



# Maryland State Arts Council Council Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2023  
Google Meet

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Council members in attendance: John Schratwieser, Sumita Kim, Zoe Charlton, Timothy App, Bonnie Fogel, Carole Alexander, Shelley Morhaim, Julie Spangler-Madden, Molline Jackson, Jack Rasmussen, Legislative Aide, Sam Jackson for Delegate Alonzo T. Washington. Not in attendance: Lily Bengfort, Chris Sloan, David Fakunle, Jackie Copeland, and Benny Russell

Vice-Chair John Schratwieser called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Chair Jackie Copeland will have limited engagement with the council due to healthcare priorities. John has stepped up in her absence.

## **Vice-Chair remarks**

- John thanked everyone and shared his appreciation for the staff and reminded councilors of their duty and impact.
- Well wishes to Jackie

Julie made a motion to approve the November 10, 2022 council minutes. Zoe seconded. Molline Jackson abstained. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

## **Executive Director Report:**

Assistant Secretary Tom Riford Transition Update:

- Continues to receive positive comments praising the arts council and the work of the arts council and the leadership team
- transition going well and new folks from all across the state have been sworn in
- no new Secretary of Commerce as of yet
- the best transition document was from the Dept of Commerce, Tom thinks MSAC's was the best part
- Office of Tourism has a significant budget, with 550K for the fall tourism campaign the agency saw a 45/1 return on the investment tracked by hotel reservations made directly from digital online ads



- Maryland film office - is unbelievably busy with scouting for new films and the Lioness film wrapped a week before Christmas, it's an 80 M series from Paramount filmed in 9 different jurisdictions across the state
- Maryland Marketing Project - Marketing and communications; so many companies expanding, relocating to Maryland, and providing jobs and investments in communities. Maryland marketing side campaign continues, workforce development and economic development marketing, and part of that effort is quality of life, so public art, events, and activities in the state of Maryland are very important.
- The Social media video of accomplishments included art playing a big part, especially in arts relief

Tom thanked the arts council board and staff for their dedication and expressed his gratitude and honor to work with the staff as he serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

### **Staffing Updates**

- Arts Capital Program Manager closes 1/13 (position will manage \$3M Grant program starting in FY24)
- Deputy Director conducting interviews

### **Arts Relief Update**

- Awarded to dates: approx. \$23.3M
- Arts relief tracker spreadsheet shared with councilors
- Continue to move forward with rewarding arts relief funds as several deadlines approach

### **Grants Volume and Payment status**

- Total amount budgeted for grants: ~\$65M; total grant payments by FY end: ~2,500; Total amount awarded to-date: ~47M; grants awarded to-date: 1,209 total; Total amount paid to-date: ~17.5M

### **Grants awarded vs. grants paid**

- Payments take 6-8 weeks to process after the Grant Agreement has been fully executed
- In December alone, \$21.3M total was awarded (\$20M of that was for ARGOS)
- All notifications are out, but it will take 6-8 weeks more to reach PAID status
- Delays caused by unsigned grant agreements, volume, and prioritization of regular programming put first

### **Panelist Payment Update**



- Current Rates: \$50 panelist training; \$200 flat fee per review cycle
- New Compensation Model:
  - Tiered, dependent on the # of apps to review
  - Better aligns with the actual time commitment
  - Increase accessibility for potential panelists
  - Would remain within the 200K budget for FY23

Councilors agreed that the groundbreaking model is comprehensive and shows MSAC's commitment to equity and access across every channel of the work that the state arts council does.

### **External Grantee Audits**

- Two audits were complete; no findings for one and recommendations for additional reporting requirements were made for the other

### **Grantee Updates**

- Evolving pandemic - the return of audiences/income is slow/lagging; Many organizations saw an influx of relief funding in 20-21
- Great resignation and after-effects?; Expenses increasing
- Reduction of programming or programming returning slowly; Some organizations' financial picture is tight, and some closing
- Many leadership transitions

### **MSAC Response**

- In dialogue with grantees
- Making determinations about grant payments, etc. based on circumstances
- Putting organizations into an on-year review, requiring additional reporting
- MSAC has been transparent about what can be done with organizations facing issues
- Baltimore Office of Promotion and Arts - MSAC provides funding for BOPA which serves as the arts council, events producer, and film office for the City of Baltimore
- Email sent to board chair notifying them of staff's direction to withhold payments for outstanding grants; received a prompt response from the chair
- MSAC must be good stewards of state funds and wants to make sure the agency can fulfill obligations under state arts council contractual agreements.

