

**Minutes
Council Meeting
March 11, 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 (by proxy,) Representative Ciresi, Ms. Colón, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Representative Labs, Mr. Lehr, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Ms. Vilayphonh, Mr. Warfield, Mr. West, Ms. Zaborney (by proxy)

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.

Chair Parks welcomed new legislative council member, Representative Shelby Labs, who serves Pennsylvania's 143rd Legislative District, which is in Bucks County. Chair Parks stated that Representative Labs was born and raised in Plumsteadville, and her family has more than 200 years of history in the community – running small businesses and farms, volunteering, and serving the people of Central and Upper Bucks County.

ROLL CALL:

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established

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

Ms. Snyder Ethers thanked Council for allowing her to provide the update and stated that the budget proposed by the Governor has funding for the PCA. Citizens has been working on how to proceed with advocacy efforts for this year. She added that they have been advised to consider bridge funding for arts organizations, but they are looking to consider using federal dollars that are possibly filtered through the state.

Ms. Snyder Ethers stated that Citizens will be meeting tomorrow to move forward with planning for the State Advocacy Day which will be in early May. Ms. Snyder Ethers also mentioned that on the Federal level, they have their Arts Action Summit on April 5-9. Ms. Snyder Ethers encouraged anybody who is interested to participate on advocacy day and added that Citizens has been working to send out more regular updates and passing on any information that they receive that will be relevant to the arts and culture sector.

Ms. Snyder Ethers also provided a brief update on Citizens' Statewide Services Project. She stated that she will have a meeting with the Fourth Economy, who is also working on a PCA impact study program. Ms. Snyder Ethers stated that she felt it would be best to partner on some elements of they are doing.

Chair Parks thanked Ms. Snyder Ethers for her report and stated that Council is interesting in learning more about the Covid relief bill and if there is anything there for the arts.

REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:

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

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Jeff Parks, Chair

Chair Parks reminded the Council of the PCA's conflict of interest policy.

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

December 10, 2020 Council Meeting:

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the December 10, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes. Mr. Lehr made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

January 20, 2021 Special Council Meeting:

Chair Parks asked for a motion to approve the January 20, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes. Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 3 ACTION: Recommendations for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts

Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities

Chair Parks stated that he had a conflict of interest to declare for ArtsQuest and asked to let the record show that he turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Gabel for the purpose of the discussion of the first portion of the recommendation of this action item. Vice Chair Gabel asked Sarah Merritt to review this recommendation for Council.

New PPA Partners:

Ms. Merritt stated that this recommendation is for new partners for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) for Regions 5, 11 and 13. Ms. Merritt reminded Council that at the December 2020 Meeting, Council was informed that PCA staff would pursue filling the 3 vacancies in these regions. Ms. Merritt stated that PPA Partnerships are vital to the work of the PCA because through them, the agency can ensure equitable distribution of funds across the commonwealth.

Ms. Merritt referred to the map provided in the memo that indicates where these three regions are located. Ms. Merritt stated that PCA staff targeted promotion in the three regions and sent out an open call for applications. Merritt reported that the PCA received seven applications and added that they are listed on the table on page 26 of the Council book. Ms. Merritt stated that a PPA Partnership Panel convened on February 23, 2021 to review the applications and make recommendations for the three regions.

Merritt explained that PCA staff recommends the following applicants as PPA Partners for Regions 5, 11, and 13 to receive current year administrative funding from the seven-months budget and programming funds:

Region 5, Lehigh Valley Community Foundation; Region 11, The Centre County Foundation; and for Region 13, the United Way of Clarion County.

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

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

Vice Chair Gabel asked to let the record show that he has returned the meeting to Chair Parks.

Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Grant Program:

Ms. Merritt reported that at the February 2020 Council meeting, PCA staff proposed the idea of providing support for creative entrepreneurs in alignment with its 2019-2024 Strategic Plan. Merritt explained that during the December 2020 Council meeting, PCA staff recommended that \$577,260 be held for PA Partners in the Arts (PPA) project grants for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Merritt stated that PCA staff also recommended that the project grant guidelines be adapted to respond to the current environment to support community resilience, and to align with the Council’s strategic plan goals related to community and economic development, specifically Goal 1: Strengthening Pennsylvania Communities Through the Arts and Goal 3: Championing Public Awareness and Appreciation of the Arts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Merritt explained PCA staff conducted research and participated in meetings and consultations with leadership of the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers, Community Development Financial Institutions like Bridgeway Capital, staff, and leadership at DCED, and with the PPA Partners.

