

Virginia Commission for the Arts
Minutes
October 19, 2006
Frederick House, Staunton

Members Attending: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs, Nick Covatta, Susan Hirschbiel, Maria Laqueur, Jackie Stone, Rod Taylor, Beth Temple, Will Trinkle, and Vaughan Webb

Members Absent: Bonita Lestina, Deborah Valentine, and Eve Wilson

Staff Attending: Peggy Baggett, Tatjana Franke Beylotte, Foster Billingsley, and Cathy Welborn

Introduction

Dr. Ellsworth, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. He welcomed the new members of the Commission and the new Program Coordinator of the Commission staff. He asked the Commission staff to thank Ralph Cohen of the American Shakespeare Center for hosting the Commission at the performance of *As You Like It* on the previous evening.

Will Trinkle made a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Fellowships in Photography

Susan Hirschbiel, who observed the meeting of the photography fellowship panel, reported that the panelists were experienced and knowledgeable. She expressed concern, however, about the slide review process and recommended that the Commission change to a digital review format as soon as possible. She also recommended that the Policy Committee discuss the questions of whether the fellowships should go to emerging versus established artists and of the uses of the fellowship funds.

Tatjana Beylotte presented the recommendations of the advisory panel to award \$5,000 fellowships to:

Colette Fu, Roanoke
Thurston Howes, Richmond
Holly Morrison, Richmond
Paul Thulin, Richmond

Questions had been raised about the eligibility of two of the artists recommended for fellowships since it was unclear that they were residents of Virginia. The Commission staff investigated the residency status of the two individuals between the advisory panel and Commission meeting and determined that both individuals are legal residents of Virginia.

David Briggs noted that a disproportionate number of the applicants were from Richmond and asked about the process for publicizing the fellowships. He then made a motion

to approve the panel and staff recommendations with the contingency that the fellowship recipients be expected to update their websites with information about their Virginia residence and the fellowship from the Commission. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Fellowships in Fiction

Tatjana Beylotte presented the recommendations of the two advisory panels for the fiction fellowships. She noted that Panel A had a split vote on two writers, considering them both excellent writers but unable to agree on the potential impact of the fellowship on their careers. The panelists recommended that a \$5,000 fellowship be awarded to Rebecca Brock of Leesburg, but they were unable to decide between Ryan Effgen of Arlington and Lamar Giles of Chesapeake for the second \$5,000 fellowship.

Panel B recommended that \$5,000 fellowships be awarded to Amanda Cockrell of Roanoke and Nick Taylor of Williamsburg.

David Briggs made a motion to transfer \$5,000 from the unallocated grant funds to the fellowships and award fellowships to both Ryan Effgen and Lamar Giles, as well as Rebecca Brock, as recommended by Panel A. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. David Briggs then made a motion to approved the Panel B recommendations for fellowships. The motion was seconded and approved with Will Trinkle abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

Request for Reconsideration of Grant Decision

Peggy Baggett presented the request from the World Children's Choir for a reconsideration of the funding decision made at the June meeting. Lu Ellsworth noted that the request does not meet the criteria under the appeals policy of the Commission. Beth Temple noted that, while it was a concern that none of the Area IVA advisory panelists had first hand knowledge of the organization, the panelists made their recommendation based upon the information in the application. Although the letter from the organization disputed the panel comments, the issues were matters of opinion rather than factual errors in the application review. No action was taken, and the funding decision made at the June meeting was unchanged.

Technology Enhancement Grants

Foster Billingsley presented the recommendations of the advisory panel and staff on the new Technology Enhancement Grants.

Rooftop of Virginia CAP. Peggy Baggett described the crafts production and promotion program of Rooftop of Virginia and asked the Commissioners for guidance on the issue of eligibility. Vaughan Webb noted that many economic development organizations and units of government in southwest Virginia and other parts of the state are starting crafts promotion activities. He expressed concern that the Commission would be setting a difficult precedent by funding Rooftop as an arts organization. David Briggs made a motion not to fund Rooftop of Virginia. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The Commissioners talked about the need to help applicants improve their technology plans and recommended that one or more of the good plans be shared as models. David Briggs made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on the applications other than Rooftop of

Virginia. The motion was seconded and approved with Susan Hirschbiel abstaining because of her association with the Virginia Arts Festival.

