the House Tourism Committee as a liaison to arts and is talking about doing a tourism trip, possibly at the western part of the state. Representative



suggested having the next council meeting, in person, in conjunction with that committee meeting. Representative Ciresi thought this would be a good idea to show the impact of arts and tourism and invited Chair Parks and Mrs. Blischke to contact him offline about to discuss the idea.

**Meeting was adjourned at 10:01 am**