

**Connecticut Arts Council Meeting**  
**Monday, June 3, 2024**  
**1:00 pm**  
**Zoom**

**MINUTES**

Present: Floyd Green, Dwayne Harris, Jacqui Hubbard, Mary Ellen Kingsland-Eckels, Andrew Linde, Judy McElhone, Sarah McKay, Dan O’Keefe, Jack Rosenberg, Elizabeth Shapiro, and Brian Walters  
Staff: Mel Díaz, Tamara Dimitri, Rhonda Olisky, and Tekowa Omara-Otunnu  
Guest: Denise Massingale-Lamb and Leah Haas (CT-N)

**Call to Order**

Chairman Jack Rosenberg called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

**Welcome to new Council Member Dwayne Harris**

Dwayne Harris was welcomed as a new Council member and asked to give a brief overview of his background. Council members and staff also introduced themselves.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Rosenberg asked if there were any comments, questions, or edits to the minutes. Hearing none, he requested a motion to approve the March and April meeting minutes.

*Motion to approve the minutes of the March 4<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> meetings.*

Motion: F. Green | Second: M. Kingsland-Eckels | Discussion: No additional discussion.

In favor: 10, Opposed: 0, Abstentions: 0

March and April meeting minutes approved.

**Office of the Arts Updates**

Staff members gave updates on past and future grants and programs. Director Elizabeth Shapiro started with an update on ARPA grants. She explained that these federal funds were given to the State and the legislature allocated funds to organizations that faced hardship by the pandemic. Based on federal deadlines, all contracts need to be signed by December 31, 2024. With over 100 new ARPA awards needing to be contracted by the end of the year, two new staff members will be hired to work on ARPA grants and collecting data through December 2026.

Program Associate Rhonda Olisky reported on the Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund (CAEF) and Supporting Arts Grant Program (SAP), both general operating support grant programs. Olisky explained that organizations must have raised \$15,000 in private funds for two consecutive years to be eligible for CAEF. This year, 188 organizations were funded almost \$900,000. She then announced that SAP would launch in mid-June with applications due in mid-August. COA is usually able to fund around \$1MM.

Program Specialist Tamara Dimitri shared that the Artists Respond and Artist Fellowship Grant Programs run every other year. This year's Artists Respond program, which is awarded to artists executing a project around a community need, awarded 81 grantees \$3,000 each. The Artist Fellowship Grant will launch in June with applications due in September.

Program Associate Tekowa Omara-Otunnu reported on Poetry Out Loud, a national arts education program that encourages the study of poetry in high school. Competitions at the school level then state level, and the state winner goes to the national competition in DC for an opportunity to win a \$20,000 scholarship. Twelve schools with just under 1500 students participated. The state champion was Emma, a freshman from Lyme High School. While Emma did not win the national competition, she was able to connect with other students and staff was able to see what other states are doing with the program. School recruitment for the new school year will start at the end of August/the beginning of September.

### **Director's Report**

Director Shapiro stated that she would give a longer report at the next meeting, including a new partnership with Art Pharmacy to develop a social prescribing program when patients are prescribed arts and cultural experiences by their physician.

### **Committee for the Governor's Arts Awards**

Council members Andrew Linde and Denise Massingale-Lamb updated the Council on their work for this year's Governor's Arts Awards. The website ([Ctgovartsawards.com](http://Ctgovartsawards.com)) is live and will be promoted by an eblast. Recommendations for awardees are still being accepted and the main qualification is a strong CT presence whether that means the recipient spent their formative years here, lives here now, or has a strong work presence here. Committee members are starting with their short list of potential awardees to see who can attend the award event on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 5 Points Arts Center. There was a short discussion about potential sponsors and Director Shapiro asked for committee members to write up their questions to share with legal.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Rosenberg stated he did not have anything to report, but thanked the Council for volunteering their time and the staff for all the work they do.

### **Other Business**

There was no "other business" to discuss.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Rosenberg asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:03 pm.*

Motion: F. Green | Second: J. Hubbard | Discussion: No additional discussion.

In favor: 9, Opposed: 0, Abstentions: 0

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.