

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

Connecticut Arts Council Meeting

April 12, 2021

1:00 pm

Via Team Video Conference Call

MINUTES

Present: Min Jung Kim, Pedro Bermudez, Jack Rosenberg, Ted Yudain

Absent: Jan Dilenschneider, Adriane Jefferson, Mary Ellen Eckels

Staff: Elizabeth Shapiro, Tamara Dimitri, Kolton Harris, Jane Schneider

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of February 8th, 2021.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Jack Rosenberg

(Y-4; N-0)

III. Chairman's Report

Ms. Min Jung Kim congratulated the Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) for the extraordinary Connecticut Creative Futures Campaign that has been launched with Fox 61 and the Department of Education which is to amplify the voice of Connecticut artists and bring greater light to the possibility of careers in the arts in Connecticut.

Ms. Kim also stated that she appreciates COA's commitment to the principles of READI which is not always easy as seen in the most recent launch of the Elizabeth Mahaffey grant. She shared

that she attended the conversation led by COA and gave respect to the COA team for creating a forum where everyone can have a voice to discuss these issues.

Ms. Kim also stated that in her newly appointed role as chair for the Connecticut Arts Council she has been thinking about the ways in which the Council members can further support COA and Connecticut's arts and culture by better articulating their roles and responsibilities as a Council. Ms. Kim convened a preliminary conversation and council members Jack Rosenberg, Pedro Bermudez and Adriane Jefferson attended. It was a very good discussion and is the first of many more where it will involve all the council members as well as COA staff.

Ms. Kim stated that an informal survey will be sent to the arts council members to pole how they would like to become more involved and also put some information and data together that will help inform future conversations and meetings. This will information gathered will support the undergoing of the next strategic plan for the CT Office of the Arts.

Ms. Kim recommended that she would like to acknowledge the great leadership and service of Fritz Jellinghaus to the arts council for 35 years and suggested that he serve as non-voting emeritus chairman. A special meeting of the arts council will be scheduled to present an official voting motion.

Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro stated that due to the changes and slight delay to the Elizabeth Mahaffey Arts Administration Fellowship grants, she is requesting that this also be presented for voting motion at the special arts council meeting.

Ms. Min recommended that the arts council research if they can vote by proxy.

Ms. Min announced that the arts council member Helen During is stepping down from the council. Ms. During will be making New Zealand her permanent residence. Ms. Min expressed her gratitude for her service and dedication to the arts and encouraged arts council members to reach out and thank Ms. During as well.

IV. Director's Report

Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro reported that in terms of state funding the Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA) has been working closely with tourism leaders to be on the same page regarding legislation moving forward that affects the arts, culture and tourism.

Ms. Shapiro informed that she is meeting weekly with Brett Thompson, the interim director of CAA and she is part of the agenda at every board meeting.

Ms. Shapiro gave an update on the status of House Bill 6119. This is the bill that changes the amount of funds from the hotel taxes to the Tourism Fund which is where the Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) resides as a line item from a 10% allocation, which is split 60% to tourism and 40% to the arts to a 25% allocation. This bill was introduced by Representative John Michael Parker.

Ms. Shapiro stated that the current language has been set to sunset by September 2022. As a state agency, COA does not do advocacy, however, COA is working closely with our Designated Regional Service Organizations (DRSO) partners and CAA to give them the information when they have questions on what's going on and are part of conversations being had.

Ms. Shapiro stated that the name change from Tourism Fund to Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund will likely occur. COA along with its partners will continue to monitor progress of House Bill 6119.

Ms. Shapiro informed on the status of House Bill 146, an act authorizing sports wagering, online lottery, and online Keno. The proposed language dedicates 10% of the gross gaming revenue or \$20m million, whichever is less, to the statewide tourism marketing account. This would be an account within the Tourism Fund and if it goes through then in fact no money would be coming to the Arts. However, what the arts folks hope that will happen is that in FY24 the language will change so that the \$10m, plus the \$20m will be deposited into the Arts, Culture and Tourism fund with the split of 60% to Tourism and 40% to the Arts. COA will continue to monitor this bill.

Ms. Shapiro also informed on DECD's Senate Bill 936. This bill has passed out of the Commerce Committee unanimously and now needs to pass the full Senate and House for the Governor to sign. This is a bill with many small changes that have to do with several DECD statutes. This is where changes to Arts Council and Arts Council Foundation statutes are. This bill will grow the Arts Council members to 15 and would separate the Arts Council from the Arts Council Foundation.

Ms. Shapiro informed, regarding federal legislation, COA has been involved in arts advocacy weeks and staff has been included in virtual meetings with members of the federal delegation, which were organized by CAA. This is the first time CAAA has reached out to our office and it's a good example of working effectively together.

Ms. Shapiro also reported on the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). Just as in the CARES Act, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has received such funds which a percentage of it will be distributed to the state arts agencies. COA expects to receive \$803,000. COA is waiting for guidelines from NEA for the eligibility requirements to award these funds.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that \$2.6m in ARPA funds is coming to Connecticut. She will actively seek these funds to come to the arts and has a variety of ideas to how they can be used.

Ms. Shapiro informed on the Shuttered Venues Grant (SVG), these are significant amount of funds for theaters, film cinemas, etc. coming from the Small Business Administration (SBA). She has been working with Matt Pugliese, Associate State Director, Connecticut Small Business Development Center (CTSBDC) and regional SBA to answer questions to the applicants.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that COA has received official notification from NEA regarding their grant award which will support COA's FY22 and the grant amount is \$846,000 which is up from last year's award.

