

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

Connecticut Arts Council Meeting

June 8, 2020

2:00 pm

Via Team Video Conference Call

MINUTES

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

Absent: No absentees.

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

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of February 10, 2020.

Motion: Helen During

Second: Jan Dilenschneider

(Y-8; N-0)

III. Chairman's Report

Per request of Chairman Fritz Jellinghaus, Chris Bruhl reported on the current status of the Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA). Mr. Bruhl reported that Connecticut continues to be well-served by the leaders and institutions that the members represent. He was very encouraged on their continued commitment during this very difficult time of COVID pandemic.

Mr. Jellinghaus stated that he would like the Connecticut Arts Council Foundation to interact and support CAA's efforts in fundraising.

Mr. Bruhl stated that it is very important for CAA is their relationship with the Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA), recognizing the role they can play in supporting COA. CAA is also doing a wonderful job in raising private funds without competing with Connecticut arts organizations.

Mr. Jellinghaus encouraged the arts council to form a small committee to think about who we are, what we do and how we will move forward with our mission when we return to whatever normalcy will be after this pandemic.

Mr. Jellinghaus made reference to the plan to rebuild COA created and presented by Jack Rosenberg to Commissioner David Lehman. Mr. Rosenberg stated that plan was presented in the fall, and that it was going to be considered to fund in the state's budget for the next fiscal year. However, due to the pandemic there is increasingly uncertainty on where the budget will land. It is very important that when this plan is again brought up to the Commissioner it is presented at a time when it will have the most potential to get support.

Mr. Jellinghaus also encouraged the arts council to think of how we can restructure the arts council and the foundation on how they are set up.

Pedro Bermudez stated that he is really proud how the arts organizations have responded to the death of George Floyd. Mr. Bermudez requested to have a conversation with the arts council on how we intend to communicate to our constituents what we will change as a whole so that we can be part of this conversation.

IV. Director's Report

Liz Shapiro reported that 4-5 DECD staff members that are working on writing all of the guidelines for the reopening of the state. The Arts and Culture sector is very much considered the heart of Connecticut's economic recovery. Liz encouraged the arts council to think of not only the role of arts and culture in Connecticut but how can we work with the other sectors.

Ms. Shapiro informed that the Office of the Arts is expecting to receive the second allocation of the biennial budget for FY21 of \$1,497,298 and it should be confirmed by the middle of July.

Ms. Shapiro reported that COA awarded 139 Artist Relief Grants; 73 Artist Respond Grants. These grants touched on all geographic areas of the state. The NEA Cares grant program application deadline closed on June 3rd. We have received 135 applications and staff is reviewing eligibility. The Connecticut Humanities is also awarding CARES funds, they have received 110 applications and we have decided not to allow arts organizations to double dip. Arts organizations could only apply to one of the programs.

The Supporting Arts Grant program application deadline closes on June 29th. This program has been over subscribed and the number of applicants to the program continues to grow. COA has been pushing this program because we would really like to see under resourced audiences

and organizations apply to the program. The application process has been streamlined. We do need to do a certain amount of due diligence to new applicants. We have received 30 new applications for this year. Due to the current circumstances, and after conversations with our partners, we have decided to suspend the REGI program this year and so an additional \$190,000 has been allocated to the Supporting Arts grant program.

Ms. Shapiro also informed that we have received 312 applications for the Program Associate position formerly held by Adriane Jefferson. This position is funded with NEA funds from the partnership grant awarded to COA.

Ms. Shapiro shared that of our nine regional partners, more than half, have been doing their own economic impact surveys and collecting data. However, the most important national survey, when looking at federal funding for the arts and culture moving forward, and that will have the most gravitas is the Americans for the Arts' real-time map and survey tool. COA has been encouraging our arts organizations to complete this survey. Currently, the tool indicates that there are 402 arts organization responses for the state of CT. The estimated financial loss for CT as of today due to the pandemic, is \$28,676,940. The total number of loss in attendance is about 1.9m people. 871 people have been laid off; and 874 have been furloughed.

The work of the Office of the Arts to support our arts organization essentially divided into four areas.

1. General economic support – we have moved the majority of our grant dollars this year to operating support and are looking at how we can partner with others for economic help.
2. Arts Education – assistance to schools in terms of what arts education is going to look like when we don't know what schools are going to look like.
3. Equity for black and brown people. COA has been committed to READI since 2017 as stated in our strategic plan. Although this has always been important, we now have more white people paying attention and that is really important.
4. Artists - how do we work to ensure that our artists continue to thrive in the midst of this very difficult situation.

