

Virginia Commission for the Arts
June 7- 8, 2005
LibertyTown Arts Workshop, Fredericksburg

Members Attending: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs; Gary Grant; Susan Hirschbiel; Bonita Lestina; E. A. McMath; Roddy Moore; Jackie Stone; Rod Taylor; Beth Temple; Will Trinkle; Deborah Valentine; and Eve Wilson

Staff Attending: Peggy Baggett, Foster Billingsley, and Amy Krawczyk

Guests: Dan Finnegan, LibertyTown Arts Workshop; David Fiske, Richmond Symphony; James Fraser, Alexandria Performing Arts Association; Marilyn Gould; John Holmfeld; Lisa Lyons, Richmond Symphony; Stephanie Micas, Arts Council of Richmond; Marilyn Richards, Virginia Stage Company; Keith Stava, Virginia Stage Company; Kathryn Willis, Arts & Cultural Council of the Rappahannock

Introduction:

Dr. Ellsworth, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. He thanked the Arts & Cultural Council of the Rappahannock and Kathryn Willis for hosting the meeting and providing wonderful opportunities to meet local leaders in the arts.

He then introduced Dan Finnegan, the founder of LibertyTown Arts Workshop, who welcomed the Commission to Fredericksburg and gave a brief history of the LibertyTown.

Bonita Lestina made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2005, meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel then gave a report on the Virginia promotional activities surrounding the Richmond Ballet performances at the Joyce Theatre in New York. The event was successful in promoting Virginia as a cultural tourism destination and in encouraging Virginians who now live in New York to keep in contact with Virginia arts and cultural organizations.

2005-2006 Grants Budget:

Peggy Baggett reviewed the draft grants budget for 2005-2006 with state funding increasing by \$542,000 and Federal funds decreasing by \$38,000. She pointed out the new line for income from the second of the state income tax check offs for the arts. The draft budget includes an increase for Local Government Challenge Grants in order to fully fund the 2005-2006 applications and a small increase for the Project Grant category with the majority of the increase going into General Operating Support for arts organizations.

Area I General Operating Support Grants:

Lu Ellsworth, who observed a portion of the Area I panel meeting, reported that the panel was well qualified. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Wythe Arts Council. David Briggs asked what is different about this long time grantee of the Commission that led to the panel recommending Priority 3 rather than Priority 2 funding. Amy Krawczyk explained that the panelists felt that the Festival is becoming more focused on the entertainment and food components than on the arts. David Briggs and Lu Ellsworth then stated that the grant award letter should be explicit that 2005-2006 will be the last year of General Operating Support funding unless future applications show a clearer focus on the arts.

E. A. McMath then made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the Area I General Operating Support applications with the addition of the language for the Wythe Arts Council grant notification letter. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Lu Ellsworth abstaining on Pro Art Association.

Link to [Area I General Operating Support](#)

Area I Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Roddy Moore recommended that the Commission staff bring the Technical Assistance grant program to the attention of the Director of the Ralph Stanley Museum as a means of getting outside expertise on exhibition planning and acquisition policies. David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area I. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area I Project Grants](#)

Area II General Operating Support Grants:

Gary Grant praised the new Prizery facility where the Area II panel meeting was held. He stated that the panelists were better informed about the applicants than past panels and had good insights about how well organizations are fulfilling their missions. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Jefferson Choral Society. David Briggs stated that, based upon the quality of the musicianship on the CD sent to the Commissioners and upon the panel comments, moving this organization from Priority 3 funding in the current year to Priority 1 for next year, as recommended by the panel, is too much of a change. He made a motion to award funding to the Choral Society as a Priority 2 grantee. The motion was seconded and discussion followed. Roddy Moore pointed out that five of the panelists had been on

the panel when Priority 3 funding was recommended last year and that the Commission should rely upon their judgment. Susan Hirschbiel and Bonita Lestina expressed concern about relying more upon the CD for the evaluation of artistic quality than upon the first hand knowledge of the panelists. The motion was defeated, 3-Yes, 7-No, 1-Abstention.

Sedalia Center. Several Commissioners expressed concern about the panelists questioning whether the primary purpose of this organization is the arts. There was consensus that the grant notification letter should include a statement that 2005-2006 will be the last year of General Operating Support funding unless future applications show a clearer focus on the arts.

