

VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

MINUTES

June 13 – 14, 2012
Virginia State Capitol

Members Present: Deborah Wyld, Lisa Alderman, Marcia Neuhaus Speck, Willie Dell, Charles G. Ellis, Dr. Gwendolyn H. Everett, Sharron Kitchen Miller, Evelia Gonzalez Porto (June 13th only), Marcia Thalhimer, Ann Bondurant Trinkle, Ann Edwards Rust, Tina Lea, Pat Perry

Staff Present: Foster Billingsley, Cathy Welborn, Tiffany Glass Ferreria, Lorraine Lacy

Guests: Senator John Miller (June 13th), Secretary of Education Laura Fornash (June 13th), Jim Thompson and Charlotte Anders, Virginians for the Arts (June 14th), Ruth Anderson, Department of Planning and Budget (June 14th)

Deborah Wyld, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:11am.

Willie Dell made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2012 Commission meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Deborah Wyld reviewed the agenda and Commission meeting materials.

Foster Billingsley reviewed the Commission's 2012 – 2013 grants / administrative budget.

Area I General Operating Support Grants:

Lisa Alderman, who attended the Area I panel meeting, stated that this was a good panel that knows the region well.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Virginia Highlands Festival: The organization submitted an appeal letter to raise the Priority level from a Priority 2 to a Priority 1. The Commissioners commented that it is commendable that the organization has made progress on implementing changes based on past panelists' comments, but there is still work that needs to be done. The Commissioners encourage this organization to do a strategic plan.

Marcia Thalhimer made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support applications from Area I. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area I Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Town of Richlands: The people in Richlands are excited and behind this project. Lisa Alderman addressed the panel's concerns about painting a mural on a private building. The mural art will be able to be removed and saved. This project will incorporate the history of the town and art. Richlands is a small community and is deserving of Commission funding for this project.

Evelia Gonzalez Porto made a motion to approve \$2,500 to the Town of Richlands. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Charles G. Ellis then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grant applications from Area I. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area II General Operating Support Grants:

Charles Ellis, who observed the Area II panel, stated that the panelists were honest and realistic in their approach to the grant review process.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Willie Dell made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area II Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Longwood Center for the Arts: The Commissioners thought that the Center's project is forward thinking. The visual arts program at Longwood Center for the Arts is tremendous. It was discussed whether Longwood is equipped to handle such a large project. Longwood is committed to the arts and would be a good institution to be the driver for this project.

Lisa Alderman made a motion to fund \$1,500 to the Longwood Center for the Arts. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Charles G. Ellis then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grants from Area II. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area III General Operating Support Grants:

Evelia Gonzalez Porto, who attended half of the panel meeting, stated that the panelists were thorough and concise.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Alleghany Highlands Arts and Crafts Center: The application did not reflect the organization well. This organization is serving an area that is economically depressed. It has not changed substantially since it was last reviewed by the panel. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to award Priority 1 for 2012 – 2013.

Arts Council of the Blue Ridge: Rhonda Morgan, the new Executive Director, adds strength to this organization. The Arts Council has a long history of providing valued services to artists and arts organizations in Roanoke. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to award Priority 2 for 2012 – 2013.

Renaissance Music Academy: There was discussion about the Renaissance Music Academy. The panel had many concerns about this organization. It was noted that this organization has not changed substantially since last spring, but that the panel and staff recommended lower level of funding. The organization must submit a long range plan when it applies next year.

Ann Bondurant Trinkle made a motion to move Renaissance Music Academy from a Priority 2 to a Priority 1. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ann Bondurant Trinkle then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support Grants from Area III. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area III Project Grants: Marcia Neuhaus Speck made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area III. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVA General Operating Support Grants:

Tina Lea, who had observed the panel meeting, stated that the panelists were well prepared.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Arlington Philharmonic: A Commissioner stated the artistic quality of this organization is good. The organization presented only two concerts for the public last year with the same plans for the year of the grant. The Commission cannot fund this group if it is not doing three separate productions for the public.

Tina Lea made a motion to rule that this organization is ineligible. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Arts Council of Fairfax County: The concerns of the panel and Commission from last year were not addressed in the application. This organization has had many changes with funding and staffing. Several Commissioners had concerns about the Council's budget. A Commissioner stated that this organization is no longer in transition. The organization made changes in its mission. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to approve the staff recommendation for Priority 2 for the Arts Council of Fairfax County. Dr. Gwendolyn H. Everett abstained.

Lorton Arts Foundation: The Executive Director, John Mason, spoke with Ann Edwards Rust about the Foundation. The financial concerns by the panel and Commission have been addressed. Fairfax County has agreed to take over the maintenance of the grounds of the facility. The County will also help with the restoration which is costly and time consuming. The organization will end the year \$400,000 in the black. The performing arts program has completed a youth arts center and will now be able to increase youth performances. The organization has expanded the use of its principle art galleries. The organization currently has 100 artists that are serving as an incubator. The organization has added an additional \$500,000 for programming in the last six months. It has a new strategic plan in place. This organization is important to Prince William and Fairfax County public schools.