Liz stated that the Office of the Arts staff is working really really hard. We have come together to work and discuss things that are difficult and sad in the midst of being confronted by all of these situations ourselves.

In terms of arts education Bonnie has been working with the Connecticut Arts Administrators Association to create guidelines for K-12 arts programs. Bonnie is looked upon by this group as a statewide resource.

Ms. Shapiro informed that she reached out to Mark Contreras from Connecticut Public TV on the work they are doing with the Department of Education to create a television resource for Connecticut Educators. She is having conversations on how to promote arts programs for educators, kids and families but also to promote artists.

Ms. Shapiro encouraged the arts council members to watch the hour long special that Ray Hardman did on Connecticut artists.

Ms. Shapiro also stated that the arts staff has spent a majority of their day talking to constituents both arts organizations and artists in helping them to identify resources to assist during this time of uncertainty. Sometimes during bad situations opportunities arise

Ms. Shapiro shared that several state-wide and national funders have reached out to her to talk about their work in Connecticut and how COA can collaborate moving forward and feels that this is a critical key in how to partner with private organizations. The Connecticut Health & Educational Facilities Authority is interested in funding basic operations needs for arts organizations but don't have the capacity and cannot fund the government. Ms. Shapiro brought in the Connecticut Humanities and they have submitted an application on behalf of the Office of the Arts to redistribute dollars to our arts and cultural organizations. We should know of the success of this application in the next two weeks.

Ms. Shapiro also shared that she has been in conversations with the president of the Council on Philanthropists who has been working with philanthropists who are interested in arts funding. Ms. Shapiro has also been in conversations with the Tremaine Foundation as Sustainable CT and others who are very much interested in how do you integrate arts and culture into a healthy economic recovery.

Ms. Shapiro has developed a close relationship with the director of New York Foundation for the Arts. Several of their programs have been opened to Connecticut artists which is funding at a very high level, and she is in conversations how Connecticut and New York can work together to support artists.

Ms. Shapiro stated that the arts staff has already had a short discussion about the current situation our country is in with the death of George Floyd. A deeper conversation is scheduled to discuss how COA will respond to the national campaigns for equity for black and brown people.

VI. Action Items

CT Office of the Arts Extension of Strategic Plan

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve the extension of COA's Strategic Plan from 2017-2021 to 2017-2022.

Motion: Jack Rosenberg
Second: Chris Bruhl
(Y-8; N-0)

Budget Reallocation of Governor's Arts Award Funds

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve to move the \$10,000 allocated for the FY20-21 Governor's Arts Awards to the Connecticut Artist Relief Grant program.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Mary Ellen Eckels

(Y-8; N-0)

CT Office of the Arts' Response to the COVID 19 Pandemic

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve \$60,000 for the Connecticut Artist Relief Grant program; \$88,000 for the Connecticut Artist Respond Grant Program; and \$446,200 for the NEA CARES Act grant program, which funds were awarded from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Motion: Helen During

Second: Ted Yudain

(Y-8; N-0)

FY20 Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve one-hundred forty seven (147) Connecticut Arts Endowment Grants for a total of \$803,442.

Motion: Mary Ellen Eckels

Second: Jack Rosenberg

Recuse: Ted Yudain and Min Jung Kim

(Y-6; N-0; Recuse; 2)

FY20 Artist Fellowship

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve fifty-one (51) Artist Fellowship Grants for a total of \$149,000.

Motion: Ted Yudain

Second: Mary Ellen Eckels

(Y-8; N-0)

FY20 Arts Workforce Initiative Grant

It is recommended that the Connecticut Arts Council approve twenty (20) Connecticut Arts Workforce Initiatives Grants for a total of \$75,000.

Motion: Chris Bruhl

Second: Ted Yudain

(Y-8; N-0)

VII. Other Business

Mr. Pedro Bermudez expressed his desire for COA to take the opportunity to voice a message in response to the killing of George Floyd. Ms. Shapiro explained that DECD is currently in discussion of how we can respond as a state agency to support the current movement across our communities regarding racial equity. Ms. Shapiro informed the arts council that they can write a statement that COA can then share.

Mr. Bermudez and Mr. Bruhl will take the lead to write a statement on behalf of the Connecticut Arts Council. The statement will be shared and reviewed by the arts council before it is published. Ms. Shapiro will seek advice from DECD's legal team.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ted Yudain, seconded by Jack Rosenberg, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lu Rivera
Administrative Assistant