

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

**Connecticut Arts Council Meeting**

**March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**1:00 pm**

**Via Zoom Video Conference Call**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Jack Rosenberg, Sofia Lewitt, Ted Yudain, Judith McElhone, Calida Jones, Fritz Jellinghaus, *emeritus*

**Guest:** Brett Thompson, Executive Director, Connecticut Arts Alliance

**Absent:** Mary Ellen Eckels, Adriane Jefferson

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of February 7, 2022.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Calida Jones

(Y-5; N-0)

**3. Connecticut Arts Alliance**

The Connecticut Arts Council welcomed Brett Thompson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA). Mr. Thompson reported on the role of CAA and interfacing with the Connecticut Arts Council.

#### **4. Acton Item**

##### **FY22 Artists Respond Grants – Round 2**

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve sixty-two (62) Artists Respond Grants totaling \$295,000.

Motion: Jack Rosenberg

Second: Calida Jones

(Y-5; N-0)

#### **5. Committee Report of Governor Arts Awards**

Ms. Sofia Lewitt reported on the continued efforts of planning the Governor's Arts Awards program. Finding a date for the event when the awardees are all able to be present continues to be a challenge. The Committee felt that pushing out the date even further would get into the summer months and that would be bring on even more challenges.

Arts Council members expressed that it has always been mandatory for the awardees to be physically present at the event to receive the award and strongly felt that should continue.

Ms. Lewitt stated that there seem to be hesitancy in attending an event in person due to the COVID surge last summer. Arts Council members suggested to inform the awardees that we would take required measures to go virtual if any health concerns arose

Ms. Judith McElhone stated it was very important to commit to a date as soon as possible to book the Arts Center in the next two weeks.

Additional dates were going to be proposed to the awardees. However, if the awardees are not able to all be present, the event will be postponed for next year.

#### **6. Chairman's Report**

Mr. Jack Rosenberg reported that a few people have gone to the doodle pole to express their view on regarding the name for the Friends of the Arts Council. He encouraged those who haven't yet, to please do so and come to a close in the next week or so.

Mr. Rosenberg proposed the idea to create a youth council and start bringing our attentions to the next generation not only for what we are doing but for what the other eco systems are doing for the arts in Connecticut.

Ms. Calida Jones expressed that she is all in to engage youth in our work and passionate of student led work but stated that it would be very important in how we shape this and the intentionality behind it. It should just not be a name but be an impactful and robust program.

Mr. Ted Yudain expressed that he supports the idea but that it deserves careful thought in terms of not just the concept but how will it work.

Mr. Fritz Jellinghaus suggested that we reach out to NASAA (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies) and ask if there are any Youth Council in other state agencies in the country and how they work.

Mr. Jack Rosenberg is recommending that the Arts Council meeting scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 be conducted in person. A final decision will be made at the April meeting.

Mr. Jack Rosenberg stated he wanted to have a discussion on the Foundation development. He has received some feedback from arts council members who were particularly concerned that the trustees of the foundation would be required to individually raise money and that by doing that we would be leaving out a portion of our communities. Mr. Rosenberg suggests that a solution would be for the trustees to raise money as a collective rather than as an individual mandate.

The other question was on who distributes the money and who makes those decisions; is it the people who collected the money or is it the people who are working on distributing out the money in the granting. Mr. Rosenberg suggests that since it's a collective get that the granting committee be made up by half of the trustees of the foundation and half of the arts council members.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that if any of the arts council member were interested in being trustees of the Foundation, please notify him via email.

## **7. Director's Report**

Ms. Elizabeth Shapiro reported that Ms. Bonnie Koba's last day was February 28, 2022. Ms. Shapiro stated that she is looking into asking for Ms. Koba to return to work for at least once a week until her position is refilled.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that Ms. Jane Schneider will be retiring effective April 1, 2022. The Commissioner has approved, and Ms. Schneider has graciously accepted to return to work twice a week starting the second week in April.

Ms. Shapiro informed that the Office of the Arts is moving into the final stretch of the normal fiscal year grant processing for FY22, meaning that the majority of COA's regular grants as well as special grant have been executed.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that the Legislature has approved another \$15million for FY23 and another \$12.5 million for FY24 to repeat the CT Free Summer Museum program.

Ms. Shapiro informed that as of this morning, COA has awarded 705 grants totaling \$49,448,504. As a comparison in FY2019, we awarded 532 grants, totaling \$6.5m. These grants are split between state, NEA funds and other sources of federal funds.

Ms. Shapiro reported that Senator Austin and Representative Walker, co-chairs of the Appropriations Committee, have requested data from grants that COA and the CT Humanities have recently awarded. Data will be provided with the next week.

Ms. Shapiro reported that Arts staff is back to work in the office once a week on Tuesdays and that the mask mandate has been dropped from the building for the time being.

Ms. Shapiro also reported that she is working on preparing a short survey to send out on COA's services and programs which is one mechanism to get information on public input to be put into our strategic plan. Survey should be out within the next month, and we will be working with our DRSO's to get it out to the public.

**8. Other Business**

No other business.

**9. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Calida Jones seconded by Ted Yudain, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 1:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lu Rivera  
Grants Administrator