Ms. Shapiro reported that the Creatives Future Partnership with Fox 61 is going extremely well. She encouraged the arts council members to look at the website to view the amazing opportunities for students. Several interviews have been done of Connecticut artists on the live interview segment. They air every Friday at 10:40 and then they show again on Saturday. COA will also be working with FOX 61 to amplify the Arts Heroes Awards.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that she serves as Co-chair of the Women and Girls in the Arts Subcommittee for the Governor's Council on Women and Girls, which is a STEM initiative, but they pushed in STEAM, and the Lieutenant Governor is excited about this project with Fox 61, and offered a quotation in support of the program for the press release at Fox 61.

Ms. Shapiro gave an update on the Arts Heroes Awards which usually take place in early May. COA was not able to present the Arts Heroes last year. Therefore, COA will be presenting the 2020 Arts Heroes awardees with a recognition in 2021 on May 14th. The presentation will not be live, it will be recorded but will have a companion live event. COA will be recognizing folks from across the state representing, one from each of the nine regions. Kolton Harris is heading up the event.

Ms. Shapiro stated that for anyone working in the arts, there are reopening guidelines. The current directives from David Lehman are that Theaters and Performing Arts Centers should plan for a relatively normal opening this summer.

Ms. Shapiro informed that COA staff, as well as SHPO and museums have completed 8 hours of introductory work on implicit bias equity and anti-oppression training. Mr. Jack Rosenberg was able to join the training. A much deeper dive into the subject with another 8 hours on May 12th and May 13th. COA is working with the National Conference for Community and Justice. In addition, we've joined forces with Connecticut Humanities and Connecticut Library Association staff as well as board members. The Connecticut Humanities and the Connecticut Office of the

arts are the only statewide granters for arts and culture, and we are working to get our programs in better alignment.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that COA had been thinking on how to expand and grow the work COA does by funding high level internships under the Arts Workforce Initiative program (AWI). As announced at the last arts council meeting, the new arts community Impact Coordinator's pilot scheduled to begin with three of our DRSOs has begun. These Community Impact Coordinators are working with organizations to serve as engagement leads with a focus on cultural vibrancy and social artistic justice. The goal is that they will become a bridge between the marginalized and the DRSOs to foster greater connectivity.

Juanita Austin at the Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition
Raymond Pinto at the Cultural Alliance of Western CT
Ysanne at the Northwest CT Arts Council

In addition, we have just added a grants equity intern, this is a nine- month internship and it has been awarded to Colleen Fitzgerald. She is a performance artist and activist. She is of Liberian and Euro American descent. She will be working on research to develop a new grant *Empower*, to amplify the voices of the marginalized organizations that are committed to serve populations that are underrepresented and oppressed. We want to have a lot of community input to make sure we get this right.

Ms. Shapiro informed that COA will be granting additional funds to the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Program to have an intern work on growing the infrastructure of the folk and traditional arts community especially young creatives who are working in this field.

Ms. Shapiro reported that the Elizabeth Mahaffey Fellowship program will have an outside grant review panel. COA is recommitting to bring back outside grant panelists to review grants in the future.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that COA received a grant of \$23,000 from the National Association of State Art Agencies (NASAA) for Creative Aging Initiative. This is being led by Bonnie Koba and Tamara Dimitri. The initiative is to have long term engagement with older residents who are living at three different HEPA housing.

Ms. Shapiro informed that COA is finally moving with the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts program (VLA). There is a very active chapter in Boston and COA is contracting with them. This will happen over the course of the next 3½ years to bring in a robust and grow a VLA program in Connecticut. This will allow access to lawyers for people who are working in the arts as well as arts organizations for free or a greatly reduced cost.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that Randy Fiveash, Director of Tourism has retired. DECD has created a tourism cohort under staff member, Maribel La Luz, who is a community engagement person. Ms. Shapiro is part of this cohort and are going to be moving forward as they do a national search for this position to have an advisory and a much more conjoined effort in tourism from the arts and culture.

Ms. Shapiro stated that she been working with Deputy Commissioner Glendowlyn Thames and her team on initiatives to support the creative economy. Ms. Shapiro recently spoke with members of the Virginia Arts Council. They have a creative community grant which awards matching grants to municipalities to regrant to arts organizations in their municipalities. Ms. Shapiro thinks this program dovetails nicely with our cultural districts program and that the ARPA funds from the \$2.6 pool awarded to Connecticut would give a lot of community jurisdiction over awarding funds in municipalities.

Ms. Shapiro informed that COA has been intersecting with the Department of Education. COA recently met with the Connecticut Arts Administrators Alliance about both the lack of and the critical importance of the position of District Arts Curriculum Leads. Most district do not have this position. This might be another proposal for the ARPA funds to hire at least for three years these arts curriculum leads. CT children are not getting the kinds of arts classes that they need in middle and high school and we must be thinking about what steps we can build to support this.

V. Action Items

No action items submitted for approval.

VII. Other Business

A special Arts Council meeting will be scheduled to discuss COA's current and new strategic plan.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ted Yudain, seconded by Jack Rosenberg, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lu Rivera

Administrative Assistant