Smith Mountain Arts Council. Roddy Moore made a motion to fund this organization as Priority 3. The motion was seconded and passed, 10-Yes, 1-No, and 1-Abstention. The Commission staff was directed to include language in the grant notification letter about the Commission expectations on financial information.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support applications from Area II. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

[Link to Area II General Operating Support](#)

Area II Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Gray Grant made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area II. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area II Project Grants](#)

Area III General Operating Support Grants:

Will Trinkle reported that the Area III panelists were well informed and well prepared. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Will Trinkle made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the applications for General Operating Support from Area III. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area III General Operating Support](#)

Area III Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Beth Temple made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area III Project Grants](#)

Area IVA General Operating Support:

No Commissioners observed the Area IVA panel meeting. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

American Century Theatre. Beth Temple and David Briggs spoke about the high quality of the productions by this company and about the importance of preserving the American 20th century repertoire. Roddy Moore offered the opinion that the Commission should not automatically expect arts organizations to grow in size. David Briggs made a motion to fund this applicant as a Priority 1 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

American Music Stage. Several Commissioners commented that they appreciated the feeling of the Commission staff that this organization has made attempts to address problems from the past. They were concerned, however, about the lack of staff bios and lack of information about the main stage productions in the application. They asked why the organization does not apply for a Project Grant for the summer theatre camp rather than an operating support grant. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to award Priority 3 funding. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Arlington Symphony. David Briggs reported that the board of directors of the Symphony is undertaking a major evaluation of the future of the organization. Because of financial problems, the last concert of the 2004-2005 season was cancelled. He made a motion to set aside funding equivalent to Priority 1 but to defer action on this application until the October 28th Commission meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Classika-Synetic Theatre. David Briggs commented that the quality of both theatres, prior to the merger, was high and that while no merger is an automatic success, it is good to see organizations looking for ways to save administrative costs while continuing to grow artistically. He made a motion to fund Classika-Synetic Theatre as a Priority 1 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Fairfax Choral Society. Bonita Lestina spoke about the quality of the four children's choirs, and David Briggs spoke about the quality of the adult chorus. Bonita Lestina made a motion to fund the Fairfax Choral Society as a Priority 1 organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs then made a motion to approve staff recommendations for the remaining Area IVA General Operating Support applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area IV A General Operating Support](#)

Area IVA Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Bonita Lestina made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the Area IVA Project Grants.

[Link to Area IVA Project Grants](#)

Area IVB General Operating Support :

Eve Wilson stated that the panelists were well informed but that it was a small group and it would have been helpful to have more perspectives in the discussion. She also expressed concern that there were not more Project Grant applications from the area. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for the Area IVB General Operating Support applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

[Link to Area IV B General Operating Support](#)

Area IVB Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Bonita Lestina made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the Area IVB Project Grants.

[Link to Area IVB Project Grants](#)

Area V General Operating Support :

Deborah Valentine commented that overall the panel meeting went well but that the Commission should refine its procedures for allocating the Project Grant funds so there is no appearance of conflict of interest. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Eve Wilson made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Jackie Stone abstaining on the Arts Council of Richmond.

[Link to Area V General Operating Support](#)

Area V Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations for the Area V Project Grants with Jackie Stone abstaining from the vote on the Arts Council of Richmond.

Link to [Area V Project Grants](#)

Area VI General Operating Support:

Susan Hirschbiel stated that the panelists were knowledgeable and that she was overwhelmed by the amount of arts activity going on in the region. Rod Taylor commented that the diversity of the panelists strengthened the discussion. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations. David Briggs made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Area VI General Operating Support applications.

Link to [Area VI General Operating Support](#)

Area VI Project Grants:

Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Art Song of Williamsburg. Bonita Lestina spoke in favor of a higher level of funding since this organization is probably the only one in the state performing in this genre. David Briggs made a motion to award \$1,200 to this project. The motion was seconded and approved, 10-Yes and 1-No with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining.

Park Place Child Life Center. Susan Hirschbiel stated that she was in favor of funding this application but wanted to confirm the tax exemption status of the organization and get an updated budget before sending the grant notification letter.

Beth Temple made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Link to [Area VI Project Grants](#)

General Operating Support Short Form Applications:

David Briggs made a motion to approve funding for the Area I short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Beth Temple made a motion to approve funding for the Area II short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Gary Grant abstaining on the Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History and the Danville Concert Association.

Jackie Stone made a motion to approve funding for the Area III short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Jackie Stone made a motion to approve funding for the Area IVA short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with David Briggs abstaining on Signature Theatre.

Bonita Lestina made a motion to approve funding for the Area IVB short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Jackie Stone made a motion to approve funding for the Area V short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

After discussion on the Area VI short form applications Commission action on the TodiMusicFest and the Virginia Opera was deferred until the following day so that members of the Commission could review the financial statements. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve funding for the remaining Area VI short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining on the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia and the Chrysler Museum.

