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REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS



**Regional Arts Commission
Grants Committee Minutes - DRAFT
April 30, 2021 @ 12 Noon via ZOOM**

Attendees

➡ Andrea Purnell, Rhonda Adams, Roz Johnson, Mont Levy, Mary Walsh

Staff: Vanessa Cooksey

Other: Rita Dillard, Chloe Smith, Lea Sutherlin, Admin Consultant

Call to order: Purnell called meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Grantmaking 2.0

Purnell asked Cooksey to report on Grantmaking 2.0.

Cooksey: Excited to share the work the team has been doing over the past few weeks; encouraged committee members to write down questions and submit following the presentation.

➡ She presented **background** and the most urgent need – a new grant management system (GMS); used Fluid Review, a Monkey Survey product for many years that is now discontinued; Erika Fiola, while at RAC, initiated the process for review and research, for a new GMS; a combined legal review of Foundant user agreement, and reduction in staff due to COVID created an opportunity to take a step back; instead of two separate systems – CRM and GMS – looked at a platform that offered both; a combined system is cost efficient, increases data security, better reporting and metrics for evaluations; Blackbaud and Salesforce offer both CRM and GMS. Cooksey further noted that RAC has already used the free version of Salesforce and has evaluated their capabilities over the past weeks; important that the system has technology needed to make process user friendly for individual grantees making the application; important to make a holistic decision.

Cooksey then presented **objectives**. Team engaged in a PESTEL exercise when thinking about grantmaking, which will also assist vendor to design a useful program for grant offerings at RAC; explained that PESTEL is a framework/tool used to analyze and monitor the macro-environmental factors that may have a profound impact on an organization's

performance; PESTEL is an acronym for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors; important that GMS meets needs of today; continuing reimagining of grantmaking efforts that started in 2019-2020; important to ensure grantmaking reflects internal team values CREATIVE – connected, respectful, excellent, accountable, trusted, inclusive, valued and enjoyable; main objective is to streamline and simplify grantmaking cycle/process; looking to launch in January 2022; she reviewed in detail “current vs. recommended” upgrades for 2022.

Cooksey paused for Q & A.

Johnson: Thanked Cooksey for framing the comprehensive picture of everything this committee is charged with; asked if any of the recommendations resulted from the March 31st town hall meeting.

Cooksey: Noted that was correct and committee will see further in recommendations for organizations as part of this presentation; further noted that she (Cooksey) has held a series of meetings with arts organizations as part of her onboarding process along with engaging Rita and Chloe based on their expertise, and input from Lea, how to evolve grantmaking.

Johnson: Shared that Build-A-Bear has a strategic partnership with Salesforce; and offered to connect the two organizations.

Levy: Inquired as to how many dollars are being considered when talking about fellowships, programs, cohorts, Tiger fund, etc.; where are funds coming from and what are staff burdens necessary to execute this based on where you are.

Cooksey: After receiving April deposit of City and County of \$12K, RAC continues to struggle with budget; if solely hotel/motel, not sure RAC will be in position to do any new grantmaking next year.

Cooksey continued presentation.

Recommendations for organizations.

Cooksey: Encouraged this committee to share if they feel rebranding and renaming are not necessary. Will encourage grants from non-art organizations that have arts programming around commitment to DEI; will also encourage public arts projects to seek this type of assistance.

Targeted grantmaking.

Purnell: Asked about the approach of going to grantees with funding verses inviting to apply.

Cooksey: It can be either.

Walsh: Program support grant - by extending to non-art organizations to support more DEI; asked how public arts projects will be included.

Cooksey: Want to create opportunity for public art to support arts sector as a whole; will develop guidelines for each project.

Cooksey continued presentation.

What's next – seek feedback from key stakeholders; secure partners where necessary; develop detailed descriptions, guidelines and process for each; establish evaluation metrics for each; and finalize GMS/CRM selection/establish implementation team; over next several months want to align these areas so that when building technology it will be sustainable.

Levy: Noted this is a comprehensive remake of what RAC has been doing; must be realistic and not make promises to the community we cannot deliver.

Cooksey: Appreciate the feedback; COVID provides opening now that was not available in the past; will make sure to get data needed to hold everyone accountable and use it to tell good stories; leveraging technology to make RAC more efficient with reduced staff.

Purnell: Suggested James Anderson and Cooksey have a conversation; this sounds like a roll out that can go well into 2025; important community hears what is being done and why; each consideration is something that this committee will need to individually approve.

Cooksey: Appreciate feedback; she offered to hold 1:1 with each committee member for a further dive; there will be two applications - one for organizations and one for individuals; need to launch an application in 2022.

Walsh: Concurred with Levy regarding budget; determine what to go forward with now, if we can come to an idea; consider percentage cost of each of these items and which will have the most impact.

Levy: Consider the politics at the heart of RAC's survival; roll out of Purnell's concept is important; needs of the art community and ecosystem will look different in 2024-2025.

Walsh: Renaming programs present branding opportunities.

Levy: One of the challenges for RAC is trying to serve so many missions including economic development.

Cooksey: Asked to hear from Carter-Adams as a new commissioner.

Carter-Adams: Listening and learning; does see it as a lot of change and love idea about extended roll out to 2025.

Purnell: Regarding stakeholders - hearing from a few artist fellows as well as CAT would be informative.

Levy: Regarding artist fellowship – make sure we have band-with to execute; support for emerging artists is another important idea.

Purnell: Concurred. Regarding Target grant slide – new initiative; this may be new to public but not new to RAC.

Walsh: Likes the artist fellowship aspect; also thinks emerging artist grant is a positive possibility.

Cooksey: Possibly next meeting of this committee and DEI together; must think about how to work DEI into our grantmaking; would like to see measurable progress in the DEI commitment within the next five years.

Johnson: Concurred.

Purnell: Asked about timeline for communicating grants to community.

Cooksey: September 2021 via a town hall to announce GMS and other updates.

Purnell: Thanked staff for their hard work and attention to these rigorous matters.

Adjournment

Purnell adjourned the April 30th Grants Committee meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Submitted by Lea Sutherlin
Administrative Consultant