

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF THE ARTS**

**Connecticut Arts Council Meeting**

**September 14, 2020**

**1:00 pm**

**Via Team Video Conference Call**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Fritz Jellinghaus, Pedro Bermudez, Chris Bruhl, Helen During, Mary Ellen Eckels, Min Jung Kim, Jack Rosenberg, Ted Yudain

**Absent:** Jan Dilenschneider

**Staff:** Elizabeth Shapiro, Tamara Dimitri, Kolton Harris, Bonnie Koba, Rhonda Olisky, Jane Schneider

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of June 8, 2020.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Mary Ellen Eckels

(Y-8; N-0)

**III. Chairman's Report**

Fritz Jellinghaus stated that he had previously encouraged the arts council members to create a small committee to discuss who we are, what we do and where we are going, but that given the facts that there will be a new chairman on board at some point that it should be deferred but nevertheless thought that it's very important to discuss restructuring the council and to review its mission and hopes the new chairman will follow through with this suggestion.

Mr. Jellinghaus thanked the arts council members for their kindness and understanding in accepting his resignation and expressed what a remarkable experience it has been to work with each of them and admired their dedication and commitment to the Connecticut Office of the

Arts (COA). He hopes that his request to be appointed as chairman emeritus will be approved so he can continue to cheer on the work ahead.

Mr. Jellinghaus reported that the arts council members have unanimously supported his recommendation for Chris Bruhl to be his replacement as chairman and his name has been submitted through David Lehman for consideration by the Governor's office.

Mr. Jellinghaus also reported that the council still has two vacancies, one from the Governor and one from Senator Looney. A list of recommendations made by the council will be submitted to the Governor and Senator Looney.

Mr. Jellinghaus presented Pedro Bermudez' recommendation to consider exploring doing the Governor's Arts Awards and Patron of the Arts as a virtual gala. The consensus was that although presenting these awards is of uttermost importance and value, capacity of staff and financial resources must be considered as well as the restrictions under the current pandemic if decided to do the gala in person. Mr. Bermudez and some council members will come together to discuss the details of how the gala can be presented.

#### **IV. Director's Report**

Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro reported that COA has two interns from UCONN's Master of Public Policy program. Both will be working through the school year, 15 hours a week. Cesar Valentin will be working with Bonnie Koba doing research for the School to Prison Pipeline report that we commissioned. Timothy Coble will be working with Tamara Dimitri who is a data analyst and will be working analyzing data from our final reports as well as data migration to our new grants management data base.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that COA has all almost completed the development of all program grants application in our new grants management platform – Survey Monkey Apply. She hopes that by early 2021 the grants management database will be ready to give the council members access to any of the programs they are interested in.

Ms. Shapiro proudly stated that COA was the first division in DECD to adopt electronic signature for their grants using DocuSign.

Ms. Shapiro informed that many of the arts staff and a member of each of the DRSOs (Designated Regional Service Organizations) as well as a member of the Connecticut Arts Alliance are taking part in some very deep in creative justice learning through the Cultural Equity Learning Community, a pilot program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Tremaine Foundation, and other foundations. Over 900 people are taking this course for 16 weeks.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that COA is working with the DRSO's and the Connecticut Arts Alliance to identify the issues and greatest challenges that Connecticut artists and arts organizations have suffered as a result of COVID.

She is also working with Commissioner Lehman and DECD senior staff to brainstorm solutions, both recognize the seriousness of this issue particularly for Connecticut's theaters.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that she is also working with Eric Dillner, Executive Director of Shoreline Arts Alliance and Dr. Sten Vermund, Dean of Yale School of Public Health. They have created a team that goes out to arts organizations and publicly assesses how safe that environment is from a COVID transmission standpoint. Being at the table as part of these discussions gives us the opportunity to share and empower our constituents with valuable information to assist in how to move forward during this time.

## **VI. Action Items**

### **FY21 Supporting Arts Grants**

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve one hundred sixty-nine (169) Supporting Arts grants totaling \$840,000.

Motion: Chris Bruhl

Second: Mary Ellen Eckels

Recuse: Ted Yudain

(Y-7; N-0; Recuse-1)

### **FY21 Designated Regional Service Organizations Partnership Grants**

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve six (6) Designated Regional Service Organization Partnership grants in the amount of \$34,000 each for a total of \$204,000.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Min Jung Kim

(Y-8; N-0)

### **Connecticut Arts Alliance Partnership**

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve a Partnership grant to the Connecticut Arts Alliance in the amount of \$34,000 for FY21 (October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021).