On the second day of the meeting the Commission discussed the financial situation of the TodiMusicFest, particularly the heavy reliance upon the City of Portsmouth. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendation of Priority 1 funding for the coming year. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

On the second day of the meeting the Commission also discussed the financial situation of the Virginia Opera. There was consensus that the Virginia Opera should apply using the long form in the spring of 2006 and be reviewed by the panel at that time. E. A. McMath made a motion to approve the staff recommendation of Priority 1 funding. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the GOS short form Option B applications. It was noted that VSA Arts of Virginia should receive notification about the Plant Zero problems with compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Link to [General Operating Support Short Form](#)

General Operating Support for Major Arts Institutions:

Jackie Stone stated that she was impressed with the level of experience and knowledge of the panelists. Susan Hirschbiel said that the different points of view led to a good exchange of ideas.

Art Museum of Western Virginia. David Briggs expressed concern about the Priority 1 ranking by the panel despite the apparent lack of racial diversity and the high

percentage of the budget for administrative salaries. After discussion there was consensus among the Commission members to award the Priority 1 funding recommended by the panel and staff but to require the Museum to submit a long form application next year for review by the panel.

Richmond Symphony. Jackie Stone stated that the issue of racial diversity for an organization working in a traditional European art form is difficult and that change cannot be accomplished rapidly. She gave her opinion that the Richmond Symphony is important to the community and is a critical component of the planned performing arts complex in downtown Richmond. Other Commissioners responded that it is good to see that the Symphony is taking steps to increase racial and ethnic diversity within the organization through its cultural diversity committee of the board and new diversity policy adopted by the board. Lu Ellsworth noted that a serious commitment to diversity has not been apparent in the materials sent to the Commission in the past, but the letter from David Fiske and Suzanne Mallory Parker expresses such a commitment. Jackie Stone made a motion to fund the Richmond Symphony as a Priority 1 grantee with a request for a mid-year progress report on diversity issues. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Virginia Stage Company. Susan Hirschbiel stated that the Virginia Stage Company has been addressing its management and financial issues over the past year and has been highly responsive to the Commission concerns. She made a motion to fund the Virginia Stage Company as a Priority 1 grantee with a request for a mid-year progress report on the financial status of the organization. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Virginia Symphony. Susan Hirschbiel stated that the Virginia Symphony is an outstanding orchestra with a gifted Music Director but that the amount of long term debt is alarming. After discussion there was consensus among the Commission members to approve the panel and staff recommendations of Priority 1 funding with a requirement that the Commission receive a debt reduction plan by mid-year.

Jackie Stone made a motion to approve the remaining staff recommendations on the applications for operating support for the major arts institutions. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining on the Virginia Arts Festival.

Link to [General Operating Support for Major Arts Organizations](#)

Special Recognition Awards:

After discussion by the Commission members on the levels of funding for the Special Recognition Awards Deborah Valentine made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Special Recognition Awards. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously with Jackie Stone abstaining on the Virginia Performing Arts Foundation and Roddy Moore abstaining on the Blue Ridge Institute.

Local Government Challenge Grants:

Peggy Baggett presented the materials on the Local Government Challenge Grant applications, including the requests for exceptions to the guidelines. Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve full funding for the Local Government Challenge Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Link to [Local Government Challenge Grants](#)

Requests To Be Listed in the 2006-2007 Tour Directory:

E. A. McMath and Bonita Lestina said that the panelists were well prepared but that the quality of the work samples was often poor. Amy Krawczyk presented the panel and staff recommendations.

Claudia Stevens. The Commission staff reviewed the history of including this performer in the Tour Directory and the recommendations of the advisory panels for the past three years. Roddy Moore had attended a recent performance and expressed concern about the quality of the new work on the Holocaust. Several Commissioners expressed concern that Ms. Stevens did only two performances in 2003-2004 and one performance in 2004-2005 through the Commission touring program and that the comments by the presenters on the final report forms have become less positive in recent years. Lu Ellsworth noted that he had attended a performance in 2003-2004 of one of Ms. Stevens' older works and that it was well done. Deborah Valentine made a motion not to include Ms. Stevens in the 2006-2007 Directory. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mary Wadkins. After Commission discussion of the incident at Appalachia High School in the fall of 2004 Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to include Mary Wadkins in the 2006-2007 Tour Directory with a touring allocation of \$1,000 and to send a letter expressing the Commission concerns about her behavior in Appalachia. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the remaining staff recommendations on the 2006-2007 Tour Directory. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Link to [2006/2007 Tour Directory Listing](#)

Technical Assistance Workshops:

Peggy Baggett talked about the need for training for the staff members of nonprofit arts organizations on arts management issues. She presented a proposal for a series of one day workshops on effective public relations strategies to be sponsored in cooperation with the Virginians for the Arts Foundation and requested that \$15,000 in Technical Assistance money be set aside for the workshop series. Bonita Lestina made a motion to accept the proposal. It was seconded and approved unanimously. The Commission

staff will send information to the Commissioners about locations and more detailed costs in the fall.