Tina Lea made a motion to move Lorton Arts Foundation to a Priority 1. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Ann Edwards Rust abstained.

Opera Guild of Northern Virginia: The organization is not doing three separate productions for the public.

Marcia Thalhimer made a motion to rule that this organization is ineligible. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Washington Balailaika Society: The applicant did not address its deficit. The organization is not reaching out to the corporate community in terms of board membership. The organization needs to address its board membership and deficit in its application next year. It was noted that this organization has not changed substantially since last spring, but that the panel and staff recommended lower level of funding.

Ann Edwards Rust made a motion to approve Priority 1 for Washington Balailaika Society. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Pat Perry then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support Grants from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVA Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Next Reflex Dance Collective: Although the organization received a Priority 2 the staff awarded it its full request. To be consistent with the funding formula for the other project grants the organization should only receive 50% of its request which would be \$500.

Marcia Neuhaus Speck made a motion to fund Next Reflex Dance Collective \$500. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Torpedo Factory Art Center Board (papermaking workshop and exhibition for veterans):

Several of the Commissioners stated that it is hard not to support a grant that benefits military veterans. The project is creative and therapeutic. The Commissioners felt that a project that deals with military veterans should have had support and backing from the mental health industry and / or a military organization. There was concern that the artists involved do not have the background to deal with the possible issues of military veterans.

Marcia Thalhimer made a motion to not fund Torpedo Factory Art Center Board (papermaking workshop and exhibition for veterans). The motion was seconded and approved. The vote was No Funding – 5; Funding – 2; 4 abstained.

Willie Dell then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grants from Area IVA. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVB General Operating Support Grants:

Ann Rust, who had observed the panel meeting, described it as a well prepared panel. She agreed with most of the panel's assessments.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Chateauville Foundation:

There was a lengthy discussion about this application with the Commissioners stating that the artistic quality is impeccable and that the organization has the potential to be a cultural treasure. Several Commissioners questioned whether or not this organization should be funded in the Special Recognition Award category as in past years. There is a concern that the organization's facilities are on private property.

This organization is eligible to apply under the General Operating Support category. As long as the performances are open to the public it can be on private property. The organization has addressed the concerns of the panel and staff for the last several years. It is in the process of turning the private property over to the foundation. The organization has a concrete plan to reduce the founder's large donation.

Marcia Thalhimer made a motion to approve Priority 2 for Chateauville Foundation. The motion was seconded and approved. Ann Rust, Dr. Gwendolyn H. Everett, Ann Bondurant Trinkle, and Evelia Gonzalez Porto opposed.

Fredericksburg Festival for the Performing Arts:

Ann Edwards Rust made a motion that Fredericksburg Festival for the Performing Arts be moved to Priority 1. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Loudoun Ballet: – The organization is only doing two productions and does not meet the Commission’s guidelines for funding.

Sharron Kitchen Miller made a motion to rule that this organization is ineligible and the second payment on its 2011 – 2012 General Operating Support grant not be paid. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Ann Edwards Rust then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining General Operating Support Grants from Area IVB. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area IVB Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Rappahannock Choral Society: Ann Edwards Rust recommended that the Commission fund this organization’s project grant at 50%. This will be consistent with how the Commission funded project grants in other regions.

Ann Edwards Rust made a motion that Rappahannock Choral Society be funded at \$1,000. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

Charles G. Ellis then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the remaining Project Grants from Area IVB. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area V General Operating Support Grants:

Marcia Thalhimer, who attended the Area V panel meeting, stated that the panel was extremely well prepared. The panelists were in agreement on all grants. They were familiar with the organizations and their recommendations were extremely accurate.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Pat Perry made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support Grants from Area V. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area V Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Ann Edwards Rust made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support Grants from Area V. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area VI General Operating Support Grants:

Pat Perry, who attended the Area VI panel meeting, stated that the panel was prepared. She noted that the panelists said that the grant writing skills of the grantees are a major issue. This panel was diverse. Deborah Wyld, who also attended the Area VI panel meeting, stated that the panel was strong. Unfortunately, half of the panel will be rotating off next year.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Lyric Opera of Virginia: The productions are top rate. The organization's upcoming season sounds great. Everything they are doing is clearly a Priority 2. Lyric Opera of Virginia is interested in collaborating with the Commission. They are not just in Hampton Roads, but also in Richmond and Northern Virginia. The organization has a large board. It is reaching out to all areas of the state. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to approve the staff recommendation of Priority 2 for the Lyric Opera of Virginia.

Sharron Kitchen Miller made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support Grants from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Area VI Project Grants:

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Marcia Thalhimier made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the Project Grants from Area VI. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Ann Edwards Rust abstained.

General Operating Support for Major Arts Institutions:

Marcia Neuhaus Speck, who had observed the panel meeting, said that the panel was solid and diverse. They were also thoughtful, considerate, and spirited in their approach to reviewing the applications.

Cathy Welborn presented the panel and staff recommendations on the applications.