Ms. Merritt stated that PCA staff proposes the adaptation of PPA Project Stream to support creative entrepreneurs in the growth of their micro businesses.

Ms. Merritt explained that PCA staff recommends that Council approve the implementation of the Creative Entrepreneurs Accelerator Grant with the \$577,260 of grant funds held for the PPA project grants. Ms. Merritt explained that the Council memo outlines the guidelines for this program. She added that it is important to note that the purpose of grant is to support Pennsylvania’s creative entrepreneurs to grow their businesses, audiences, and revenue. She added that this will advance Council’s overarching value of diversity, equity and inclusion and prioritize investment to socially and economically disadvantaged creative entrepreneurs and for those who are located and whose work benefits low-income communities.

Ms. Merritt stated that these would be non-matching grants and the amounts would be between \$500 and \$2,000.

Ms. Merritt also noted that in creating these guidelines, PCA staff has provided a value-added structure. Merritt explained that grantees will have free access to small business consultation and evaluations and added that these grantees are not only getting funding, but they will also have these professional development and business development supports in place.

Ms. Merritt stated that the recommendation is for the implementation of the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Grant Program with \$577,260 of grant funds.

Ms. Goldberg posed questions about some of the application and business plan requirements as well as the evaluation process for this program.

Ms. Merritt explained that applicants are only eligible to apply every 3 years and they would be referred to the partner to apply for the grant through a small business development entity, whether that is a small business development center in their community or a community development corporation that is working with small businesses. Merritt added that PCA will work on who the referral agencies will be with the PPA partners.

Mr. Blischke explained that in terms of evaluation, staff are proposing to partner with a community development financing institution to pilot a measurement system that tracks a creative businesses from initial concept, formation, growth, and ultimately sustainability.

Mr. Gabel asked for some clarification about who is going to be helped with a grant as small as \$2,000. Mr. Gabel also mentioned the recent response from the Greater Philadelphia cultural alliance and their concerns about the program structure.

Merritt explained that she conducted a lot of research and looked at other programs across the country and found that both statewide, or in a city, this tends to be where these grant amounts land and that is how PCA staff determined the amount.

Mr. Gabel asked for a concrete example from the research process.

Ms. Dunlap stated that an example she could offer was a program that the Colorado Creative Industries has in place that has the same concept of advancing the careers of creatives entrepreneurs and artists in the communities they serve. Ms. Dunlap gave an example of an independent musician who needs funding to go into a recording studio, or funding to help a visual artist get into juried art show that has a high entry cost, or costs associated with forming a business.

Mr. Blischke explained that the federal definition of a small business is 500 employees, but that is not who PCA going to target, but rather one- or two-person micro businesses. Blischke added that often, part of the struggle with business formation is access to initial capital.

Blischke stated that in terms thinking about how we are supporting individuals, it is important to recognize that artists are very important because art is created by artists and we know the social and economic benefits to all of the residents of Pennsylvania. Mr. Blischke explained that ultimately, through this program we will reasonably be able to provide a very useful product that will help more artists than were previously helped.

Blischke stated that the program will likely give PCA, our partners, and entrepreneurs more access to resources.

Mr. Gabel asked how prevalent and accessible are small business development centers and asked where they are located around the state?

Ms. Merritt replied that the state is covered by regional small business development centers. She added that they usually operate out of a university. Ms. Merritt stated that a center in Mr. Gabel's region is Shippensburg, which serves the entire region of Cumberland, York, Adams, Franklin, and Fulton Counties. These centers cover the entire state. Ms. Merritt added that Ms. Dunlap has been working with DCED's PREP regions.

Ms. Dunlap stated that there are 16 small business development centers serving the state. Dunlap also stated that she has been attending DCED's PREP and Engage meetings and inviting AIE and PPA partners as well. Dunlap stated that attendees include representatives from chambers of commerce, workforce development centers, small business development centers, sometimes tourism organizations.

