



**Regional Arts Commission
Full Commission Board Minutes
December 11, 2024, 8 a.m. via Zoom**

Commissioners Present

Commission: Roz Johnson, chair, yea; Jerry Gennaria, vice chair, yea; Constantino Ochoa, secretary, yea; Sam Fiorello, yea; Robert Arbuthnot, yea 8:12a; Rhonda Carter-Adams, yea; Beverly Isom; Mont Levy, yea; Rudy Nickens, yea; Andréa Purnell, yea; Cheryl Walker, yea; David Wilson, yea

Commissioners Absent

Heather Corcoran
John Russell
Angela Williams

Staff

Vanessa Cooksey, Savannah Babington, Charlie Bosco, Rita Dillard, Gregory Harris, Tracey Morgan, Angie Peters, Jay Scherder, Jason Schipkowski, Chloe Smith, MK Stallings, Lea Sutherlin, Leigh Winter

Additional Attendees: Dr. Robert Harvey, KEB - Rick Gratza

Public Guests (Johnson)

Chair Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for acknowledgement of public guests – none in attendance.

Approval of November 21, 2024 Minutes

Johnson called for a motion to approve the November 21, 2024 minutes. Motion made by Levy, seconded by Carter-Adams, and unanimously carried to approve the November 21, 2024 minutes. Votes were as follows:

Yea –Johnson, Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Isom, Levy, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Chair Johnson reminded that the purpose of the meeting was to serve as a follow-up to the November full commission/annual board meeting. She added that the focus would be Dr. Harvey's presentation on the Theory of Change framework for discussion and educational purposes. Chair Johnson then requested that Cooksey begin the report.





Theory of Change (TOC) Framework (Cooksey/Harvey)

Cooksey mentioned that Dr. Harvey was traveling at the time of this meeting, but would participate through communicating with her, via the Zoom chat, and would remain available to address any questions. Cooksey noted that this would be a high level review of TOC and presented the following: (1) understanding the work behind TOC; (2) purpose of this meeting – to request a ‘yea’ or ‘nay’ vote from commissioners – mainly on page 15 of the packet for this meeting - inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact; (3) large body of work to be done in 2025; (4) looking for agreement from full commission that TOC is the right direction for RAC; (5) completion of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and ‘report out’ on accomplishments for the strategic plan during the January 2025 Town Hall; (6) often times no specific impact named with a strategic plan, and as leader of RAC, wants to be clear on how St. Louis will be better and different because of RAC’s contributions toward moving the region forward; (7) reminded that TOC with Dr. Harvey began in January 2024 and ‘deep dive’ at the June 2024 Annual Board/Staff Retreat; (8) thinking about what the region could look like if engaged in particular work over a period time through TOC and its impact; (9) reminded that she [Cooksey] held 1:1’s with several board members around the inputs, activities/coordinated tactics, focused on in the sector and community, and outputs of TOC; (10) thanked commissioners for reading TOC document – sent prior to this meeting; (11) kudos to RAC’s “great team members”; (12) RAC is fortunate to have Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue as primary source of resource in spite of volatility; (13) TOC inputs - including people, money, data - team has explored a variety of ways to diversify revenue, and producing data about and for the sector [Stallings has elevated RAC’s data game – informed by feedback from grantees on what they need from RAC]; (14) TOC activities – including ‘we invest’, ‘we amplify’, and ‘we convene’; (15) TOC outputs – including metrics that have helped communicate RAC’s value and performance in the community and helpful in communicating and documenting staff performance and focusing on efforts; (16) TOC outcomes – RAC work should benefit residents, creatives, and organizations; (17) overall impact of TOC by 2035 and ability to say that St. Louis, as a region, will experience joy and prosperity as a top 10 arts and culture destination; (18) distinction of RAC’s history; and (19) detailed review of TOC 10 tactics of activities that shape the work that ladders up to how RAC invests in artists, arts organizations, creatives, and public art – 10 tactics include #1 thru #4 ‘we invest’, #5 and #6 ‘we amplify’ [kudos to MARCOMM team], and #7 - #10 ‘we convene’.

Cooksey noted that outputs are quantifiable, measurable, and immediate effects of activities, and shared specifics and context from those areas. Cooksey further noted that RAC wants to focus on the creatives who creating is essential to their livelihood, and that financial literacy/financial efficacy is important for the creatives in the arts sector. Cooksey added that creative work will benefit from having thriving livelihoods, then highlighted the TOC glossary of terms. She then reminded that the team has put in a lot of time and effort into TOC, and that most of the 2024 staff meetings have been dedicated to working through this process when it comes to consent and moving forward. Cooksey noted that on average, when people go through a theory of change process, it’s 4.3, 4.5 or 4.7, and that RAC’s team has landed at 4.8 through a rigorous process.

Cooksey noted that her request from this meeting was for questions about this (TOC) work, and ultimately a vote to say yes, the team should keep going in this direction. She then asked for questions and/or comments.

Carter-Adams expressed appreciation that it starts with staff input and asked what the plan would be if TOC not approved.





Cooksey stated that the TOC will be changed to what it needs to be to get approved, and that the hope is that none of this is unfamiliar to commissioners as a collective as this work evolved out of last year's Annual Board/Staff Retreat, and that additional one on one meetings have been held with Chair Johnson, and Chair-elect Gennaria along the way.

Walker thanked Cooksey and team for their work on TOC and for the additional context and flavor, and for considering the whole creative and the whole organization.

Cooksey expressed appreciation to Dr. Harvey for initiating important conversations that started at last year's Board Staff Retreat, as these conversations focused on building a resilient organization and approaching this work through a liberatory lens.

Levy extended congratulations to the staff for their ongoing dedication and hard work. Levy then noted the following: (1) asked how RAC will measure the success and impact of each element in the TOC framework; (2) suggested revisiting how best to define "arts and culture"; and (3) while great progress is being made, there's always room for refinement.

Peters read Dr. Harvey's following chat response to Levy's question/comment: *(1) at a high-level, the ideal evaluation schedule would be annual for outputs; and (2) include bi-annual progress-monitoring check-ins with teams who lead/ "own" bodies of work.*

Cooksey then read Dr. Harvey's additional chat response to Levy's question/comment: *In addition, RAC would start using theory of action evaluation practices to secure baselines; and decide the ratio of investment (money) - to - infrastructure for measurement. For example, having to answer the question: "are we using an independent (in-house) research/evaluation approach, a university-collaboration, a research collaborative, and/or some combination approach? That infrastructure answer would allow us to emerge in what we collect, why we collect it, and HOW we collect it.*

Additional discussion held regarding staffing, employee attrition/retention, and identifying new sources of revenue.

Johnson called for a motion to approve RAC's Theory of Change Framework. Motion made by Walker, seconded by Nickens, and unanimously carried to approve RAC's Theory of Change Framework. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Johnson, Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Arbuthnot, Carter-Adams, Isom, Levy, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Cooksey expressed that although challenging, it has been an amazing year, much has been accomplished, and that the team looks forward to getting some rest over the holidays then getting back to work in January. Cooksey added that she would be available to address any questions from commissioners.





**REGIONAL ARTS
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Public Comment

None in attendance.

Roll Call & Adjournment

Johnson called for a motion to adjourn the December 11, 2024 Full Commission meeting.

Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Levy, and unanimously approved to adjourn the December 11, 2024 Full Commission meeting at 8:47 a.m. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Johnson, Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Arbuthnot, Carter-Adams, Isom, Levy, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

Board Packet Attachments

- Full Commission Meeting Minutes, 11/21/24
- Theory of Change Overview Presentation