Synetic Theatre: At the December 1, 2011 Commission board meeting Synetic Theatre was moved into the Majors category. The Commission staff had not informed the organization about the differences between being reviewed by a regional and majors' panel. This organization had been reviewed by the Area IVA panel and given Priority 1 ranking for many years. Foster

Billingsley will notify the organization that it will be reviewed by the Majors panel next year spring and give it guidance on what is expected as a Major arts organization. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to approve the staff recommendation of Priority 1 for Synetic Theatre.

Taubman Museum of Art: Exhibitions of this museum are high quality and it is well attended. The Executive Director, David Mickenburg, is the right person for this organization at this time. He is doing an amazing job. The organization's debt is staggering, but they are whittling away at it and doing the best they can. The Commissioners want to see the grant payments broken down into three payments with a mid-year report.

Virginia Repertory Theatre: This organization asked the Commission at its December 2011 and April 2012 Commission meeting to consider a transition proposal from Theatre IV and Barksdale Theatre. The Commission decided that under the current Commission guidelines it could not approve the transition proposal.

It was recommended that the Commission make a one time exception to the Technical Assistance Grant program to allow Virginia Repertory Theatre to apply for a \$4,000 grant. This grant would be used for a consultant for the launching of a new marketing brand.

Lisa Alderman made a motion to make a one time exception to the Technical Assistance Grant program to allow Virginia Repertory Theatre to apply for a \$4,000 grant. The motion was seconded and approved. Ann Edwards Rust and Sharron Kitchen Miller opposed.

Marcia Neuhaus Speck then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations on the General Operating Support for Major Arts Institutions. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

General Operating Support Short Form Applications:

Sycamore Rouge: The Commission staff learned that this organization was having financial difficulty after the March 1st deadline. The staff asked the Managing Director of Sycamore Rouge to submit a letter about the organization's financial issues and the plan on how it is addressing those issues. There is a concern this group will not be in business next year.

The Commissioners did not vote on this organization's short form application. It was suggested that the Commission board wait until its fall board meeting to award a general operating support grant or make a payment based on the reports and financial plan submitted by Sycamore Rouge.

Charles G. Ellis made a motion that the Commission board wait until its fall board meeting to award a general operating support grant or make a payment based on the report and financial plan submitted by Sycamore Rouge. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ann Edwards Rust then made a motion to approve the General Operating Support short form applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Special Recognition Awards:

Foster Billingsley presented the staff recommendations on the Blue Ridge Institute of Ferrum College and Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts.

The Crooked Road: This organization was not recommended for funding in Area I Project Grants. Several of the Commissioners felt that we need to fund this organization. It has been funded for many years by the Commission. The Crooked Road is serving the entire Southwest region of Virginia.

Lisa Alderman made a motion to give a \$5,000 Special Recognition Award to the Crooked Road. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ann Edwards Rust then made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for Special Recognition Awards. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Local Government Challenge Grants:

Marcia Neuhaus Speck made a motion to approve all the Local Government Challenge Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Artists in Education Grants:

Sharron Kitchen Miller, who had attended the Artists in Education panel meeting, stated that the Commission picked up a great new panelist from VCU, Sarah Cunningham. The bad news is that we will be losing the majority of the panel next year, including Shelly Kruger Weisberg.

Foster Billingsley presented the panel and staff recommendations on the Artists in Education Grants.

Lisa Alderman made a motion to approve the staff recommendations for the Artists in Education Grants. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2012 – 2013 Grants Budget:

Willie Dell made a motion to approve the 2012 – 2013 grants budget with the changes resulting from Commission action on the grant applications. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Updates:

MINDS WIDE OPEN: Children and the Arts – Corporation funding dropped drastically compared to Minds Wide Open 2010. Susan Hirschbiel, Peggy Baggett, Keith Martin and Neathawk Dubuque & Packett have been working on this project for five years. If it is decided to continue with this program, the Major arts organizations will need to find another group of people to head it up.

Strategic Planning:

The Commission board has decided that the Commission's current strategic plan does not reflect the resources of the agency and reduced Commission staff. Foster Billingsley gave the background on a possible planning facilitator, Nello McDaniel and ARTS Action Research. The planning process will take place over a year and will begin this summer. The Commission will also ask Jonathan Katz with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies to be part of the planning process.

Charles G. Ellis made a motion to engage Nello McDaniel with ARTS Action Research to help facilitate and write the Commission's new strategic plan. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Legislative Thank You Letters:

The Commissioners discussed whether or not the Commission should require our General Operating Support grantees to submit legislative thank you letters as a condition of funding.

Lisa Alderman made a motion to remove the mandate requiring General Operating Support grantees to send thank you letters that is tied to the final 15% of its grant payment. The Commission will replace the language in the award letter that strongly recommends thank you letters to the legislators with copies being sent to the Commission. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Report of the Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee: Ann Edwards Rust, Tina Lea and Marcia Thalhimer

The Nominating Committee recommended the following slate of officers for 2012 – 2013.

Chair: Deborah Wyld

Vice Chair: Lisa Alderman

Secretary: Marcia Neuhaus Speck

The Nominating Committee asked if there were other nominations from the floor. There being none, the nominations were closed. The report of the Nominating Committee was approved unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.