Dunlap stated that the PREP program is designed to help support regional, economic development. She added that depending on the area and the interest, it could be manufacturing or small business. Dunlap stated that they are the center of the wheel as far as resources that are available for these different types of businesses in the communities they serve and so, just like small business development centers, the entire state is covered with PREP and Engage regions through DCED.

Judge Morgan asked what we do if grantees do not submit a report or if they have used the funds improperly. He asked if we try to collect funds back if we find that the recipient of the grant did not comply.

Mr. Blischke responded that in all our grant award agreements, there are provisions that outline appropriate uses of funds. There are also provisions that detail our right to audit and remedies for misuse of funds. Blischke stated that PCA does monitor because the use of Pennsylvania taxpayer funds is incredibly important, and we will ensure accountability and take all appropriate actions to ensure that state funds have been used appropriately.

Chair Parks thanked PCA staff for all of the work that has been done with regard to this program, particularly in terms of leveraging the amount that the legislature has allotted to the PCA to support the arts in Pennsylvania by reaching out into inter-agency cooperation within the state. Parks added that this has been a groundbreaking activity, incorporating the DCED, Department of Health, and Department Education. Parks stated that PCA has really done a lot more than we have done historically in terms of leveraging the revenue that we have received and providing access to artists and creative industries. Parks added that he does think, as someone who has worked with artists for most of his career, this is an opportunity for individuals who are using their art as a profession or as a way to earn income. Parks stated that incorporating the resources of the small business development centers and the community development financial institutions is groundbreaking. Chair Parks commended the team on the staff that has reached out to do all of this and said that PCA has come a long way over the past few years.

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. Mr. Gabel seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

Entry to Program Stream:

Ms. Merritt stated that the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) Project Stream program was designed to provide small grants up to \$2,500 to organizations and individual artists for one-time or sporadic projects.

Merritt explained that PCA staff has been reviewing past Project Stream grants and found that many organizations had been relying on Project Stream grants for on-going support.

Merritt stated that since Project Stream is shifting to focus on support creative entrepreneurs (accelerator grants), PCA staff recognizes that there is a need to create a point of entry grant program to help these organizations that would have normally applied in Project Stream and move them into Program Stream.

Merritt added that this would be a grant to organizations with a budget under \$200,000. Ms. Merritt stated that once PCA's budget allocation is known, staff would determine a flat amount to allocate for these organizations' grant award.

Merritt stated that as organizations apply and are funded through the Program Stream Point of Entry, they would be reviewed and will then possibly be recommended to move into Program Stream for ongoing support.

Ms. Merritt reminded Council that these grants in Program Stream and Program Stream Point of Entry are for general operating support and do not have to be project specific.

Ms. Merritt stated that PCA staff recommends for Council to approve the implementation of the Program Stream Point of Entry grant for organizations incorporating existing program guidelines for Program Stream and indicated that the guidelines are outlined in the memo in the council book.

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

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

ITEM 4 ACTION: Recommendations for Creative Catalyst Projects

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap explained that this recommendation is for Creative Catalysts Grants for Fiscal Year 2020-21.

Local Learning: National Network for Folk Arts Education: PA Folk Arts Education Project:

Ms. Dunlap stated that Local Learning has a national network that provides folk arts education and they have come to the PCA with a proposal for a PA folk arts education project. Ms. Dunlap explained that this will be a collaboration of the PA Folk Arts Education Project, the PCA's folk arts partners, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide a series of trainings and workshops incorporating folk arts into classroom.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the project will have three phases including a summer institute, a summer intensive training with an in-person implementation piece, and the final phase would be an outreach and engagement opportunity at the American Folklore Society Meeting, which is going to be held this coming October in Harrisburg.

Ms. Dunlap stated that they are requesting \$10,000 for this statewide education and training and outreach project PCA staff is recommending \$10,000.

