



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Monday, February 9, 2015

A meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:00 pm in the Miller Classroom at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square, 1375 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland.

Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that the meeting agenda had changed due to Sari Feldman being unable to make the meeting because of an injury she had from a fall. It was agreed that, in Ms. Feldman's absence, Mr. Minter would chair the meeting. The executive session and work session will be rescheduled for a special meeting in the coming weeks.

The roll call showed that Trustees Matt Charboneau, Steve Minter and Eliza Wing were present. It was determined that there was a quorum.

Also in attendance were: CAC staff: Karen Gahl-Mills, executive director; Meg Harris, director of administration; and managers Stacey Hoffman, Jennifer Schlosser and Jake Sinatra.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Trustee Charboneau, seconded by Trustee Wing, to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2014 board meeting. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

Mr. Minter stated that the Board of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture prepared a resolution of remembrance and appreciation for James D. Ireland III who passed away in January. Mr. Minter said that the Board wished to express its appreciation for Mr. Ireland's great work in the community, including work in arts, civic affairs, economic development. Mr. Minter stated that Mr. Ireland was a tremendous leader.

Mr. Minter read the resolution aloud. (See [resolution](#))

Motion by Trustee Charboneau, seconded by Trustee Wing, to approve the resolution of remembrance and recognition for James D. Ireland III. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Raymond Bobgan, executive director of Cleveland Public Theatre, made a public comment regarding the agenda item related to Community Partnership for Arts and Culture's proposal for the Creative Workforce Fellowship.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Gahl-Mills welcomed guests and made a report to the board. She stated that Cuyahoga Arts & Culture remains steadfast in our mission to make our community stronger through the investments it makes in arts and culture institutions and activities county-wide. She gave an overview of what items would be presented on today's agenda and thanked the Board for their attention.

Trustee Minter asked Ms. Gahl-Mills, since she has served as executive director for five years, to share some reflections on CAC's progress. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that it has been an extraordinary five years for CAC. She stated that she is most proud that CAC has moved from an organization that processes grants to an organization that is committed to its cultural partners' success. Trustee Minter stated that it has been an exciting five years for CAC, and that he was pleased to see how the organization has evolved. He stated that CAC is in a strong position to think about the years ahead.

4. FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Harris gave a report on Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's finances. She provided an overview of the organization's financial results for 2014, stating that CAC had \$15,984,716 in excise tax revenue for the year. This figure is \$215,284 or 1.3% below forecast and \$734,890 or 4.4% below receipts in 2013. Ms. Harris stated that CAC's investment income for the year was \$95,753 which exceeded forecast by \$15,753. Ms. Harris stated that unaudited expenditures for 2014 were \$17,302,118 which was under budget by \$247,126. She added that the draw on the cash reserve was \$1,216,396 rather than the budgeted \$1,269,244.

Ms. Harris stated that the Local Government Services division of the Ohio Auditor of State has nearly completed their GAAP conversion for 2015 and that the annual audit is expected to begin next week.

Ms. Harris next reported on January revenue stating that tax receipts for January 2015 were \$1,289,666. This figure is \$43,784 or 3.3% below forecast and \$151,901 or 10.54% below revenue for the same period in 2014. Interest revenue in January was \$6,664 which is as budgeted for the month. Cash expenditures in January were \$1,137,304 which is under the budget due to the timing of grant payments.

Ms. Harris stated that the Audit and Finance Committee meeting is scheduled on March 4 at 8 a.m. in CAC's offices. At this meeting, the committee will review, discuss and make recommendations on CAC's Internal Financial Control Policies and Procedures.

5. CONNECT WITH CULTURE

Ms. Gahl-Mills introduced Tom O'Brien, program director of Neighborhood Connections. Mr. O'Brien gave an overview of Neighborhood Connections and its partnership with CAC, which has resulted in more than 100 projects co-funded. Mr. O'Brien thanked CAC for its partnership with Neighborhood Connections.

