

Virginia Commission for the Arts
Minutes
December 7, 2006

Members Present: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs; Nick Covatta; Susan Hirschbiel; Maria Laqueur (attended part of the meeting); Bonita Lestina; Jackie Stone (attended part of the meeting); Rod Taylor; Beth Temple; Will Trinkle; Deborah Valentine; and Vaughan Webb

Members Absent: 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 9:40 a.m. He thanked Deborah Valentine for hosting the dinner on the previous evening.

Peggy Baggett reviewed the agenda. David Briggs made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 19th meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Advocacy Update

Lu Ellsworth reported on the meeting with the Secretary of Education about the Commission budget. He thanked the Commissioners who had written to the Governor about funding for the arts.

Susan Hirschbiel reported on her meeting with the board presidents/chairs of the major arts institutions in Hampton Roads. The group sent a joint letter to the Governor about arts funding and plans to meet again.

Lu Ellsworth reminded all of the Commissioners to contact their representatives in the General Assembly prior to the start of the legislative session about funding for the arts.

The Commission and Virginians for the Arts will be scheduling meetings with all members of the Virginia Congressional delegation in the next few months to discuss Federal funding of the arts.

Report of the Policy/Planning/Budget Committee

Will Trinkle gave the report of the Policy/Planning/Budget Committee. The Committee had met on November 8 to discuss a long list of issues identified at previous Commission meetings and by the Commission staff.

He asked Peggy Baggett to review the proposed grants budget for 2007-2008. After discussion the Commissioners agreed by consensus with this first draft of the budget.

The Policy Committee recommended that, for the fifth year in a row, the Commission limit arts organizations to applying for either General Operating Support or a Project Grant, but not both, for the 2007-08 year. This policy was begun during the state budget cuts and has the following advantages. The number of applications reviewed by the Commission in the spring has gone down by a significant number, easing the workload for the Commission staff. With fewer applications to review, the area panels have more time for discussion of the individual applications. Even with the recent increase in state funding, the Commission is not fully funding the General Operating Support grants. It makes little sense to have organizations preparing two separate applications for partial funding. The Commission discussed the letter from the Shenandoah Valley Music Festival in response to the Policy Committee recommendation and other issues. The recommendation of the Policy Committee served as a motion. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Peggy Baggett presented the proposal to begin a joint grant program with the Virginia Tourism Corporation in 2007-2008 for cultural tourism promotion. Beth Temple made a motion to approve this new grant category. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Will Trinkle then summarized the Policy Committee discussion about developing the strategic plan for 2008-2010. The Policy Committee members were divided in their opinion of whether to undertake a more extensive planning process with significant involvement of people from outside the arts as well as the traditional constituents of the Commission. Peggy Baggett and Lu Ellsworth shared the positive results of in-depth strategic planning by the state arts agencies of New Jersey and Montana. In the discussion that followed, the Commissioners made the points below.

- C There was little interest in investing significant resources in consultant fees and in having additional board meetings.
- C There is not a sense that the Commission needs a major change in overall direction.
- C It would be good to re-examine the long-established principle that the nonprofit arts organizations of the state are the top priority of the Commission. One possible approach to this re-examination would be to have a small group of Commissioners discuss the topic, including a review of information from other states, and report to the full board in March.
- C In developing the next strategic plan the Commission will focus on several key issues but will not examine every grant program and service in detail.

Will Trinkle then noted that the Policy Committee had identified three major issues for discussion at the March Commission meeting - the appropriate role for the Commission in supporting individual artists, the next steps in strengthening the local arts agency network in Virginia, and the appropriate staffing level for the Commission.

Arts in Education Committee Report

Rod Taylor gave a report on the Arts in Education Committee which had met immediately prior to the full Commission meeting. The Committee approved funding for 320 Teacher Incentive Grants and approved the addition of two artists to the AIE Roster.

The Committee also recommended that the Commission do a one day training workshop for artists who will be working in the residency program. The Commission staff will contact potential workshop leaders and prepare a budget for review by the Commission Executive Committee. Although the primary target audience for the workshop will be the artists on the AIE Roster, it will be open to any artist interested in working in K-12 schools. The Commission staff will also investigate the interest of several state universities in creating a certificate program for teaching artists.

The Arts in Education Committee had discussed priorities if there were additional funding for the arts education programs of the Commission. The Committee was not in favor of increasing the amounts of the individual Teacher Incentive Grants. Dr. Taylor reported that the Committee asked the Commission staff to develop a proposal for an after-school arts initiative. The Committee had also asked the Commission staff to look at alternatives for teacher recognition.

A discussion followed about the Teacher Incentive Grant program in which the points below were made.

- C The Commission would like to see a better geographic spread among the Teacher Incentive Grants.
- C The Commission should post some model Teacher Incentive Grant projects on the website.
- C The Commission should consider hiring a contract employee to promote the Teacher Incentive grants in school divisions that are not currently taking advantage of the program.
- C The Commission should look at alternative ways to support arts programs in the schools.

Technology Enhancement Grants

Foster Billingsley presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Technology Enhancement Grants. Lu Ellsworth made a motion to approve the staff recommendations. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Role/Mission of the Commission

The Commissioners discussed the current mission statement. Some members of the Commission commented that the mission statement is too long while others felt that the current language clearly describes the purpose and goals. There was agreement that it would be helpful to have a short phrase to use as a slogan. Deborah Valentine and Will Trinkle volunteered to work with the staff in developing a slogan to be discussed at the March meeting.

Beth Temple made a motion to reaffirm the mission statement, as adopted in 2005. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Report on 2006-2007 Activities

Peggy Baggett gave a status report on a number of ongoing activities. Under the professional development initiative the Commission and Virginia Tech Outreach held the first workshop on financial management in Richmond on November 30. Other financial management workshops will be scheduled later in the year.

The Governor's Arts Awards will be presented in September of 2008. The first contribution for the Awards has been received from Exxon/Mobil.

A public relations consultant has been hired to conduct a publications audit.

Using the funds budgeted for local arts agency professional development, the Commission will award a grant to the Virginians for the Arts Foundation to hire a contract employee who will work with the local arts agency network.

Lu Ellsworth encouraged members of the Commission to join the NASAA Affiliates program.

Old and New Business

Lu Ellsworth and Peggy Baggett reported on a meeting with the Directors and Chairs of the Maryland State Arts Council and DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, representatives of the Meyer and Cafritz Foundations, and the Director of the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation about a possible joint touring program. Unlike Virginia, the Maryland and DC state arts agencies do not currently have a touring program. The group will meet again to continue the discussion, but it is not clear if there will be a benefit to Virginia from a joint program.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Attachments:

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