Bridgeway Capital: Statewide Impact Management System for Tracking Creative Business Growth

Ms. Dunlap stated that Bridgeway Capital is the group that PCA works with in the Creative Business Loan Program. Dunlap reported that Bridgeway Capital has come to the PCA with an idea for a statewide impact management system (IMS) for tracking creative business growth. Ms. Dunlap stated that this IMS system is temporarily being named the Keystone Alliance for Creative Economies. Ms. Dunlap explained that the pilot will include work that they are doing at Bridgeway Capital in their region as well as partnering with Craft Now in the Philadelphia Region. Their intention is to also work with the Pennsylvania Wilds in the rural part of the state.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this pilot with these partners will be a test to align the data collection and management and reporting capabilities of a statewide model with the hopes of it someday being used as a model at the national level for creative economic development initiatives.

Ms. Dunlap stated that they are requesting \$10,000 for this statewide education and training and outreach project, and PCA staff is recommending \$10,000.

Endless Mountain Music Festival: Junior Composer STEAM Program: Ms. Dunlap stated that this organization came to PCA staff with a concept to pilot a "Junior Composer STEAM Program" which is a program that already

exists in New York State. Ms. Dunlap explained that this program utilizes free software technology called Melody Assistance which allows students to use to create their own musical pieces. Ms. Dunlap stated that there will be master classes in this pilot program and that they intend to promote it through the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) as well as other outlets across the state.

Dunlap explained that their hope is to have 40 participants in the first year and if the program succeeds, they would like to see it expand.

Ms. Dunlap stated that they are requesting \$7,500, and PCA staff is recommending \$7,500 in support of this initiative.

American Folklore Society: 2021 Annual Meeting: Ms. Dunlap stated that The American Folklore Society (AFS) will be hosting their 2021 Annual Meeting in Harrisburg, October of 2021 and that this organization came to the PCA requesting support of this convening. Ms. Dunlap indicated that the organization's intention is for this event to be in person, but they have some variations of hybrids, if necessary. Ms. Dunlap stated that they are coming to PCA to support that national conference and explained that this is an opportunity for Pennsylvania to feature and highlight all of the wonderful folk artwork created by regional folk arts and artists around our commonwealth.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the AFS came to us with a request for \$10,000 and PCA staff is recommending \$10,000.

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

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

ITEM 5 ACTION: Recommendations for Long-Term Residencies

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Chair Parks stated that he is aware of the following conflicts of interest: Council Member Gabel for the Adams County Arts Council and Representative Ciresi for the Kimmel Center.

Ms. Dunlap reminded Council that Long-Term Residency (LTR) projects are 60-day arts in education residency projects. Dunlap explained that PCA's arts in residency projects are traditionally 10 to 20 days in length and long-term residencies are increasing a traditional residency to 60 days, so it typically runs 6-9 month in average length.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the PCA had a long-term residency online review panel on February 25, 2021. Ms. Dunlap pointed out that this review panel process was a little different from PCA's other programs in that it used a 90-point scale versus a 100-point scale.

Ms. Dunlap explained the three project areas included project design, program support and the professionalism and the quality of the teaching artist recommended and that those all had equal weights of 30 each.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA received a total of 16 applications for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 long term residency projects and explained that all applications are listed on the table attached to the memo in the Council Book. Ms. Dunlap reported that based on the panel recommendation and based on the PCA staff review, 8 of those applications are being recommended for funding for a total of \$120,000.

Ms. Goldberg asked if teaching artists are used from PCA's roster or if the organization selects from their own roster.

Ms. Dunlap replied that because this program is not run through the Arts in Education partners and because it is something that comes directly to PCA, these organizations are permitted to recommend their own artists. Dunlap added that proposed artists are also part of the review process because they are not part of the roster.

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 Gabel and Representative Ciresi 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.

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

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

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

ITEM 6 ACTION: Recommendations for Resiliency through the Arts for Healthcare Workers

Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Gabriele reported that about one year ago, because of the Covid pandemic, about \$1 million of the PCA grant budget was put into budgetary reserve. Ms. Gabriele stated that this amount was a combination of all non-executed contracts and that \$500,000 of that amount was approved to use in our creative business loan fund many months ago.