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation Dues:

Peggy Baggett explained the current situation with the dues paid by the Virginia Commission for the Arts to the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. As a result of a dispute between the Commission and the Mid Atlantic, the Mid Atlantic board has permitted the Commission to freeze its annual dues payments at the 2000 level. Peggy Baggett proposed that, now that the dispute has been resolved and Virginia is receiving a higher level of service from the Mid Atlantic, the Commission begin paying its full annual dues over the next two years. The dues payment will increase by \$3,000 each year until the Commission is paying its full dues by the end of 2007. Beth Temple, who represents the board of the Commission on the board of the Mid Atlantic, praised the rate of return on the dues payments. Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the staff recommendation. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Local Arts Agency Study Group Report:

Peggy Baggett reviewed a report prepared for the Commission on how the recommendations of the local arts agency study group, if adopted, would differ from existing Commission policy. Lu Ellsworth stated that while the recommendations had been referred to the Policy Committee for consideration over the summer, the topic is an important one, and that every Commissioner should participate in the discussion. During the discussion the following points were made.

- In addition to posting the report on the Commission website, the Commission staff should actively distribute it to arts leaders around the state for comment.
- It is difficult to compare Virginia to states such as Kentucky and North Carolina that have had strong local arts agency networks for decades.
- If the Commission decides to make the development of a strong network of local arts agencies a top priority, what is the roadmap for accomplishing this goal?
- The leaders of some Virginia arts organizations are concerned about the possibility of reduced funding for their organizations if the local arts agencies are made a top priority. How can the Commission raise new funds to support the local arts agencies rather than reducing operating support grants for the arts producing organizations?
- There was a proposal made by a subcommittee of the local arts agency study group to develop new local arts agencies in the state as the first stage of the local arts agency initiative. What happened to that recommendation?
- How can the Commission structure a local arts agency program so that all of the arts in the state benefit?
- Local arts agencies can be important advocates for public funding of the arts, and the partnership between the Commission and the local arts agencies is important.
- If the Commission adopts the recommendation of the local arts agency study group on the definition of a local arts agency, how many of the existing entities would qualify?
- Many rural areas of the state do not have the resources to sustain a local arts agency.

- The existing Local Government Challenge Grant program is important to rural areas of the state and should be continued.
- If the Commission had \$15 million a year for the grant programs, there is no question that all of the recommendations of the study group would be adopted. It is, however, a question of priorities when funding is so limited.
- Strong local arts agencies can help to build a stronger and more diverse arts community.
- It is important that any changes in the Commission priorities be supported by a cross section of the arts across the state. We want to avoid divisiveness within the arts community.
- Local arts agencies are only one of the reasons that more funding for the arts is needed.
- Any proposal for major changes in the Commission priorities will need the support of the Governor and key legislators.

At this point in the meeting Lu Ellsworth left the meeting for an interview on a local radio station, and Will Trinkle chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Arts in Education Applications:

Beth Temple reported that the AIE advisory panelists were an interesting and engaging group. There was concern among the panelists about the declining number of applications, and they provided good advice on the future of the AIE program. Rod Taylor made a motion to approve the panel and staff recommendations on the Artist Residency and Curriculum Development Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Link to [Artist Residency and Curriculum Development Grants](#)

Link to [ALL GRANT AWARDS 2005/2006](#)

Report of the Arts in Education Committee:

Beth Temple reported on the meeting of the Arts in Education Committee on the previous day. Based upon the responses to the survey on the Commission AIE program and the recommendations of the advisory panel, the Arts in Education Committee recommends notifying the field that the Commission is considering the following changes in the Arts in Education Program. After allowing time for public comments the Arts in Education Committee will meet again in the late summer or early fall. The possible changes are as follows.

- Shorten the minimum time for an artist residency to three days to encourage more schools to participate.
- Encourage arts organizations to take the lead in planning and carrying out artist residencies with local schools.
- Expand the definition of the school day to include after-school, Saturday, and summer

activities that fit the criteria for an artist residency.

- Eliminate the Curriculum Development Grants.

In addition to the policy changes, the Committee is recommending that the applications for artists and for residency sponsors be simplified and that the Commission staff find additional ways to promote the program to potential residency sponsors.

2005-2006 Grants Budget:

E. A. McMath made a motion to approve the grants budget included with the meeting materials, incorporating the change in the amount of the Project Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

New Business:

Bonita Lestina reported on her attendance at the Fairfax County Cultural Policy Summit at George Mason University with Ben Cameron as the keynote speaker.

Report of the Nominating Committee:

Gary Grant gave the report of the Nominating Committee which recommended the following slate of officers for 2005-2006:

Chair - Lu Ellsworth

Vice Chair - Will Trinkle

Secretary - E. A. McMath

Will Trinkle asked for nominations from the floor. There being none, David Briggs made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to accept the slate of officers proposed by the Nominating Committee. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.