Trustee Minter asked Mr. O'Brien to expand on his comments about the impact of the program. Mr. O'Brien stated that the projects funded have added vibrancy to neighborhoods in Cleveland and East Cleveland. He gave examples of a few groups that received Neighborhood Connections funding early on that have now expanded significantly, including El Sistema @ Rainey, Arts Collinwood and the Broadway School of Music and the Arts.

6. DISCUSSION

Preview of 2016 Project Support

Ms. Gahl-Mills provided an overview of early-stage planning for the 2016 Project Support grant program. She stated that, given CAC's reduced revenues, CAC is considering its priorities, and how to accomplish its objectives for this program with fewer dollars. She stated that the Project Support grant program allows CAC to achieve its mission by funding more types of organizations, arts and culture organizations run by volunteers, and arts and culture activities that are hiding in unexpected places. Most of the organizations that receive Project Support aren't eligible to apply for General Operating Support, but they are still providing arts and culture to the public. She stated, through Project Support, CAC is able to reach more people in more places, through different types of organizations. It's a cost-efficient program, and CAC spends 11% of its revenue on it, so it allows CAC to do a lot with a little. It helps small organizations to connect to more residents.

Ms. Hoffman gave an overview of CAC's early-stage recommendations for the 2016 Project Support grant program as outlined in the 2016 Project Support Guidelines Memo (See [memo](#)).

Trustee Charboneau asked whether CAC planned to leverage its relationship with cultural partners to help it reach out to new organizations. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that yes, CAC would do this.

Trustee Charboneau asked whether CAC considered 138 cultural partners in this program to be a high number. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that if the program grows much more, CAC may need to add additional staff.

Trustee Wing commented that offering additional support to cultural partners outside the grants is a great idea and encouraged CAC to partner with organizations in the community who already offer the types of programs that we might want to offer, such as CPAC or BVU, or even consider online resources. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that CAC plans to do this.

Trustee Minter commented that it's important for CAC's footprint to encompass all of Cuyahoga County, since its funding comes from the entire county. He stated that it would be ideal to help make connections between the Neighborhood Connections, Project Support and General Operating Support organizations. How can CAC help make those connections? How can CAC help residents know what free or ticketed programs are offered in their community? He stated that there is a lot of opportunity for CAC in this area – there are so many things you can do that are free or are inexpensive. He stated that he feels that helping residents connect with the activities is part of CAC's task. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that she agrees. Trustee Wing stated that she agrees with Trustee Minter's comments, and that she feels that transportation is a barrier to access. Ms. Gahl-Mills commented that she has heard that some cultural organizations are partnering with RTA to help address that issue.

CWF Proposal

Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that CAC is pleased with CPAC's proposal for a two-year grant to administer the Creative Workforce Fellowship as outlined in the Creative Workforce Fellowship Program Proposal (see [proposal](#)).

Mr. Sinatra gave an overview of the proposal.

Trustee Wing asked for clarification about the overhead costs, and Ms. Gahl-Mills referred her to the proposed budget in CPAC's proposal.

Trustee Minter asked for more information about the discussion about how many fellowships to offer, and how much each fellow should receive. Ms. Gahl-Mills stated that CPAC determined those numbers. Tom Schorgl, president and CEO of CPAC, stated that those numbers were determined through a survey of the community that asked respondents about different formats. He stated that the majority of respondents preferred fewer fellowships and a more substantial grant award amount over more fellowships with smaller grant award amounts. Mr. Sinatra stated that CAC worked with an independent contractor last year who conducted a national survey of programs that fund artists, and that \$15,000 still falls near the top for this type of grant nationally.

Trustee Minter asked Mr. Schorgl what CPAC would do with 10% more funding for this program. Mr. Schorgl stated that with a 10% higher budget, CPAC would invest more in the artists or promote and provide more visibility to the artists.

