

**Virginia Commission for the Arts  
Minutes, April 3, 2008  
Tuckahoe Area Library, Richmond**

Members Present: Dr. Lucius Ellsworth, Chair; David Briggs, Nick Covatta, Maria Laqueur, Ann Rust, Jackie Stone, Rod Taylor, Deborah Valentine, and Vaughan Webb

Members Absent: Susan Hirschbiel, Bonita Lestina, Beth Temple, and Will Trinkle

Staff Present: Peggy Baggett, Foster Billingsley, and Cathy Welborn

Guest: Steve Galyean, Virginia Tourism Corporation

**Introduction**

Lu Ellsworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m. He introduced new Commissioner Ann Edwards Rust and welcomed her to the board.

David Briggs made a motion to approve the minutes of November 29, 2007. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Review of General Assembly Actions and Draft Grants Budget**

Peggy Baggett reviewed the General Assembly actions to date on the Commission appropriation for 2008-2010 and presented the first draft of the 2008-09 grants budget. In the discussion the following points were made.

- A \$20 million increase in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts has been approved, but the Commission has not yet been notified of the impact on the Partnership Agreements between the Endowment and the state arts agencies.
- Thanks to the good work of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, there will be fewer restrictions on the uses of the Partnership funds in the future.
- The Commission and Virginians for the Arts should do more to publicize the income tax check offs.
- The professional development workshops, suspended in 2007-08 because of the budget situation, should begin again in 2008-09. The workshops are a valuable service to staff and board members of arts organizations, they give greater public visibility to the Commission, and the total cost is a small percentage of the overall Commission budget.
- Since the Commission is currently short-staffed, the professional development workshops

should not take place until the second half of the 2008-09 fiscal year.

- Some funds should be set aside to support the statewide costs of Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts. The Commission has been an advocate for this project to increase visibility for the arts and should be a financial partner as well.
- With the Governor's Arts Awards, the new Heritage Awards, and the Minds Wide Open celebration happening in the next two years, no new initiatives should be started in 2008-09.
- The joint cultural tourism promotion grants awarded in partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation are a good service. Without a strong partner such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation, however, the Commission does not have the resources to have an impact on tourism in the state.

Once the budget bill has been approved and signed by the Governor, the Commission staff will revise the grants budget for consideration and a vote at the June Commission meeting.

### **Commission Role in Arts Education**

Lu Ellsworth introduced the discussion topic of the Commission role in support of arts education. He noted that over the past four years various members of the Commission had expressed concerns about the Teacher Incentive Grants. He reminded the Commissioners that they had decided to evaluate and make a decision on the future of this grant category in the first year of the 2008-2010 biennium. This schedule will give schools sufficient advance notification of any changes. In the discussion the following points were made.

- The Teacher Incentive Grants are reaching only a small segment of the schools across Virginia.
- The grant program, which does not require a cash match and has a simple application form, is popular with teachers, particularly in areas underserved in the arts.
- The Commission does not have good information on the effectiveness of these grants, and with such small grants it is not cost effective to undertake a major evaluation of the grant program.
- The grants give the Commission visibility in communities with few arts organizations and little arts education.
- With the state government procedures for electronic transfer of funds many teachers are having difficulties in getting access to the funds once the grants are awarded.
- The Commission staff should do a simple survey of the teachers who have received Teacher Incentive Grants to get some documentation of the impact of the grants and of the problems associated with receiving the funding.
- It is good to continue awarding the grants to the teachers rather than the schools so that the teachers get recognition for their work.
- The Commission should explore working in partnership with the local arts agencies of the state on arts education..
- The Commission should see if there are other potential partners, such as the Virginia Education Association, to increase the impact of the Teacher Incentive Grants.
- There should be more publicity about the deadline for the Teacher Incentive Grants.

- The Commission staff should find out what other state arts agencies award grants to teachers and how these programs are structured.

Peggy Baggett then reported on her meeting with the Chair of the state Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There will be a presentation at the state Board of Education meeting in September on expanding arts education in Virginia schools, and the Commission will assist in planning this session.

## **Tourism in Virginia**

Steve Galyean of the Virginia Tourism Corporation gave a presentation on trends in tourism in Virginia. He announced that the Virginia Tourism Corporation has the funds and wants to continue the joint grant program with the Commission for cultural tourism promotion efforts.

He also asked if key representatives of the Commission would meet with representatives of Virginia Tourism to discuss (1) ways to encourage the arts organizations of the state to work more closely with local and state tourism efforts and (2) how to present the link of arts and tourism to state decision-makers.

## **Updates**

Lu Ellsworth reported on the value of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in providing information, conducting research, and advocating on behalf of the state arts agencies both with the National Endowment for the Arts and Congress.

Peggy Baggett gave a progress report on the statewide celebration of women in the arts. There is now a brand name, Minds Wide Open, and a logo, both of which were developed by BCF, Inc. of Virginia Beach, the advertising firm that is working on the state tourism account. Susan Hirschbiel has agreed to be the statewide Chair of Minds of Wide Open, and Keith Martin of the Richmond Ballet is heading the steering committee. Melinda Scott of Richmond has been hired as part time coordinator. A marketing plan and a fundraising plan are under development. The next step is to raise the funds to create the website. David Briggs stated that it is important for the local arts agencies to be involved in this statewide initiative.

Peggy Baggett then reported on the Governor's Arts Awards. There has been extensive newspaper coverage of the deadline for nominations.

## **Priorities for the Next 18 Months**

Lu Ellsworth and Peggy Baggett reviewed actions to date on the priorities for the next 18 months identified at the previous Commission meeting. The partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation had already been discussed. In addition to supporting the statewide celebration of women in the arts, the Commission will assist the major arts organizations of the state by coordinating two roundtable meetings a year, one as part of the Arts Works for Virginia conference and one in May. The Commission will continue working with Virginians for the Arts on the Arts Build Communities public relations campaign. It was noted that there should be a way to tie the Arts Build Communities campaign into the women in the arts celebration. The

Commission will continue working with Virginians for the Arts to reach the dollar per capita funding goal. There will be no further action on the legislation to change the rotation of the board terms of the Commission.

Peggy Baggett reported on the status of electronic filing of grant applications to the Commission. With the increased information technology security standards for state government, the Commission will be unable to take advantage of the standardized software developed by WESTAF. It was pointed out that other state arts agencies have reported no saving in staff time for processing grant applications in electronic versus paper formats. With the high costs of customized software and no prospect of saving time for the Commission staff, the Commissioners decided by consensus to table the issue of electronic grantmaking for the next six months.

Peggy Baggett reported that for the second year in a row the Commission would be a sponsor of the Creative Economy conference in Abingdon in May. David Briggs noted that the Commission needs to continue building relationships with local economic development offices. He suggested that the Commission work in partnership with the major arts organizations in building stronger ties to the economic development community.

### **Election of the Nominating Committee**

Lu Ellsworth opened the floor for nominations for the Nominating Committee. Nick Covatta nominated Susan Hirschbiel and Will Trinkle. David Briggs nominated Beth Temple and Vaughan Webb. After discussion the Commissioners agreed by consensus to suspend the by-laws, which call for a three person Nominating Committee, and elect the four individuals to the Committee. Nick Covatta made a motion to elect the four individuals. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

### **Old and New Business**

Lu Ellsworth encouraged the Commissioners to read the evaluations of the Art Works for Virginia conference and send any further suggestions to the Commission staff.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.