Bonnie mentioned that expenses are soaring especially for theatre organizations and they are not seeing a return.

### **Strategic Planning Update**



- Finalizing RFP
- Timeline: Jan 2023 - RFP Solicitation; Feb 2023 - Proposal Review and Selection; Mar-Oct 2023 - Plan Development

## **Staff Reports**

### **Public Art**

Maryland Public Art Roster - The Roster will be a second procurement option in selecting artists for the Artwork Commissions program

Goals:

- Increase equity in the selection process for Artwork Commission projects; Decrease administrative time for staff, state agency partners, and Artist Selection Committee members, creating efficiencies in artist selection
- Increase the number of Artwork Commissions (given capacity restraints) to address our backlog of capital-building projects in the queue; Roster names would be made public giving public artists visibility for organizations and municipalities seeking artists for public art projects

Process:

- A Call to Artists will be open to artists nationwide\* to apply; A panel of public art professionals will review applications based on four eligibility criteria
- Artists included on the Roster are eligible to be considered for all Artwork Commissions through 2025 without re-applying to individual projects; The Roster will open biannually for new applicants and renewals

Precedent:

Public Art staff and members of the MD Public Art Commission researched other Public Art Roster programs incl: ArtsWA, Oregon Arts Comm., NYC

Councilors inquired how this will interact with our current Maryland roster and the public art team explained that they are looking into how both rosters will support each other, and the roster might have to be in parallel to the current roster managed by Maryland Art Place.

## **Program Revisions Status**

### **Grants for Artists**

- Broad-based working and living expenses; Applications open now in SmartSimple; Grantees were chosen at random from eligible apps; Two rounds of funding in FY 2023; Info session Tuesday, Jan. 17, 3 pm - 4 pm



- So far: strong positive reaction from the public

Councilors expressed interest in the basis for eligibility and application questions. Chad explained that eligibility will be determined by Maryland residency and proof of generated income from a creative practice independent of salaried work. He shared that the program was created to support living and working expenses for independent artists. Steven reminded councilors that the program has already been approved by the Program Policy Evaluation Committee and the full council and funding is intended to fund independent artist working and living expenses.

### **Independent Artist Award**

- A panel of 10 editors confirmed; Fall public inquiry data aggregated
- Consultation with other state arts agencies; "Aesthetic Perspectives" model revisited
- Optional council convening to discuss progress

Several councilors express interest in convening to further discuss revision progress.

### **Special Request program**

- Recommendations approved by the council; Revised guidelines drafted and approved
- A revised application is under construction; February opening, pending council budget vote

### **Arts in Education program**

- Revision Goals:
  - Explore maximums on grant awards; Examine the criteria for determining site/school-wide support
  - Review the use of funds; Review the Equitable Funding Formula
  - Consider Roster eligibility regarding independent artists and organizations
- Revision Timeline: February: Listening Sessions; March: Editor Sessions; April-May: Policy Recommendations

### **County Arts Development/A&E Districts**

David shared the process of redesignation and A&E districts up for redesignation.

### **Arts and Entertainment Districts**

(Time for Redesignation and Site Visits!)



