

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 2015 MEETING

VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

House Room Two, Virginia State Capitol

Richmond, Virginia

Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Charles Ellis, Vice Chairman Sharron Kitchen Miller, Secretary Shelley Kruger Weisberg, Faye Bailey, Robert (Bob) Behr, Dorothy Blackwell, Lorita Copeland Daniels, Jay Dick, Ron Fabin, Jo Hodgins, Wanda Judd, John Rainero, Grace Han Wolf.

Staff in attendance: Executive Director Margaret Vanderhuy, Deputy Director Mackenzie Byrne, Program Coordinator Cathy Welborn, Arts in Education Coordinator Casey Polczynski

Chairman Charles Ellis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and explained the procedures and protocols for the two day meeting.

Minutes: Charles Ellis asked for approval of the minutes of the March 25<sup>th</sup> commission meeting. Bob Behr made a motion to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Jay Dick and the motion carried unanimously.

Budget: Margaret Vanderhuy gave an overview of the past year's challenges including the consecutive statewide budget reductions, the new state mandated accounting procedures, the new National Endowment for the Arts reporting requirements, and the transitions in staffing.

She gave an overview of the current and anticipated budget; grantees will receive full second round payments for FY15 thanks to prudent internal savings strategies. For FY16, all grant categories will be reduced except for the Local Government Challenge Grants which provide a 10 to 1 return on the investment. Grantees will receive lower than expected awards because their eligible income revenues increased substantially even though the number of applications remained constant.

In response to a question by Faye Bailey about the accessibility of tax check-off revenue to offset funding cuts, Ms. Vanderhuy said the staff would be working with Secretary Holton and the Governor's office on strategies to release the funds that are currently restricted.

#### AREA 1

John Rainero said the panelists were well prepared and the panel was efficiently run.

Shelley Kruger Weisberg asked about the groups that did not submit their final reports on time. The protocol is that they do not receive their second round payment; they must submit a long form application in the coming year, and they do not receive their first round payment until their

final report is received. Additionally, the failure to submit a report is included in the notes on their subsequent panel review.

A motion to approve the Area 1 General Operating Support grants was made by Jo Hodgkin and seconded by Faye Bailey. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the Area 1 Project Grants was made by Jay Dick and seconded by Sharron Kitchen Miller. The motion carried unanimously.

John Rainero abstained from voting on the application for The Birthplace of Country Music.

## AREA 2

Charles Ellis attended the panel meeting and stated the panelists were well prepared.

Jo Hodgkin recommended that both the Prizery and the Piedmont Arts Association apply with the long form application next year since both are facing continuing financial challenges in the struggling economy where they are located. It was noted that both serve an important role for the arts in areas that have few cultural outlets or programs. The Prizery is working with their new managing director to develop a strategic plan.

A motion was made by Faye Bailey to approve the General Operating Support grants for Area 2 with the stipulation that the Prizery and Piedmont Arts Association submit a long form next year. Jo Hodgkin seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

For Area 2 Project Grants, Jo Hodgkin made a motion to move the James Chamber Players to Priority 1 and Shelley Kruger Weisberg seconded. The amendment was approved unanimously.

Jay Dick made a motion to approve the Area 2 Project grants as amended. Sharron Kitchen Miller seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

## AREA 3

Dorothy Blackwell said the panel was well prepared. As a prelude to the discussion, she urged the Commission board to move Garth Newel from a Priority 2 to a Priority 1 with another full review by long form next year. She said that the organization is very important to the region and that with new leadership in place, there should be some positive changes to come. After some discussion and a note that the panelists themselves were divided on the priority ranking, Jay Dick moved that Garth Newel be changed from Priority 2 to Priority 1 but with a long form review next year. Shelley Kruger Weisberg seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Wanda Judd to approve the Area 3 General Operating Support grants and John Rainero seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by John Rainero to approve the Area 3 Project Grants and seconded by Wanda Judd. It was approved unanimously.

