

WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION— BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 26, 2020 / Webinar

Commissioners Present

Robin Avni
Andre Bouchard
Representative Carolyn Eslick
Wesley Jessup
Jolyn GC
Mariella Luz
Diane Martindale, Chair
Monica Miller
Justin Raffa, First Vice Chair
Charlie Robin
Anna-Maria Shannon
Sheree Wen
Representative Sharon Wylie

ArtsWA Staff Present

Karen Hanan, Executive Director
Mike Sweney, Program Manager, Art in Public Places

Guests & Speakers

David Fischer, Executive Director, Tacoma Arts Live

Commissioners Absent

Francene Blythe
Ginger Ewing
Linley Logan
Joan McBride
Faaluaina Pritchard
Rebecca Redshaw
Rosanna Sharpe, Second Vice Chair
Judy Tuohy
Senator Lisa Wellman
Senator Hans Zeiger

Call to Order

Martindale, ArtsWA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. She conducted roll call; a quorum was not required for this meeting because no Board action was proposed.

Hanan said ArtsWA staff are working remotely as requested by Governor Inslee. Technology challenges are being addressed. An online meeting process allows staff to check in several times per week, and teams to check in frequently as needed, to ensure work continues.

ArtsWA staff are working with state and federal level colleagues to find out whether National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) will receive emergency funding that state arts agencies can use toward emergency funding for artists and arts organizations.

ArtsWA is working with large state-wide funding groups and interested parties to develop resources in a streamlined and focused manner, which will be placed in one on-line location within the next few weeks. This resource will include everything possible, including insight on how to submit for unemployment payments, funding for artists and non-profit arts organizations, and other needs.

When Project Support Program grantees began contacting ArtsWA because they were unable to fulfill their contracts by holding proposed events, ArtsWA transformed some of the project support grants into operating support grants. This will support organizations that are unable to hold their events, but can still receive their funds to keep their organizations afloat.

The Legislature approved \$200 Million for Covid-19 emergency relief funds before session ended. Most of these funds will go to cities and counties for unexpected expenses related to this crisis. Hanan has crafted an application to Governor Inslee requesting \$10 Million from this fund for ArtsWA to use in supporting artists and arts organizations throughout the State. The proposal and letters of support were sent to the Board for review. Hanan will submit this application today. While it may be a long-shot, it is worth pursuing because the losses ArtsWA is learning about in the arts industry are enormous. If received, this money would be distributed through a streamlined grant process as soon as possible.

While a motion is not required, Hanan wanted to inform the Board and hopes for its support.

Luz asked who would review the grant applications. Hanan said primarily ArtsWA Staff, in order to complete the grant process quickly. Reviews could include Commissioners; let Hanan know of your interest.

Martindale asked whether there is room for the Board to engage in advocacy. Rep. Wylie said a phone call to legislators, where the relationship is already established, would be helpful. If possible, emphasize how this funding would support organizations within the applicable district. Rep. Wylie is concerned about finding multiple streams for financial support to small and large non-profit organizations.

Rep. Eslick clarified whether the funding, if received, would be passed through the grants department. Hanan verified funds would be awarded through an application process handled by the Grants to Organizations program. Rep. Eslick said it is important to ensure that all organizations are legitimate and there is a process in place to hold recipients accountable for use of the funds. It is important to ensure the central focus is to retain jobs. Rep. Eslick requested to be involved in the award process.

Hanan said criteria will be fairly strict, connected to losses and furloughed staff. This grant would be focused to mitigate the financial impact on arts organizations, their staff, and artists.

Charlie Robin said the bulk of staff who work for the Capitol Theater are hourly and part-time staff. His connection to the meeting dropped before he was able to complete his comments and questions.

Rep. Wylie said some of the federal stimulus may focus on support for the gig economy, contractors, and microbusinesses. There may be new criteria established to support people who would not typically be eligible for unemployment and other financial support. Hanan said there is potential for relief on the federal level, and ArtsWA will find out what is available and reach out to constituents to keep them informed.

Rep. Wylie said it is her understanding that \$175 Million of the \$200 Million emergency fund stimulus approved by the Washington State Legislature is focused on the unexpected health care expenses in the cities and counties of Washington, to include medical supplies, temporary hospitals, and reimbursing counties where resources are slim.

Robin reestablished his connection. He asked for any details that support gig workers, hourly and part time staff, when they are available.

David Fischer, Tacoma Arts Live, said on the revenue side from mid-February through the end of May, their shortfall will be at \$1.85 Million. Review of expenses to determine how to reduce financial commitments is underway. With borrowing, Tacoma Arts Live may be able to keep full time staff at 75% time until approximately June. Their commitment is to maintain staff to the highest degree possible. Surveying of part-time staff will hopefully provide information on how to focus support for them. Tacoma Arts Live is reviewing its financial situation daily.

Hanan said ArtsWA is also requesting financial support for individual artists and plans to work with Artist Trust, that already has a process in place to disburse funds to individual artists. Technical and professional support would be included in the financial support package to individual artists that may eventually be created, should state and/or federal stimulus funding be received.

Martindale adjourned the meeting at 1:34 p.m.