- Leonardtown A&E District (Site Visit -1-26-23)  
(Commissioners of Leonardtown)
- Historic Stevensville A&E District  
(Queen Anne's County Tourism )
- Cambridge A&E District  
(City of Cambridge)
- Downtown Frederick A&E District  
(Frederick Arts Council)
- Highlandtown A&E District (Site Visit 1-19-23)  
(Southeast Community Development)

### **County Arts Agencies**

- Celebrating \$ 3.5 million in Arts Relief Funding!
- Considering waiving the annual "Match" requirement
  - Match often time a hurdle and since there is precedence hopeful to permanently remove the match
- Continued work with CAAM to define programming and new strategies around convening and professional development.
- Lots of Leadership transitions coming out of the COVID Pandemic.
- Personal goals include continuing to work with county arts agencies to know how to best support capacity needs; report findings reveal some needs extend beyond grant working

David extended an invitation to council members to attend site visits. Molly expressed interest in attending to share her expertise and speak to planners about the importance of the economic development of arts & entertainment districts. David mentioned that he would send the dates of upcoming visits as they become available.

### **Finance Committee and Fiscal Report**

Shaunte presented the FY23 Revenue budget as a follow-up to the budget sent to councilors before the meeting. Total state general funds: \$26.7M; total special funds: \$41.3M (including arts relief funds); total federal funds: \$879k; a total of all funds: 68.9M

FY23 Budget Surplus Spending Plan (As of 10/31/22) approved by the Finance Committee presented.

Bonnie made a motion to recommend mid-year budgeting and allocation of funds. Zoe seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

### **Reallocation of funds presented:**



Current practice: To reallocate funds between administration and grants budget lines, MSAC staff develop recommendations, and the full council votes to approve at a regular meeting.

Proposed policy: The Executive Director may review staff projections of the use of funds and 1) approve reallocating budgeted funds between administration and grants budget lines for amounts totaling up to \$250k and 2) approve reallocating funds among grant programs. The Executive Director will notify the full council of such reallocations. For amounts totaling over \$250k, reallocation between administration and grants budget lines requires a full council vote.

Justification: The change will allow staff to reallocate certain amounts of funds accordingly and be more responsive to grant program needs.

Bonnie made a motion to recommend the proposal to streamline reallocating funds. Shelley seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

Bonnie made a motion, seconded by Shelley to approve. All in favor. The motion passed.

## **Executive Committee Report**

Steven shared his intention to return to four council meetings a year. Currently, there are five and according to the by-laws, the council is only required to meet four times annually. Essentially the council will combine the November and January meetings. This will ensure staff has adequate time to prepare for more meaningful, productive meetings. Ad hoc meetings are always an option when there's a need.

While councilors expressed their appreciation for less work and fewer meetings, they also expressed interest in the time scheduled for less formalized complex conversations. Steven mentioned that in the past staff and councilors participated in retreats every other year and there have been discussions around reviving such gatherings in June. He also shared that retreats are being built into the strategic planning process as well.

## **Governance Report**

Different tools were presented to councilors to encourage councilor engagement. The Councilor Reporting Form was reviewed which allows councilors to share their experiences in the field. A Councilor engagement tracking sheet was shared which will monitor councilors' attendance and participation in arts council-driven events. Steven is working on talking points to assist councilors in advocating for the council. Councilors shared the value of attending grantee-sponsored events and the appreciation from grantees. Steven offered councilors the opportunity to participate in a



creative assignment model that staff participates in during weekly staff meetings. Councilors will consider the idea and follow up.

## **Equity & Justice Sharing**

Steven reminded councilors of the Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Racial Equity in Arts Funding workshops available in March and May. Councilors are to follow up with Keyonna if interested in attending. John encouraged councilors to attend coffee with the council sessions and reminded councilors to be mindful of their role as observers when attending sessions held by MSAC.

## **New Business**

- Reminder to complete financial disclosure forms
- Senator Ronald Young retiring; the council recognized all he has done to transform Frederick into what it is today and commemorated his service by reading a citation, recognizing his contributions and long-standing commitment to the arts on behalf of the Maryland State Arts Council
- No recommendation at this time to re-engage with Americans for the Arts; MSAC is keeping high on their equity and justice intentions and looking into MSAC's participation in the national arts advocacy date
- Fall regional office hours were successful with six places visited throughout the state. Staff looking into continuing office hours in March and hoping to work with County arts agencies for a more impactful experience.

John thanked everyone for a great meeting.

Timothy made a motion to adjourn Julie seconded. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:15 pm.