



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, February 15, 2023

A regular meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:00 at Trinity Commons in Cleveland, Ohio.

The roll call showed that Trustees Isenhart, Mendez, Scott Taylor, and Sherman were present. It was determined that there was a quorum.

Also in attendance were: Jill Paulsen, executive director, and CAC staff.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Trustee Scott Taylor, seconded by Trustee Isenhart, to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2022 Board meeting.

Discussion: Trustee Sherman stated that she had two corrections for the minutes. The first was under section 4; she did not second this motion, it should be corrected. She added that under section 4, it should be reflected that she moved to amend the pending motion to approve the motions she made at the December meeting. She said the approval for Grants: Support for Artists, she first made two friendly amendments which were not seconded and then made the motion included in the minutes. She would like this reflected. She motioned to have the amendments accepted.

President Mendez asked the Board to vote on approving the minutes as amended by Trustee Sherman.

Vote to accept minutes for December 14, 2022 as amended – Ayes: Isenhart, Mendez, Scott Taylor. Abstain: Sherman. The motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments on the meeting agenda items.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Paulsen thanked everyone for joining her and the Board. Ms. Paulsen's remarks can be found [here](#).

In response to Ms. Paulsen's report, Trustee Sherman requested a full breakdown of how the funds made possible by ARPA were used by the recipients. She requested a breakdown of how recipients used the funds by grant program. She stated she wanted to know how much was used for the hiring of individuals. Ms. Paulsen clarified that no artists received funds from CAC; they were funded by Assembly, as were creative businesses. Ms. Paulsen noted that of the \$1.65M that CAC distributed to arts nonprofits, 70% was used for personnel (staff, contract personnel, artist fees, and interns) and 13% was used for rent, utilities, and space rental.

Trustee Sherman said that in the executive director's report it was noted that it is expected that CAC will allocate less money to grantmaking in 2024. Trustee Sherman said that this is a policy decision made by the Board. She believes CAC should be spending more money and push out more money that the community can use. Ms. Paulsen said that throughout its history, CAC tells grantees to anticipate smaller allocation every cycle due to anticipated, declining revenue. She noted that if the levy passes (providing additional revenue) CAC would recommend increasing the overall funding amounts for grantmaking. She added that most of the funds on CAC's balance sheet right now are already committed (to 2023 grantmaking) and are not available for grantmaking. Trustee Sherman would like to see a public hearing for comment on financial needs in the community. Trustee Mendez said she supported conservative budgeting in order to provide for 10 years of grantmaking from each levy cycle.

4. REPORTS – GRANTMAKING

Mr. Sinatra provided brief remarks regarding the preview to changes to grant guidelines for 2024 grant opportunities from [pages 8 and 9](#) of the Board materials. He stated that across the three grant types the goal is to simplify and streamline the application and panel process. There are no recommended policy changes to General Operating Support. Changes to Project Support and Cultural Heritage are minor and are primarily focused on implementing commitments that the Board made last year. Guidelines will be brought forward to the Board at the April meeting for its approval. Mr. Sinatra said that feedback is collected from applicants, grantees and panelists through the whole cycle and is incorporated into future grant cycles.

Trustee Sherman motioned that the Board make a policy decision to consider, in light of the likelihood of new levy dollars, to responsibly release more money from CAC's substantial reserves which are currently intended to be held onto to spend in 2027, the 11th year of the current levy. No second.

Ms. Paulsen said that policy discussions regarding allocation are historically had in September, when CAC has a better picture of its annual revenue and revenue trends. Trustee Mendez concurred that we do have these discussions, they are held annually in September.

Trustee Sherman motioned that CAC have a discussion on how funding is done and that there be a public hearing. Trustee Scott Taylor amended that CAC staff hold public hearings and provide feedback to the board. Trustee Sherman rejected the amendment. No second.

Trustee Isenhart motioned to add extended time to the September meeting to allow for additional discussion and comments from the public related to the allocation. Second: Trustee Scott Taylor second. Vote: Ayes: Isenhart, Mendez, Scott Taylor. Abstain: Sherman

5. BOARD ACTION – Finance and General Business

Ms. Harris provided the financial update. The finance report can be found in the Board materials [here](#).

Ms. Paulsen stated the Board had been given a personnel report pertaining to the hiring of Maya Curtis, who will join CAC as a grant manager. Ms. Paulsen asked that the Board vote to approve the personnel report.

Motion to approve the personnel report dated February 15, 2023 by Trustee Scott Taylor; seconded by Trustee Mendez. Discussion: None. Ayes: Isenhart, Mendez, Scott Taylor. Abstain: Sherman.

Contracts and Policies

Ms. Paulsen stated that CAC's current lease expires on March 31 and Playhouse Square Real Estate (PSRE) will not be renewing the lease for CAC's current space because PSRE is moving forward with its longtime master plan to do major renovations to the Bulkley building on floors 4-7. Therefore, PSRE is not renewing or extending leases for any tenants occupying floors 4 -7 of the building. PSRE has provided CAC with an excellent option for new, flexible office space. They have converted the 4th Floor of the Hanna Building to flexible, furnished, shared workspace where CAC can rent just the space it needs while also having access to a several conference rooms, a full kitchen, and included utilities and internet. The rental is month to month and allows us to add or drop space, as needed. CAC will be able to lower its annual rent and occupancy expenses by approximately \$15,000 per year with this move.

Motion by Trustee Scott Taylor, seconded by Trustee Isenhart, to approve changes in CAC's office space to move to a month-to-month agreement with Playhouse Square Real Estate Vote – Ayes: Isenhart, Mendez, Scott Taylor. Nays: None. Abstain: Sherman. The motion carried.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Pete Saudek, Cleveland Action Strategist, from ioby (*in our back yards*) provided an update on CAC's partnership with ioby for grassroots and crowd-sourced grantmaking. Trustee Sherman asked if there are any other nonprofits that work with incarcerated individuals. CAC staff responded that In Education and Writers in Residence work with incarcerated individuals.

Mr. Jeremy Johnson, CEO of Assembly for the Arts, provided an update on the current advocacy efforts for additional public funding for the arts that would be distributed by CAC. He said that State Bill 164 passed, which gives Cuyahoga County voters the ability to go to the ballot to expand the cigarette tax and also include a vaping tax. This is the first major step in expanding the pie. Mr. Johnson expressed his gratitude to the many elected officials who worked together to make this happen. He stated that it is too early to determine when the issue might go on the ballot. Mr. Johnson also provided an overview of Assembly's current work.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Liz Maugans, artist

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Scott Taylor, seconded by Trustee Isenhart, to adjourn the meeting. Discussion: None. Vote: all ayes. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 pm on Wednesday, April 19, 2023.

Karolyn Isenhart, Secretary, Board of Trustees