Ms. Gabriele stated that PCA staff brainstormed and discussed various ways to ask for approval to release the remaining \$500,000. Gabriele explained that it was necessary for it to align with our strategic plan and provide relief and help during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Gabriele explained that after several discussions with various organizations and individuals about possibilities, an idea formed following a discussion with the co-chair of the Pennsylvania Music Therapy Task Force, when she spoke of music therapists, current and past projects with health care workers.

Ms. Gabriele explained the initiative that will use music and art therapy strategies to address critical and community health needs and increase visibility of the arts-based strategies to the health care sector and increase opportunities for artists to work within the health care sector.

Gabriele explained that PCA's strategic plan has two action items under Goal 2 that this project would fulfill, the first one being to pursue opportunities for arts and healthcare and the second one being to promote arts in the health network of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Gabriele stated that PCA staff held discussions with healthcare organizations about how the implementation of this project might work. She explained that PCA staff also spoke with the Director of Communications in the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Communications Director at the Department of Human Services to advise them of this proposed initiative and to see if they had any ideas or feedback and added that they both liked the idea.

Gabriele reported that finally, PCA staff spoke with our contact in the Governor's office to make sure that this is something that they would support, and they do.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the timeline for this initiative, upon Council approval, is to immediately request the release of funds from budgetary reserve, to solicit applications and then make a final recommendation to Council at a Special Council meeting within the next couple of months.

Ms. Gabriele stated that PCA staff recommends that Council approve the guidelines following this memo for accepting proposals for the delivery of music and arts therapy in hospital and health care settings to help health care workers process the stress brought on by the pandemic.

Gabriele added that we anticipate that staff will recommend one applicant and award up to \$500,000.

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. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 7 ACTION: Recommendations for Marketing Initiative – Americans for the Arts

Norah Johnson, Director of External Affairs & Public Awareness

Chair Parks stated that he is aware of the following conflict of interest: Council member Lehr for the Americans for the Arts.

Ms. Johnson reported that she would provide a summary of the recommendation and stated that for many years, PCA has been partnering with Americans for the Arts (AFTA) to provide multi-year, fairly intensive, mostly in-person marketing training and audience building skills for Pennsylvania Arts and Cultural organizations. Johnson stated that when the pandemic hit, any of these in person trainings that had been scheduled did not happen. Johnson explained that PCA has been able to continue to provide virtual trainings through AFTA throughout the length of the pandemic and that those trainings have been well attended with an average of two dozen organizations per session. Ms. Johnson added that those sessions have been on a range of topics relating to digital marketing with a heavier focus around responding, dealing with, and surviving and eventually thriving through the pandemic.

Ms. Johnson stated that one of the learnings that we have developed through our engagement with AFTA is that with many arts and cultural organizations, access to specific guidance and advice is an issue, and so while it is helpful to provide training for organizations so they go back and do their work, it is also very helpful for organizations to be able to have access to discreet expert consultation for one-on-one help with specific projects.

Ms. Johnson stated that this revision to the scope of work of that engagements with AFTA would be for us to provide a certain number of arts and culture organizations in Pennsylvania, through an application process run by AFTA, the opportunity to work one-on-one with an industry expert to address a discreet specific challenge or work product. Johnson explained that there would essentially be a deliverable for them at the end of that engagement and there would be a certain number of hours for them for several months that are budgeted for that engagement.

Ms. Johnson explained that organizations would apply to AFTA with a specific challenge that they are trying to address and resolve, and the expectation would be that the expert consultant would work with them, not only to help them do the project for them, but to also work with them at a close enough level to build their expertise to help them address a specific problem or project.

Ms. Johnson indicated that because the current scope of work is now specifically for training, not for the delivery of a service, PCA staff wanted to come to Council to authorize a slight revision to the language of the grant award agreement with AFTA. She added that there will not have to be a revision to the budget amount, and AFTA would be required to provide detailed budget information as well as a project plan that would be approved for this concept.

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

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

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

ITEM 8 INFORMATION: Strategic Plan Progress Report

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke advised Council that a full update on the action plan is found within the Council book materials. Blischke stated that PCA staff created this action plan to specifically identify actions that would advance the goals and strategies that Council enacted in its strategic plan. The Council Book contains a report on each of the goals and each of the strategies. Mr. Blischke stated that he would not go over every line item and that the complete report is in the Council materials.