7. BOARD ACTION

Approval of Creative Workforce Fellowship Grant to Community Partnership for Arts and Culture for 2015-2016

Motion by Trustee Minter, seconded by Trustee Wing, to approve a two year grant with the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture in the amount up to \$800,000 to the Creative Workforce Fellowship in 2015 and 2016. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

Trustee Minter stated that he was pleased that CAC and CPAC have come together around this important issue. Mr. Schorgl thanked CAC and stated that he looks forward to working together on this project in the future.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Authorization to Enter Into Agreement with Suite 1300, Inc. - Neighborhood Connections

Ms. Harris stated that CAC would like to continue their work with Neighborhood Connections and asked the board to consider authorizing an agreement with Neighborhood Connections in an amount up to \$75,000. Ms. Harris stated that CAC would continue its work with Neighborhood Connections to providing more grassroots funding opportunities in the cities of Cleveland and East Cleveland.

Motion by Trustee Wing, seconded by Trustee Charboneau, to authorize CAC's executive director to enter into an agreement with Neighborhood Connections (legal name: Suite 1300 Services) in an amount up to \$75,000. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

Approval of Contract with the Cultural Data Project

Ms. Harris stated that CAC plans to continue using the Cultural Data Project as a data collection as well as application and reporting tool. She stated that the contract this year with CDP is less than last year, \$20,500 annually, down from \$35,000. She added that this change is the result of a new pricing structure developed by CDP.

Motion by Trustee Charboneau, seconded by Trustee Wing, to approve entering into a contract with the Cultural Data project in the amount of \$20,500 for a one year term. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried.

Trustee Minter asked whether all General Operating Support applicants are required to use the Cultural Data Project. Ms. Harris stated that General Operating Support and Project Support I applicants are required to use the Cultural Data Project.

Trustee Minter asked whether CAC considered the Cultural Data Project as its database. Ms. Harris stated that it serves as CAC's source for tracking data such as financials and visitors, and that it helps to have all of those together in one place.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Minter made some factual comments about his service as a volunteer on the campaign steering committee.

Next meeting: The next regular meeting will be held at 4:00 pm on April 13, 2015 in the lobby of the Allen Theater.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Charboneau, seconded by Trustee Wing, to adjourn the meeting. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm.

Sari Feldman, President, Board of Trustees

Attest:

Steven Minter, Secretary, Board of Trustees



Resolution of Remembrance and Appreciation
for
James D. Ireland III

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture mourns the loss of James D. Ireland III and salutes him for his tireless commitment to Cleveland's arts and culture community, and to our agency.

It is fair to say that, without Jamie's work, we would not be here today. In 2005, Jamie's advocacy resulted in changes in state legislation that allowed the question of dedicating tax dollars to support arts and culture in our community to come before the voters of Cuyahoga County.

He was a co-chair of the Issue 18 campaign, and he was also the co-chair of the steering committee appointed after the passage of Issue 18 which led to the appointment of CAC's first board. Jamie was also instrumental in protecting CAC's authorizing legislation when it was challenged in the state legislature in 2008.

In more recent times, Jamie was a quiet but unwavering supporter of CAC's work. He read every word of the minutes of every meeting and often asked probing questions about how decisions were made, questions that helped our agency continuously improve. And, when the time came to begin discussing the renewal of the tax levy that funds CAC's work, Jamie, once again, quietly stepped into a leadership role, bringing together key community and arts leaders to build the coalition necessary for another success.

Cleveland – and our agency – was made better and stronger thanks to Jamie's efforts. We will miss his humble leadership, his devotion to arts and culture in all of its forms, and his willingness to do whatever was necessary to help our community thrive.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture hereby expresses and records its appreciation to James D. Ireland III for his unwavering support of our agency, and for his lifetime of advocacy and support for arts and culture in Cleveland.

Adopted at the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees assembled this 9th day of February, 2015.

Attest:

Steven Minter
Secretary, Board of Trustees

Sari Feldman
President, Board of Trustees



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 9, 2015
To: CAC Board of Trustees
From: Jill Paulsen, deputy director and Stacey Hoffman, manager – project support
Re: Update on 2016 Project Support Guidelines

Executive Summary: At its February meeting, staff and the Board will discuss the policies and strategy underlying Cuyahoga Arts & Culture’s next cycle of grant guidelines (2016 Project Support). There will be no action taken at the February meeting. Board feedback on February 9 will inform staff work, leading to the presentation of and potential approval of the policies that shape the 2016 Project Support guidelines at the April meeting.