#### AREA 4A

Jay Dick said the panel was prepared and that each panelist had a unique strength or focus. Jo Hodgins had visited some of the organizations to be reviewed. Grace Han Wolf was impressed with the panelists' depth of knowledge and thoughtful comments.

Jay Dick pointed out some areas of concern during the reviews. He pointed out that though the panel was torn, the staff recommended that the Alexandria Choral Society receive a Priority 1. He concurred but urged a long form application again next year. He mentioned that they were concerned about the Arlington Arts Center and the financials of the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra and urged a long form application again for each of them as well.

He agreed with the staff recommendation of a Priority 2 for the Torpedo Factory and asked that the Guidelines about government appointed board members for applicant arts organizations be clarified.

Jo Hodgins urged a Priority 1 ranking for the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic and said the group is a semi-professional orchestra that provides opportunities for community members to perform. Wanda Judd made a motion to move the organization to a Priority 1 and Dorothy Blackwell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Jay Dick asked if the Washington West Film Festival was eligible and if it should receive funds. Grace Han Wolf said they do not provide year round programming and much of their revenue goes back out to charitable causes. Jay Dick moved that the Film Festival should not receive funds and the motion was seconded by Grace Han Wolf. It carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Wanda Judd to approve the Area 4A General Operating Support grants as amended; Lorita Daniels seconded, and it carried unanimously. Commissioners Dick, Hodgins, and Wolf abstained from the vote on the Arts Council of Fairfax.

Dorothy Blackwell made a motion to approve the Area 4A Project Grants, and Jay Dick seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

#### AREA 4B

Ronald Fabian said the panel included a good, diverse group of panelists with business experience. He noted that one panelist consistently did not follow the Commission Guidelines in making his critiques and his comments.

Ronald Fabian disagreed with the panel's comments about A Place to Be and thought some of the criticisms should be removed from their review including not reaching a diverse audience. After

some discussion, Mr. Fabin moved that the group be moved from Priority 3 to Priority 1 and Shelley Kruger Weisberg seconded; the motion carried unanimously.

Jo Hodgkin urged that the Castleton Festival be required to submit a long form application next year.

Ron Fabin made a motion to accept the Area 4B General Operating Support grants as amended and Sharron Kitchen Miller seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

John Rainero made a motion to accept the Area 4B Project Grants, and Jo Hodgkin seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

## AREA 5

Commissioners Judd and Daniels attended the panel meeting and said the expertise and knowledge among the panelists was substantial and professional.

Lorita Daniels said the Petersburg Symphony needs capacity building and the city is without many resources. In response to a question about the Paramount Theater's financial structure, Margaret Vanderhye explained that staff had followed up with the Paramount to ensure that the theater was not including external revenue from their performing companies as part of their eligible funding levels. Jo Hodgkin requested that the Richmond Children's Choir submit a strategic plan to the Commission or submit a long form application again next year.

A motion was made by Wanda Judd to approve the Area 5 General Operating Support grants, and Lorita Daniels seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

Following a discussion and clarification about the Richmond Jazz Society's application and recent grant history, Dorothy Blackwell made a motion to approve the Area 5 Project Grants and Lorita Daniels seconded the motion; it carried unanimously.

## AREA 6

Faye Bailey and Bob Behr attended the panel meeting. Ms. Bailey said the panel was impressive and well prepared in a variety of different areas. Their firsthand knowledge of the arts organizations was good.

Shelley Kruger Weisberg said the areas of concern for the Community Alliance for Performing Arts Fund are familiar from years past. Sharron Kitchen Miller noted that Eastern Shore's Own is not fully ADA compliant and should be required to submit a long form application next year showing that it is. She offered a motion to make their compliance a contingency for funding, and Jay Dick seconded the motion.

With the additional suggestions that Todd Rosenlieb Dance be required to submit a long form application next year and that the comment about weak attendance be removed from the Virginia

Chorale review page, the full comments were accepted into a motion made by Wanda Judd and seconded by Bob Behr to accept the Area 6 General Operating Support grants. The motion carried unanimously.