Ms. Blischke stated that he would highlight some of the key areas and added that PCA has been very active, through Council leadership in advancing this plan. Blischke added that notwithstanding the pandemic and a lot of the challenges that have arisen over the past year, PCA has remained very active and has moved the needle in many key ways.

Blischke reported that under Goal 1, Strategy 1, which is to strengthen communities through the arts, one of the things that PCA wanted to look at was its funding policies in looking at the equitable distribution across the state to make sure all Pennsylvanians are served. Mr. Blischke stated that this year, Council acted in a very profound way to adjust the funding strategy for our general operating support program, Arts Organization and Arts Program (AOAP.) Blischke explained that this was a significant undertaking.

Blischke informed Council that their leadership has not gone unnoticed and has gained national attention. Blischke explained that the National Association of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) has featured Council's work in their monthly letter to all of the state arts agencies in the country and has invited PCA to participate on a national panel to talk about the work that was accomplished in that area.

Blischke stated that numerous state agencies and various media agencies have reached out to PCA to discuss and added that this was a huge accomplishment that bodes well for how we will look at all our programs and in making sure we are serving Pennsylvania.

Mr. Blischke stated that he wanted to take a moment to highlight the work that Amy Gabriele, Seth Poppy, and Ian Rosary have done in the current difficult environment, being remote, in with dealing with a complicated state system. Blischke reported that this team has already made efforts to try to approve accountability in the workflow in our systems and they are also making progress in trying to enhance all the information that is managed through our regional partnerships.

Mr. Blischke reported that another area to highlight is work that has been done under Goal 1 in the strategy to support community projects. Blischke stated that a key element that Council authorized was the creation of the Creative Communities initiative. Blischke explained that PCA staff has worked on this initiative and that Sarah Merritt has done a great job in creating compelling guidelines and has identified six communities and is in the process of identifying a new community. Blischke added that Ms. Merritt has also worked very closely with the consultant firm, Metris Arts Consulting, to design and employ evaluation tools apply metrics tools. Blischke stated that this initiative has raised the visibility of the role of arts in community and economic development and has also profoundly strengthened PCA's visibility and relationships with cross-sector partners.

Blischke reported that one area under Goal 1 in Strategy 4 is preserving and promoting diverse cultures and cultural heritage. Blischke stated that Dana Payne has been directing this area and has made progress in helping us reach statewide coverage for PCA's folk and traditional arts coverage. Blischke believes that Ms. Payne has a lead on the possibility to expand that coverage this coming year even further.

Blischke also added that in this strategy, PCA has also identified strategy in promoting creative entrepreneurs. Mr. Blischke explained that the action that Council took today will vastly move the needle on this and will create resources and support for creative entrepreneurs.

Blischke stated that another area of focus is PCA's inclusion, equity, and diversity work across our agency. Blischke stated that Dana Payne, who has been leading these initiatives, has engaged external help on this work. Blischke asked Dana Payne to provide an update on this initiative.

Dana Payne reported that PCA staff and Council members have participated in the DEI survey using the equity and maturity model, which is a proprietary tool that was developed by Walls Torres Group to enable organizations to diagnose current performance, provide clarity on gaps and identify opportunities for growth.

Ms. Payne stated that in January, virtual meetings were held with consultant Daria Torres and PCA staff and then again with Council members during the two January roundtables. Ms. Payne stated that participants were provided with an overview of the work thus far, an inventory of current agency DEI related programs, PCA's existing activities and policies, and opportunities. Payne explained that participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback and that two areas have been identified for additional focus. Payne stated that the first area of focus is being ready to act upon activities that can be implemented within the next three months. Payne stated that the second area of focus are activities that require more definition than what would be able to be implemented within the next six months to a year.

Ms. Payne reported that strengths and challenges have been identified and work is being done in order to set goals and develop specific measurable outcomes. Payne explained that this means measuring and reporting models for appropriateness determining the best ways to track progress and the best ways to communicate progress internally and externally.