Report on the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Leadership Institute

Will Trinkle, Rod Taylor, Jackie Stone, Foster Billingsley, Peggy Baggett, and Lu Ellsworth reported on the recent Leadership Institute held by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. There was agreement that it had been a productive meeting. Of particular interest were the session on identifying new leaders for the field, the talk with Chair Dana Gioia of the National Endowment for the Arts about the future of the NEA special initiatives, and the session on the roles and responsibilities of state arts agency board members.

Dr. Ellsworth stated that it was good to see Foster Billingsley taking a national leadership role in rebuilding the network of state arts agency Deputy Directors.

Report on the Virginians for the Arts Board Meeting

Lu Ellsworth and Peggy Baggett distributed information from Virginians for the Arts about advocacy with the 2007 General Assembly. Virginians for the Arts will continue to press for the dollar per capita in state funding with the 2007 General Assembly.

Peggy Baggett reported that Governor Kaine will present Governor's Awards in the Arts in September of 2008. The Virginians for the Arts Foundation will coordinate the fundraising, promotion of the Awards, and selection of the Award recipients in partnership with the Commission.

Discussion of Lessons Learned

Lu Ellsworth led a discussion of lessons learned over the past year, including the topics below.

- C The importance of Commission grants, not only as a source of funds, but as a means of validating the work of Commission grantees
- C The importance of ongoing professional development for the field
- C The need for the Commission to focus again on cultural tourism as a priority.
- C The importance of the peer review process in awarding grants. Since its founding, the Commission has relied upon the peer panel process, which is a requirement of the National Endowment for the Arts Partnership Agreement. While the Commission will continually look for ways to nurture in a positive way the panel process, it is a system that has served the field well and should be respected.
- C The critical importance of arts education
- C The need to strengthen and collaborate with the local arts agencies of the state

Report of the Executive Committee

Lu Ellsworth reported on the meeting in late August of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee discussed priorities for the year, including advocacy for the dollar per capita goal, the partnership with the Virginians for the Arts Foundation on professional development for the field, the national arts advocacy effort, and support for Virginians for the

Arts in laying the foundation for a statewide public relations campaign for the arts.

Peggy Baggett summarized the proposal from the Executive Committee for the use of unallocated grant funds, including two additional workshops in the series on effective public relations strategies, a series of workshops on strategic planning, a series of workshops on financial management for arts organizations, and a career building workshop for visual artists.

She then reported on the plan for the use of the 2007-2008 American Masterpieces funding. The National Endowment for the Arts is making the program requirements much more flexible than in 2006-2007. The Executive Committee proposed that half of the funding be used for a continuation of the Richmond Ballet's American Masterworks tour with the other half distributed to as many different disciplines and organizations as possible. The Commission will not know the amount of the funding until Congress has finished its work on the Interior Appropriations Bill.

Susan Hirschbiel made a motion to approve the Executive Committee recommendations on the use of the unallocated grant funds and the 2007-2008 American Masterpieces funding. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Peggy Baggett pointed out the list of topics identified by the Executive Committee for discussion by the Commission's Policy/Planning/Budget Committee in 2006-07. A list of those topics and additions made during the Commission meeting are attached to these minutes..

The Commissioners then discussed an idea first raised at the June, 2006, Commission meeting about ways to get the board members of all arts organizations, but particularly the major arts organizations, more involved in leadership on behalf of all of the arts in the state. There was agreement that the Commission members in the areas of the state with organizations designated as major arts institutions by the Commission should contact the board leaders to discuss the need for such leadership.

Old and New Business

There were no items of old business. Under new business, Will Trinkle stated that Susan Jennings, long time director of the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge, has taken a new job and that she should be recognized for her service to the field. He made a motion to issue a proclamation to Ms. Jennings. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Attached:

List of discussion topics for Policy Committee
Table of Contents, Technology Enhancement Grants