

Minutes
Special Council Meeting
September 16, 2020
9:00 a.m.

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
Skype Conference Call

Chair Jeffrey Parks welcomed those in attendance. Chair Parks informed those on the call that the special meeting was going to be recorded for the purpose of aiding in the production of the meeting minutes only and asked council members to not participate in the meeting if they do not agree to being recorded for administrative purposes.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA SKYPE: Chair Parks, Mr. Alaquiva, Mr. Astorino, Representative Ciresi, Ms. Colón, Vice-Chair Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Lehr, Judge Morgan, Representative Pickett, Mr. Stull, Ms. Vilayphonh, Mr. Warfield, Mr. West, Ms. Zaborney.

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Senator Iovino, Senator Ward.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT VIA SKYPE: Karl Blischke, Executive Director; Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director; Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning; 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; Ian Rosario, Grants Liaison.

GUESTS PRESENT VIA SKYPE: Jenny Hershour, Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania; Tierney Smith, Office of Senator Iovino

CALL TO ORDER:

Jeffrey Parks, Chair

Chair Parks called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and reviewed guidelines regarding the format of the meeting and asked Mr. Blischke to call the roll.

ITEM 1 ROLL CALL:

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Jeffrey Parks, Chair

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

ITEM 2 ACTION: Recommendations for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap explained that this recommendation is for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) administrative funding for the remaining portion of Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Ms. Dunlap stated that at the July 2020 meeting, Council approved funding for the first five months of the fiscal year in the amount of \$150,000.

Ms. Dunlap explained that with additional funds that are now available through a release of some funds that were previously held in reserve, PCA staff is recommending that Council act on funding the PPA administration for the remaining seven months of the fiscal year, an amount totaling \$191,707.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA is recommending that the funding for the remaining 7 months cover the partner administration which may include Project Stream support, or in the event that funds are not available for Project Stream, funds will go to the PPA partners to support community outreach services and provide resources for the regions they are serving.

Ms. Dunlap directed Council members to the chart page 6 of the Council Book that shows the first five months of the fiscal year and what was already approved at the July meeting and recommendations for the remaining seven months. Ms. Dunlap explained that currently three regions do not have PPA Partners.

Ms. Dunlap asked if the Council had any questions regarding the recommendation.

Mr. Stull asked if there was any reason why region 5 left the partnership.

Ms. Dunlap explained that Region Five, which was served by the Lehigh Valley Arts Council notified PCA that they decided not to move forward with the PPA partnership starting with Fiscal Year 2020-2021. This decision was made by their leadership and board.

Ms. Dunlap stated that with that news, PCA staff reached out to Community Partnership RC&D. Ms. Dunlap explained that this is an organization that has been a partner for quite some time and they already help provide administrative support for the uncovered regions, which are Region 11 and Region 13. PCA staff recommended that Community Partnerships RC&D administer the Program Stream funding for those regions until PCA is able to identify new partner organizations.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA staff reached out to Community Partnerships RC&D regarding Region 5 to see if they would be willing and able to provide those administrative services related to Program Stream for Regional 5, and they replied that they would be willing and able.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the PCA's second recommendation for Action Item 2 is that the funds that were previously approved for the Lehigh Valley Arts Council (\$11,444) now go to Community Partnerships RC&D to provide program stream administration support to Region Five. Ms. Dunlap explained that this is to ensure that those Program Stream grantees will receive their funds in an effective and efficient way.

To clarify, Ms. Dunlap stated that Community Partnerships RC&D will provide support only related to Program Stream for those three unrepresented regions: Region 5, Region 11, and Region 13.

Ms. Dunlap reported that PCA does plan on holding a new round of open applications to identify partners for those three regions in 2021.

Chair Parks asked where Community Action Partnerships, RC&D is located.

Ms. Dunlap responded that they are centrally located in Lewistown, which is above Perry County and one hour north of Harrisburg.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any additional questions

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

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

ITEM 3 ACTION: Recommendations for Folk & Traditional Arts Program

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

Ms. Payne directed Council to pages 9-11 of the Council Book. Ms. Payne stated that these recommendations are for two of the grant programs offered under the Folk and Traditional Arts Infrastructure program.

Ms. Payne reported that PCA received eight letters of interest and those letters of interest were approved for organizations to submit applications for the Folk Arts Partnership. Ms. Payne stated that she convened a four-member advisory panel for the partnership in June in order to review the eight applications submitted. Ms. Payne stated that all eight applications were recommended for funding with a total amount of \$120,000.

Ms. Payne reported that for the apprenticeship grants, 21 applications were received and 18 of those applications were recommended for funding.

Ms. Payne stated that she convened a seven-member apprenticeship panel in June to review the applications and 11 were approved for full funding and the rest were approved for partial funding.

Ms. Payne explained the following recommendations for the Folk and Traditional Arts partnership.

The first recommendation is for Council to approve funding in the amount of \$183,865 that represents \$120,000 to support the eight Folk Arts Partnership organizations and \$63,865 in support of the 18 apprenticeship projects.

The second recommendation is for funding in the amount of \$5,000 paid to Community Partnerships RD&D for administration of the apprenticeship grant awards.