Mr. Blischke stated that the next item to highlight are related to Goal 2: the role of arts in providing educational opportunities and lifelong learning. Blischke explained that one area that PCA has sought to expand are the ways for artists to be able to serve all kinds of communities. Blischke stated that a recent development for PCA is completing the application process for a grant from the National Assembly for State Arts Agencies. Blischke stated that PCA was approved for that grant to support work with creative aging in older Pennsylvanians. Mr. Blischke complimented Jamie Dunlap on her work in coordination with staff and education partners in developing a plan for that application. Blischke added that PCA was awarded a grant of \$60,000 and that this first grant the agency received other than from the National Endowment of the Arts. Mr. Blischke asked Ms. Dunlap to give a quick overview on how the PCA plans to use those funds.

Ms. Dunlap reported that she is very excited about this opportunity and explained that the plan is to develop and provide online training modules to teaching artists free of charge across the Commonwealth. Dunlap stated that these training modules will contain components with assessments, such as quizzes and tests embedded into the training modules. She explained that at the end of these series of modules, there will be a certificate of completion provided. Ms. Dunlap added that this training will also have a series of four videos that will be examples of best practices, of different art forms in different communities across the state, working in creative aging settings. Ms. Dunlap explained that the intention is to distribute these videos through an online platform and hopefully through cable and network television. She explained that these will be provided free of charge to individuals who at home or in assisted or long-term living facilities. Ms. Dunlap stated that the videos will be a part of the training and will also serve a dual purpose of providing access to creative aging experiences for seniors.

Dunlap stated that this is a great opportunity for PCA and added that it is going to be a lot of work but will help move our work forward in creative ageing.

In finishing up the report on Goal 2, Mr. Blischke reminded Council that their action on arts in the healthcare measure really is a quantum leap in Goal Area 2. Blischke stated that Ms. Gabriele referenced specific action items that now have great opportunity.

Mr. Blischke stated that the next part of his update is a highlight of Goal 3 and enhancing PCA's branding, messaging, and marketing. PCA has engaged external help with the Bravo Group. Blischke explained that Norah Johnson is leading this initiative and asked her to provide an update on this initiative.

Norah Johnson reported that PCA engaged Bravo Group with the idea originally that the work would be wrapped up by July 2020; however, because of the pandemic, this engagement was put on hold for a period of time but restarted at the end of 2020. Ms. Johnson stated that since then, there has been a lot of work done under the contract and she thanked those Council members who participated in the mood board workshop and those who have took part in the stakeholder interviews with Bravo Group. Ms. Johnson stated that some audience analysis workshops have also been conducted and Bravo Group and currently in the process of finalizing PCA's brand platform for Council to approve and then they will be moving into developing messaging and audience development as well as the development of deliverables.

Mr. Blischke asked Council if they had any questions or general observations about the overview and highlights of the action plan.

Ms. Goldberg thanked PCA staff for the wonderful progress that they have made during these difficult times and commended staff for their hard work and effort. She added that PCA has made such wonderful progress in initiatives that have been completed and that are in progress that she has been honored to serve on the Council for all of these years. Goldberg added that she is impressed that PCA has become visionaries and are true pioneers and that it is no wonder that the agency stands out among all the other state arts councils. Goldberg commended PCA staff for standing out among other state agencies and that even during the pandemic did not miss a beat.

Mr. Blischke thanked Ms. Goldberg and stated that this Council has taken on a great leadership role and that translates to the staff and inspires their interaction and he commended staff for the work they have done.

Chairman Parks echoed Ms. Goldberg's comments and stated that leadership starts at the top and commended Mr. Blischke and PCA staff for embracing the changes that have occurred from just being a granting organization but is progressively moving forward with limited resources to address the needs of the creative community in Pennsylvania and other communities as well. Chair Parks congratulated Mr. Blischke and PCA staff members and offered thanks on behalf of Council.

ITEM 9 INFORMATION: Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Grants Budget

Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration

Ms. Gabriele directed Council to the spreadsheet on page 56 of the Council Book and explained that this spreadsheet shows a draft of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budget. Gabriele explained that this is typically shared with Council at the March meeting each year and added that the current year is shown as a reference.

Ms. Gabriele stated that some things will change between now and July when this budget will be acted upon pending the passage of the state budget.

