



Washington State Arts Commission

Board Meeting Minutes / February 4, 2025 / Squaxin Island Museum, Shelton

Commissioners Present

Robin Avni, Second Vice Chair
Mary Big Bull-Lewis
Michael Cade
Claudia Castro Luna
Jackson Cooper
Lou Oma Durand
Chonchol Gupta
Ryan Hardesty
Jasmine Mahmoud, PhD, First Vice Chair
Tisa Matheson
Terry Morgan
Noël Moxley
Catherine Nueva España
Charlie Robin, Chair
Bennyroyce Royon
Krishna Thiagarajan

Commissioners Absent

Senator Matt Boehnke
Dr. Kelvin Frank
Tony Ginn
Star Rush
Senator Lisa Wellman
Representative Sharon Wylie

ArtsWA Staff Presenters

Miguel Guillén, Grants to Organizations Program Manager
Karen Hanan, Executive Director
Linnea Ingalls, Tribal Cultural Affairs Program Coordinator
Adrienne Kerrigan, Community Relations Program Coordinator
Deane Shellman, Deputy Director
Mike Sweney, Art in Public Places Program Manager
Michael Wallenfels, Communications Manager
Cheryl Wilcox, Tribal Cultural Affairs Program Manager

Guests & Speakers

Manny Cawaling, Director, Inspire WA
David Foster, Foster Government Relations
Debbie Preston, Public Information Officer for the Nisqually, Tribe

For a full transcript of the meeting, please view the recording at: [ArtsWA Feb 4, 2025 meeting minutes](#)

Call to Order / Land Acknowledgement / Roll Call

Robin, ArtsWA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:18 am. Thiagarajan read the land acknowledgement. Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was verified. Public comment rules were shared.

A MOTION to approve the agenda was made by Moxley, seconded by Cade, and passed unanimously.

Kristopher Klabsch Peters, Chair, Tribal Council, sq'ŋsədəbš - Squaxin Island Tribe, welcomed the board. Wilcox presented Peters with a gift of cedar roses made by ArtsWA staff.

Board Chair's Report

Robin reviewed his report (packet page 1).

Executive Director's Report

Hanan reviewed her report (packet pp. 2-5). All state agencies were asked to provide a 6% cut to their budget for review by Governor Ferguson, which will be sent to the Legislature for consideration. This is one segment of the approach to bridge the budget shortfall. At the National Endowment for the Arts, Mary Ann Carter, a republican appointed originally during the first Trump administration, is currently director. There has been no decision yet regarding cuts to federal funding for the arts.

The Billy Frank Jr. statue replacement project is moving forward. The Governor's portrait unveiling was successful. Hanan continues to work with Rep. Wylie on a bill for the Own Washington Art (OWA). This bill would create a program for constituents to purchase art on a loan program. Gupta is also providing support on how to run this program, which would support artists, galleries and the arts economy with potential increased art purchases.

The Art Pharmacy social prescribing program will need funding. Mahmoud is working with Hanan on this prospect. The America 250 project, where every state develops its own approach to celebrating our nation's 250 anniversary, is being led in our state by the Washington State Historical Society. ArtsWA is participating in the planning meetings.

Biennium 6th Quarter Report

Hanan and Shellman reviewed the current budget report (packet pp. 6-17). The budget is on track, with funds expected to be expended near the end of the fiscal year per grants contracts. Some Art in Public Places expenditures on artworks will be billed towards the end of the fiscal year. Durand and Robin thanked the Operations Team for their excellent management of the budget and the clear report and an easy to understand presentation.

Strategic Plan Dashboard

Wallenfels outlined updates on the dashboard which will be sent via email in the near future.

ArtsWA New Staff Introductions

Hanan introduced new staff hired since February 2024: Lauren Iida, Janessa Post, Claire Schechtman, Rebecca Merkley, Art in Public Places; and Lisa Siewert, Grants to Organizations (packet pp. 18-19).

Approve Consent Agenda

A MOTION to accept the consent agenda of minutes for the November 7, 2024 Board Meeting (packet pp. 20-25) was made by Moxley, seconded by Cooper and passed unanimously with no changes.

Washington State Poet Laureate 2025-2027

Hanan and Ingalls presented the panel's recommendation for the next WA State Poet Laureate, Derek Sheffield (packet p. 26).

A MOTION to approve the panel's selection of Derek Sheffield as the 2025-2027 Washington State Poet Laureate, subject to the approval of the Humanities Washington Board, and finally, Governor Ferguson's approval and appointment was made by Castro Luna and seconded by Thiagarajan. There was one conflict of interest: Mary Big Bull-Lewis. The motion passed unanimously with one recusal.

Billy Frank Jr. Statue Replacement Project

Hanan, Sweney, Wallenfels, and Debbie Preston, Public Information Officer for the Nisqually, Tribe provided an update on the Billy Frank Jr. statue replacement project (packet pp. 27-56). This is a rare occurrence as states rarely update their represented statue at the U.S. Capitol.

Sweney explained that the final proposal is currently being reviewed by the Architect of the Capitol. Once it is approved, the information goes to the Library of Congress for final acceptance.

Wallenfels and Preston are the communications team for promoting and documenting the project. They have developed lesson plans, conducted research, and are communicating with news outlets and many partners to educate about Billy Frank Jr.'s life and achievements and what the statue represents to our state. They have overseen a tour of the maquette throughout the state.

Grants to Organizations

Guillén, GTO Program Manager, reviewed panel recommendations for the Arts Service Organization Grants FY 2025-26.

A MOTION to accept the panel's recommendation for funded and non-funded Arts Service Organization Grants FY 2025-26 was made by Mahmoud and seconded by Royon. There was one conflict of interest: Morgan (WA Festivals and Events Foundation. Mahmoud asked that the minutes reflect that Shunpike will receive one \$6,000 grant each year for a total of \$12,000 over two years. The motion passed with one recusal.

Creative Districts

Adrienne Kerrigan, Community Relations Program Coordinator, reviewed the panel recommendation for certification of the Soap Lake creative district (packet p. (packet p. 57)

A MOTION to approve the panel's recommendation for Soap Lake Creative District certification was made by Cade and seconded by Morgan. There were no conflicts of interest. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board took a tour of the Squaxin Island Museum, Library and Research Center.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conversation

Commissioners Tisa Matheson, Jasmine Mahmoud and Robin Avni led exercises and discussions on equity. Commissioners agreed that it is important that this topic be on the agenda for each meeting. How ArtsWA navigate these times as a state agency, as state employees and as board commissioners is of consequence. It is important for ArtsWA to represent all people in the state of Washington.

Advocacy

Thiagarajan, Advocacy Chair, led the State of the State Report with David Foster, Foster Government Relations and Manny Cawaling, Inspire WA. ArtsWA Legislative priorities and budget requests were discussed. Cawaling provided a preview of Arts, Heritage & Science Day.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to make comment.

Adjourn

Robin adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m.