The last recommendation is to also provide grantees with the flexibility to re-allocate Fiscal Year 2020-2021 grant award funds, as necessary, to general operating and/or technology enhancement expenses.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any additional questions.

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

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

ITEM 4 ACTION: Recommendations for Preserving Diverse Cultures Division

Dana Payne

Ms. Payne reported that, in July, Council approved funding for both grant opportunities offered by Preserving Diverse Cultures Division.

She stated that one thing that was missing is that both programs, especially Strategies for Success, require a partial match at certain levels of funding.

Ms. Payne explained that the intermediate level of Strategies for Success requires a partial match of \$7,500 and the advanced level requires a 100% match of \$20,000.

Ms. Payne stated that in light of the pandemic and the financial strains that many of these organizations are experiencing, PCA staff is recommending that Council waive the match requirements for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 program period for the Strategies for Success grantees. Ms. Payne explained that this will provide flexibility and continued support of these organizations that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Chair Parks asked the Council for any additional questions.

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

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

ITEM 5 ACTION: Recommendations for Statewide Services

Jamie Dunlap

Ms. Dunlap reported that at the July 2020 Council Meeting, PCA staff brought forward a recommendation to have open solicitation for requests for proposals to provide statewide services focused on reopening and recovery through a one-time grant in the amount of \$20,000. Ms. Dunlap explained that this would be a matching grant that would support reopening and recovery services and initiatives in the creative sector and arts organizations across the commonwealth.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA received three proposals and the applicants were the Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, and the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.

Ms. Dunlap reported that a panel was created to review the proposals. She explained that the panel consisted of individuals from outside of the agency. Ms. Dunlap added that the panelists are listed at the end of the memo and included someone from the Department of Aging, DCNR, DCED as well as an individual from the New Jersey Arts Commission.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the panel reviewed the proposals based on the criteria outlined in the memo, and after their review and the discussion, the panel recommended that Citizens for the Arts in PA receive the Statewide Services Recovery and Reopening Grant.

Ms. Dunlap explained that this recommendation was made based upon several factors including the organization's existing resources, the statewide reach that Citizens for the Arts in PA has, and their relationships with key stakeholders.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the review panel also suggested that it would be helpful for Citizens for the Arts in PA to provide more information about key partners referenced in their proposal and more detail on plans to reach the diverse communities across the commonwealth.

Ms. Dunlap explained that she will be planning a follow up conversation with Citizens for the Arts in PA to follow up on these questions.

Ms. Dunlap stated that PCA staff recommends Citizens for the Arts in PA for this grant, contingent upon PCA staff receiving a response to the two items noted.

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

ITEM 6 ACTION: Recommendations for Entry Track

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke reminded Council members that Entry Track is the point of entry for applicants wishing to qualify for ongoing general operating support through PCA's Arts Organizations and Arts Program (AOAP) Track.

Mr. Blischke reported that prior to the pandemic, PCA received 32 applications for funding for this year and convened review panels to make assessments for Council's consideration.

Mr. Blischke explained that these are the only general operating grants that Council did not yet have a chance to act on based on the five-month budget. Again, with funds that were released, this gives Council an opportunity to address these grants that were submitted and reviewed prior to the pandemic.

Mr. Blischke stated that PCA staff is recommending that Council approve funding in this category along the same lines that Council approved for grants to Program Stream and AOAP and that everyone who is funded is recommended for \$3,000 across the board.

Mr. Blischke explained that PCA staff is recommending that all who scored 70 or greater receive a grant and those assessed below 70 are not recommended for funding. Mr. Blischke added that, just as Council provided additional flexibility in the AOAP category relating to issues arising from pandemic, PCA staff recommends that Council provide the same additional flexibility for these grants and not require a match. Mr. Blischke explained that this will offer grantees the ability to use these grants for capital expenditures which will be particularly helpful as organizations make expenditures related to enhancing their online capabilities and in some cases cleaning and protective equipment.

Mr. Blischke added that PCA staff also recommends that once a grant award agreement is delivered to a grantee, they will need to sign it within 60 days or forfeit their funding.

Chair Parks noted that this is a dramatic differential on the way it has been operated in the past and asked the Council for any additional questions.

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

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

ITEM 7 INFORMATION: Public Comments

Chair Parks announced that the Council has allotted time to hear public comments.

There were no other requests to make comments.

Chair Parks thanked everybody for attending.

Executive Director's Report

Karl Blischke

Mr. Blischke wished a belated happy birthday to Representative Ciresi.

Mr. Blischke thanked Council and staff for working through this challenging time and for being able to respond quickly and provide support to the creative sector.

Mr. Blischke reminded everyone that Council has allocated funds related to the five-month budget appropriation that was just under \$4 million.

Mr. Blischke explained that through those actions, PCA secured a leveraged relationship with partners across the state. Blischke stated that Council also provided maximum flexibility for operating support to organizations across the commonwealth as they take unprecedented action and have unprecedented needs during the pandemic. Council has also continued key initiatives that will be important now and eventually as communities look to recover. Mr. Blischke gave the Creative Communities initiative as an example.