Ms. Gabriele provided an overview of some areas that have projected changes:

- All Program Stream Grants for 2021 are \$2,000, and PCA staff is hoping to increase those to \$3,000 for next year.
- Program Stream Entry and Creative Entrepreneurs are two new funding line items. Creative Entrepreneurs was just approved during this meeting to start in the current year budget. The combined amount for these two line items will replace what was allocated for Project Stream.
- Folk Arts is projected to increase slightly to expand the folk arts partnership and increase administration of the Folk Arts Apprenticeship.
- Creative Communities is projected to increase expanding the grantees and growth in that program.
- Creative Catalysts and Statewide Services may increase over the year depending upon the availability of funds based on grants that were not able to be executed for various reasons.

Ms. Gabriele stated that this is not an action item but is to provide information to start preparing for the July action item.

Chair Parks stated that Council will see what the legislature does for the budget for the PCA during these uncertain times. Parks added that he appreciates this preliminary view of maintaining our programs and the council appreciates this report.

ITEM 10 INFORMATION: Chair's Report

Jeffery Parks, Chair

Chair Parks formally recognized two legislators who have finished their service on the Council. Chair Parks thanked Representative Tina Pickett (of the 110th District) for her 20 years of service as a legislative member of the Council. Parks stated that Pickett followed Speaker of the House Matt Ryan on the Council and tied with former Rep. Mark Cohen for the longest service on the Council. Parks added that Representative Pickett has been an eloquent voice for rural arts organizations and their role in their communities, and a champion for the arts and the PCA in her caucus.

Parks also thanked Senator Judy Ward of the 30th Senatorial District who was named to the Council in 2019. Parks explained that Senator Ward is a noted friend of the arts in her district, and she has been a valued longtime volunteer at the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.

Chair Parks added that both legislators have also been members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Arts & Culture Caucus and stated that the Council and staff of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts deeply appreciates their contributions to Council deliberations, and their insights and experience that informed the PCA's programming and goals. Parks stated that formal letters have been sent on behalf of Council to Representative Pickett and Senator Ward.

Chair Parks reported that the Veterans Arts Residency Resource Guide was recently developed by one of our arts in education partners, the Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership. Parks explained that this guide was supported by one of our creative catalyst grants and is being shared by the PA Department of Military and Veteran Affairs and the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Affairs. Parks also noted that Council member Susan Goldberg and her husband, Woody, reviewed and provided input into the guide. Parks added that an electronic copy of this guide would be sent to each Council member.

ITEM 11 INFORMATION: Executive Director's Report

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke reminded Council about filing their Annual Statements of Financial Interest. Mr. Blischke stated that Laura Kline sent the link and related information about this filing earlier this year. Mr. Blischke asked Council to file the statement, if they have not done so yet, and added that it is preferred to have the statement filed by the end of March and that there are consequences if the report is not filed by May 1, 2021. Mr. Blischke asked Council members to contact him with any questions.

Mr. Blischke stated that that PCA staff is closely watching federal action that will hopefully happen in short order regarding the Shuttered Venue Operating Grants. Mr. Blischke explained that the Small Business Association will be providing guidelines about these grants and that these are a huge opportunity and are very important for any eligible Pennsylvania arts organization. Blischke added that this is a grant that will be available to offset revenue losses by operators of venues in Pennsylvania and can be up to \$10 million.

Mr. Blischke reported that the House has passed the American Rescue Plan that will be going to the President and explained that within this bill, \$135 million will be allocated to the National Endowment for the Arts and 40 percent of that money goes to state arts agencies. Blischke added that as guidelines come from the NEA, PCA staff will work on recommendations for its distribution of Pennsylvania's portions of those funds.

Mr. Blischke reported that PCA staff submitted a letter of intent to apply for funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to support creative entrepreneurs. Blischke stated that the letter was received and accepted and PCA has been invited to apply for a \$500,000 grant to support creative entrepreneurs across the state.

Mr. Blischke announced that Taha Vahanvaty is the 2021 Poetry Out Loud statewide champ. Taha Vahanvaty is a senior at Stroudsburg High School. Mr. Blischke stated that Taha Vahanvaty created a great promotional video for the Poetry Out Loud program, which can be found on PCA's Facebook page.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.