Background

As we approach another Project Support funding cycle, it is time to reflect on the purpose and goals of the program. 2016 marks the eighth offering of Project Support. While we are pleased with how it has evolved and grown tremendously over the years, we would be remiss if we did not pause to reflect on the *purpose* of the program and consider ways to improve it. We must ask ourselves:

- *Are we achieving what we want to with the Project Support grant program? And is this what the community wants and/or needs?*
- *What changes must we consider that will still allow us to maintain the essence of the program in light of reduced revenue?*

What have we achieved with Project Support so far? The Project Support program is designed “to promote public access and encourage the breadth of arts and cultural programming in our community.” Through Project Support CAC has been able to achieve its mission in three important ways.

Project Support is our annual opportunity to support the full ecosystem of arts and culture activities in unique and often unlikely places, such as neighborhood centers, homeless shelters, at after school programs and on main streets, as well as in more traditional performing arts venues and galleries. Unlike our operating support program, Project Support is open to all nonprofits – no matter their mission – as long as they commit to offering public arts/culture programming. Project Support has helped CAC serve more organizations, 138 this year alone.

Besides supporting a breadth of arts/culture disciplines, Project Support funds art happening in a majority of municipalities, often through street fairs and community concerts in many of our outer ring suburbs. Project Support has helped CAC reach residents in their own neighborhoods throughout Cuyahoga County. In 2013, PS-funded projects took place in 32 unique communities.

Finally, because this program is a small percentage (10.8% in 2015) of CAC's grantmaking budget, in alignment with our Allocation Policy, Project Support has been a cost effective way to achieve CAC's mission.

What changes must we consider for 2016 in light of reduced revenue? Acknowledging that Project Support has helped CAC achieve its mission, our work for 2016 is about keeping this essence, while being mindful of budget realities. We anticipate developing guidelines for the Board's review that include the following changes:

- 1. Deepened, more meaningful relationships with cultural partners.** In the past, we have approached each Project Support cycle as an opportunity to increase the number of grant recipient organizations. Growth – as defined by the number of groups funded – was one of our main goals. While we have been able to increase organizational participation each cycle (from 54 in 2008 to 138 in 2015), with tax receipts down, now is the time to revisit our definition of growth.

Recommendation:

- Shift from actively growing the applicant pool to deepening our relationship with a steady cohort, although we will accept applications from organizations new to the program. Spend more time providing non-financial support, in addition to the grant, to each of these organizations.
- 2. Reduced grant request amounts, in line with declining revenue.** As we have for our other grant programs, we must continue to decrease what we allocate to Project Support. If we want to keep supporting the County's full ecosystem and achieving the breadth this program is designed to support, we must make changes.

Recommendation:

- Lower the amount that organizations can request (current maximum request amount is \$50,000) and consider other mechanisms (such as a more streamlined program or applying a curve based on panelists' scores).
- 3. Further simplified application and panel process.** Feedback from past panelists and applicants indicate that there is still a need to hold live-streamed, public grant panels. We will continue this for 2016. We will also refine the application/guidelines and panel process to be simpler for all – making sure that the time and energy that organizations spend applying for a grant is not out of sync with the smaller grant awards they will likely receive.

Recommendations:

- Simplify the Project Support I application and continue to improve the online application system to make applying for and reviewing grants easier for all.

By developing grant guidelines that are based on past success but also incorporate these three changes, CAC will be able to offer a grant program – regardless of funds available – that allows us to reach all corners of the County to provide residents with a wide variety of arts and culture activities.

Next Steps

Board feedback on February 9 will inform staff work, leading to the presentation and potential approval of the policies that shape the Project Support guidelines at the April meeting. The guidelines will reflect the recommendations outlined above. Upon Board approval in April, staff will finalize the application questions and open the 2016 application process to our cultural partners by June 1, 2015.