Mr. Blischke explained that the pandemic put on pause some really important work that PCA staff was working on related to the strategic plan but now that is up and underway again. Blischke stated that PCA staff is continuing on the brand and messaging work with the Bravo Group.

Mr. Blischke stated that Sarah Merritt is beginning to re-engage on developing an evaluation protocol for the Creative Communities initiative and Mr. Blischke stressed that importance in documenting and telling a story on how the arts advance community and economic development.

Mr. Blischke stated that he is pleased to report that PCA is able to re-engage on its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work which relates to PCA's over-arching value in the strategic plan.

Mr. Blischke explained that Dana Payne is directing those initiatives and called on Ms. Payne to provide an update.

Ms. Payne reported that within the next four to six weeks she will be reaching out to Council and staff to participate in an initial process by taking the online Equity Maturity Model Survey, which is a propriety equity tool developed by PCA's consultant, Daria Walls Torres of The Torres Group. Ms. Payne explained that this survey will be used in the diagnostic phase to gauge where we are, where we want to be, and how to get there.

Ms. Payne stated that she provided the consultant with background materials and information about PCA's approach to DEI in the past and will be meeting with her shortly. Ms. Payne explained that after the initial meeting, she will reach out to everyone with the tools and the link and information with the Equity and Maturity Model. Ms. Payne added that after everyone has completed the survey, she and the consultant will look at the results and be in the midst of the diagnostic phase.

Ms. Payne directed that Council reach out to her with any questions about this process and the tools that will be used.

Mr. Blischke stated that Council allocated funds from the five-month budget and PCA is still waiting for word on the remainder of state budget. He added that in that context and because of the current environment, Council has a lot to consider in terms of the best course for action and for funding policies. Blischke reported that he has been having very good discussions with Chair Parks on items and discussion areas for Council and prior to looking at the big picture for the remainder of the state fiscal year and going forward, that it will be important for Council to have a deep dive that will include a scan of the current landscape and the issues that are being faced going forward.

Mr. Blischke stated that certainly, this pandemic has served as a catalyst or an accelerant for certain trends, including remote working and importance of community, and the disproportionate impact on the creative sector and communities of color.

Mrs. Blischke stated that with respect to communities, now more than ever, people are deciding where they want to live and that may be a decision that is separate from who is employing them. Blischke added that because of this, the creative sector is certainly positioned to be at the table as communities look to retain residents, attract residents, talent, and investment.

Mr. Blischke reported that he and PCA staff have had some very good discussions with Emma Alaquiva about accessibility in connection with the great PSA that he did involving the deaf community. Blischke added that this will also be a point of discussion with Council moving forward.

Mr. Blischke indicated that he will be reaching out in the next few weeks with information and data about what is happening, discussions that have been held with the field recently which has included 16 or 17 conversations that staff put together with arts organizations around the state. Mr. Blischke also reported that PCA staff has been in tune with its national service entity, NASAA, and he has had several direct conversations with the executive directors of state arts agencies around the country. Mr. Blischke added that all of this information will be brought to the Council members in the near future as context for the discussions.

Chair's Report:

Jeffrey Parks, Chair

Chair Parks thanked Council members for the well-attended meeting and that their presence is appreciated.

Chair Parks reported that according to most national resources, it is going to be somewhere between mid-year 2021 and end of the year before enough people feel comfortable to go to public assemblies to restore things such as presenting organizations, events, festivals and probably even museums.

Chair Parks stated that this is going to be a Darwinian experience that none of us has ever seen and it is impacting different areas of the state in different ways. Parks reported that Allegheny County has philanthropic resources that have unified in support of arts organizations and it is pretty much similar in the Philadelphia area. Parks stated that the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation has stepped up to create an initiative to support arts organizations in the Lehigh Valley.

Chair Parks indicated that he not sure what is happening in other parts of the state and that he has deep concerns about other communities that do not have strong philanthropies and communities that will support the arts.

Chair Parks asked all in attendance to do two things. First, is to speak with legislators and encourage continued support for the arts through the Council and if possible, recovery funds would be fantastic.

Chair Parks stated that the effects of the pandemic will be “Darwinian” and he believes that 40% percent the arts organizations, particularly the smaller arts organizations, will go away. He is hopeful that they will come back and hopes that it will be something that this type of funding can restore.

Chair Parks also stated that he would like to ask those who are interested, after funding is determined, to participate in a group discussion about policy and supporting the arts throughout the state. Parks would like to do this at the end of this year or the beginning of next year.

Chair Parks stated that as Mr. Blischke previously mentioned, this is an opportunity, particularly for rural and suburban areas to attract residents who may be working elsewhere but can now work from anywhere. Parks added that broadband internet access is crucial to attracting new residents to Pennsylvania.

Chair Parks asked Council to contact Mr. Blischke if they are interested in joining a group to discuss policy coming out of the pandemic and take advantage of the resources that Pennsylvania has. Parks added that once PCA knows what kind of funding it will have moving forward, the discussion will focus on policies to put in effect to really support arts organizations. Parks stated that the biggest challenge is going to be who will be the survivors and who will not survive.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:46 am.