Faye Bailey made a motion to accept the Area 6 Project Grants and Bob Behr seconded; it carried unanimously.

#### SHORT FORM APPLICATIONS

A motion was made by Dorothy Blackwell and seconded by Sharron Kitchen Miller to approve the General Operating Support short form applications. The motion carried unanimously with Charles Ellis abstaining on the vote for the Danville Symphony.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHALLENGE GRANTS

The motion to approve the grants was made by Shelley Kruger Weisberg and seconded by Sharron Kitchen Miller. The motion carried unanimously with Grace HanWolf abstaining on the Herndon Arts Council vote.

#### MAJOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Charles Ellis, Shelley Kruger Weisberg and Faye Bailey attended. They said the panel engaged in a very thoughtful discussion and the panelists had diverse backgrounds. The addition of a former Commissioner on the panel was very helpful.

Jay Dick said he met with Synetic Theatre and they are continuing to make progress based on last year's review and meetings with the Commission and staff. He agreed with the staff recommendation of a 1.5 Priority and said he hoped the theater would seek outside board membership to expand its horizons.

A discussion ensued about the Fairfax Symphony with the request that staff draft suggestions in the Guidelines for ways to deal with major arts organizations that consistently fail to fulfill the criteria that the Majors must attain to be considered for funding.

Faye Bailey said the Virginia Opera had much work to do to become financially solvent and that keeping them at a 1.5 Priority was appropriate. Their lack of an audit is inexcusable; they were to have it to the Commission in advance of the June Board meeting. She suggested that their first payment should be contingent upon receiving the audit. Ron Fabin made a motion that the Virginia Opera receive a 1.5 Priority rating with payments in three installments, the first being contingent upon receipt of their audit. Shelley Kruger Weisberg seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Shelley Kruger Weisberg shared that a VSO board member had reached out to her to explain the myriad financial concerns and plans to rectify them. She made a motion to give them a 1.5 Priority rating which was seconded by Ron Fabin. A discussion followed during which John

Rainero expressed his concerns about the substantial financial challenges facing the company. Sharron Kitchen Miller and Shelley Kruger Weisberg said the greater Hampton Roads community will not allow the Symphony to go under and that it plays too substantial a role in the arts in the region. Jo Hodgins suggested that the Opera and the Symphony be treated equally by the Board since the two organizations are so inextricably linked in programming and financial concerns.

Shelley Kruger Weisberg made a motion to give Virginia Symphony a 1.5 Priority rating with a three payment schedule; it was seconded by Ron Fabin. The motion passed 8-5.

A motion to approve the Major Arts Organizations grant as amended was made by Jay Dick and seconded by Wanda Judd. It carried unanimously.

#### ARTS IN EDUCATION GRANTS

Wanda Judd said the panelists were impressive; Sharron Kitchen Miller said they had a diverse set of skills and experience and were well prepared. Jay Dick asked why the Fredericksburg Center for the Creative Arts received such a large increase in funding. Ms. Polczynski responded that they had a very viable program, received substantial community support, and were meeting an important need in their community.

Shelley Kruger Weisberg and Jay Dick questioned funding for the Virginia Performing Arts Foundation and why it was the only application for teacher artist training. They asked for clarification from the applicant about what the funding will be used for.

Sharron Kitchen Miller made a motion to approve the AIE grants and Faye Bailey seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioners Dick, Hodgins, and Wolf abstained from the vote on the Arts Council of Fairfax.

#### SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Jo Hodgins made a motion to approve the grant of \$4,500 to Blue Ridge Institute / Ferrum College as a special recognition award as defined in the Guidelines. Dorothy Blackwell seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

#### THE BUDGET

Following the earlier thorough presentation and extensive discussion on the current and proposed budget situation for FY15 and FY16, Jay Dick made a motion to approve the proposed budget and John Rainero seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ron Fabin, Chair of the Committee, presented the Committee's report to the Board.