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Jack Rosenberg

Recuse: Chris Bruhl

(Y-7; N-0; Recuse-1)

### **Folk & Traditional Arts Program FY21 Partnership Agreement**

It is recommended that the Arts Council approve a partnership grant in the amount of \$15,000 to the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) for the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program (CCHAP) to support the ongoing partnership of the statewide Folk and Traditional Arts program.

Motion: Mary Ellen Eckels

Second: Ted Yudain

(Y-8; N-0)

## **VII. Other Business**

### **Arts and Education Initiatives Presentation – Bonnie Koba**

Ms. Bonnie Koba serves as the representative of the New England region for the Arts Education Advisory Group. This group is comprised of one manager representing each of the 6 regions across the United States in collaboration with NEA and NASAA. The nature of this group working in arts education throughout the country informs the work here in CT and in turn the work COA is doing here in CT is often replicated in other states.

Ms. Koba reported, that in terms of informing her work, the arts ed managers began a deep dive into equity, diversity and inclusion over a dozen years ago and long before the concept of overt recognition of these issues became somewhat mainstream thinking and a call to action. For arts education managers, in terms of DEI work as well as access, has always been a challenge. Since schools are their focus as the microcosm of society, they often see issues emerging and often are addressing them a couple of steps ahead of a bigger curve.

Ms. Koba informed that the guiding questions on the national level this year are: How can state arts agencies arts education managers use an asset-based approach to reimagine and build sustainable, equitable and resilient arts education programs in their state? How can they effectively use data to define and decrease equity gaps in arts education policy and practice? How do they identify and engage community leaders in arts based collected impact practice for both episodic crisis such as natural disasters and pandemics and sustained crisis related to racism and other social injustices? As they reimagine systems, processes and policies to foster accessible art education programs, how do they incorporate dignity informed by place based in multilingual identities into the core values of our programming? This work aligns beautifully with COA's strategic plan – its current and relevant for our current times.

Ms. Koba also informed that COA is working in partnership with Arts for Learning CT to create a sustainable operational structure with resources and capacity to revision and expand the growth and development of the HOT approach as COA transitions the HOT Schools program to their care.

Ms. Koba reported that COA's Arts Presentation Grants connect Pre-K-12 schools and citizens with a Connecticut arts experience through field trips, classroom artist visits, lecture demonstrations, etc. These are small grants between \$500-\$1,000 that provide exposure experiences.

Ms. Koba reported also reported that in the school base sphere, she works with affiliate group CT Arts administrators Association (CAAA) and the Department of Education (SDE). Over the

summer she worked with district fine arts administrators and CAAA to develop examples of how arts lesson, music and visual arts can be conducted in various asynchronist and synchronist virtual learning, in school full and split classes, and hybrid virtual and in person attendance scenarios in preparation for reopening schools in a COVID climate. In May, working with this group, developed a set of recommendations for superintendents and school principals to consider as they budgeted for this current school year. SDE signed off as a partner on this document and distributed it through their network.

Ms. Koba informed that another focus for COA in arts education continues to be developing and connecting teaching artists. COA is currently working on a revised application and tracking system for teaching artists. COA is trying to make the application more welcoming to less experienced artists and bipoc artists who are currently misrepresented in our roster while at the same time maintaining a level of confidence with schools that COA's roster of artists are well developed in their art form and well versed in education pedagogy and school culture. COA's partnership with Oddfellows Playhouse in Middletown, is helping COA to create a hub and community for teaching artists where they can share ideas, ask questions and serve as support for one another both professionally and personally.

Ms. Koba also informed that COA has two arts education initiatives in development and exploration:

1. *Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline* - COA just completed in the spring of 2019 a landscape research study of arts-based programs and practices happening both locally and nationally that keep youth from trending toward the pipeline in the first place. COA is beginning to drill down to identify specific individuals and programs in Connecticut that engage in this work as well as to collect community data trends. The goal is to connect those in the work and hopefully co creating a replicable model for disrupting the pipeline.
2. *COA Partnership with Connecticut Center for Non Violence-Year 2*. Supporting the certification of cadres of teaching artists in the principles and practices of Kingian non-violence. This includes 24-36 hours of professional development, observation demonstration and critique. There are about 10 artists who participated fully and were certified last spring and they each have been encouraged to invite a bipoc artist partner to participate in the training going forward this year and then serving as a team together.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Ted Yudain, seconded by Mary Ellen Eckels, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lu Rivera  
Administrative Assistant