He said that all three current executive committee members are willing to stand for reelection and serve another term. The slate would include Charles Ellis for Chair, Sharron Kitchen Miller for Vice Chair, and Shelley Kruger Weisberg for Secretary. Jo Hodgkin made a motion to approve the slate of nominees as proposed, and Mr. Rainero seconded the motion. It carried unanimously. Charles Ellis thanked the committee for their work.

## REPORT OF THE PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

Program Director Cathy Welborn gave the Commission a report on the feedback from the panelists on possible ways to streamline the application and the review process. Additionally Jay Dick passed along suggestions from panelists about having online access to artistic works through websites and YouTube links. Sharron Kitchen Miller suggested tightening up the process to make sure word count and formats are consistent and within the limits we set. A full review of panel and staff comments will be considered as the FY 17 application process is developed during the summer and fall.

Charles Ellis recessed the Board meeting at 3:15 p.m. until the next morning and asked the Board to be present at the 5:00 p.m. Culture Works reception at the 1708 Gallery with Richmond business, elected, and cultural leaders.

Charles Ellis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and noted that Commissioners Jay Dick and Grace Han Wolf would not be present for the second day.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Margaret Vanderhye gave an overview of the structure and work of the three committees and the agendas they pursued since the Chair established them earlier in the fiscal year. They are: Budget and Policy, Arts in Education, and Special Constituencies.

Committee Chair Lorita Daniels gave an overview of ideas for military and veterans, disability and special ability populations, Creative Aging, and the incarcerated. Bob Behr offered additional insights for the committee's work over the course of the coming year. Faye Bailey recommended that the Commission align itself with the many arts groups and coalitions that already exist as partnerships and not try to start over or "reinvent the wheel". AIE Coordinator Casey Polczynski reassured the Board that she would be doing an asset mapping exercise and statewide survey to determine which populations are being served well and by whom and where there are areas of interest that need focus and assistance.

Committee Chair Wanda Judd gave an update on the work of the AIE Committee and the goals for the coming year as included in the briefing books. The committee will be reviewing the current AIE grant application process and the Guidelines and will recommend changes over the summer and at the September meeting. One proposed revision will be to reduce the maximum AIE grant from \$10,000 to \$7,500. Casey Polczynski introduced the possibility of adding a new,

shorter term and more flexible education grant called an AIE Express or “mini-grant” if additional funding is secured in the future.

A discussion followed on artists in classrooms and the essential requirement that teachers be present with them at all times. Casey Polczynski will do additional research on the process for background checks and full vetting of the artists and the procedures they must follow in their classroom presentations.

Committee Chair Jo Hodgkin presented the Budget and Policy Committee proposals to adopt the final draft of the By-Laws and Policy Manual updates and revisions.

Jo Hodgkin made a motion to accept the changes to the By-Laws as proposed by the Committee. Wanda Judd seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Jo Hodgkin explained the changes proposed over the course of months of committee and board involvement. She made a motion to approve the Policy Manual as updated; Sharron Kitchen Miller seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Chair thanked Ms. Hodgkin for all her hard work leading the committee on the important task of updating the policies that guide the work of the Commission.

Margaret Vanderhuy presented a summer timeline to update the work plan for the Strategic Plan in time for inclusion in our NEA application this fall. She said she would be working with staff and all the committees to make sure their agendas and work plans would be included in the updates.

Casey Polczynski gave the Board an update on the 2016 Poetry Out Loud program in Virginia and said applications to participate are already well ahead of last year’s levels. She will be doing additional outreach to areas where participation has traditionally been low.

Cathy Welborn gave the Board an overview of the calendar and deadlines for applications for the coming year. The Performing and Tour Directory Roster applications deadline is July 15<sup>th</sup>. The

Charles Ellis presented the Board with the meeting schedule for the coming fiscal year. He thanked the Board members for their hard work and reminded them that they are all “ambassadors” for the Commission and for the value that our arts organizations add to communities throughout the state.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

