

**Regional Arts Commission
Grants & Programs Committee Minutes
August 17, 2023 @ 8 a.m. via ZOOM**

Committee Members in Attendance

Roz Johnson, Chair, Beverly Isom, David Wilson

Committee Members Absent

Angela Williams, Andréa Purnell, ex-officio

Staff in Attendance:

Vanessa Cooksey, Tony Chance, Ann Haubrich, Angie Peters, Pacia Anderson, Lea Sutherlin

Call to Order & Approval of Minutes

Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Johnson then called for the approval of the minutes of the May 11, 2023, Grants and Programs Committee meeting.

Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Wilson, and unanimously carried to approve the May 11, 2023, minutes. Vote was as follows:

Yea – Johnson, Wilson, Isom

Nay - None

Abstain - None

Johnson asked staff to present the following reports:

Update on Programs/CAT (Anderson)

Anderson provided a summary of the 2023 CAT Cohort as follows: (1) relaunch was very successful; (2) collaboratives/pivoting/feedback - CAT came back strong in 2023 and pleased with the outcomes; (3) CAT program 20 years old/curriculum redesign; (4) shifted learning platform to Google; (5) faculty dream team; (6) safe space for exchange while building community; (7) changed to every other Saturday to support the more structured learning experience; (8) capstone project - thanked Cooksey for approving funding for the Lab Team Project experience and thanked this committee for expanding the CAT budget which enabled partnership with the organization – Undo Bias; (9) anticipate being under budget; (10) evaluation/feedback which allowed them to pivot in real time, then overall evaluation of the cohort experience which will help with data

gathering for the future; (11) discussed with Purnell cross organization collaborations; (12) endeared by how RAC “showed up for CAT” – being present, financial support and the autonomy to keep CAT as CAT; (13) fellows transformed and bonded; (14) CAT is about developing artists in the community; and (15) working on draft plan for what comes next.

Johnson reminded how she shared at a prior meeting that one of the 2023 CAT Fellows works at Build-A-Bear and was part of the team that won the project grant; extended congratulations for a job well done; and thanked Anderson for her “labor of love.”

Wilson asked for, and Anderson shared, an example of one of the projects.

Haubrich thanked Anderson for her amazing and hard work and noted it was a great program. Haubrich then gave the following program updates.

Gyo Obata Fellowship (GOF): (1) completed 10-week summer program on 8/11; (2) amazing closing program/gathering – and asked Isom for comments; (3) 10 fellows from St. Louis Community College, Washington University, McKendree University and University of Kentucky; (4) organizations and fellows had a great summer; and (5) Shevaré Perry did a wonderful job with the program.

Mid America Artist Alliance (MAAA) – Artist INC program: (1) RAC is in partnership with MAAA to conduct the eight [8] week program; (2) program is tailored to the needs and challenges of St. Louis working artists to help turn practices into art careers; (3) facilitators are trained artists from the Midwest - mostly St. Louis; (4) very diverse cohort; and (5) first cohort will begin in September.

Cooksey thanked Haubrich for her report on programs, and asked Isom for feedback on GOF.

Isom shared the following: (1) it was her first time participating as a new commissioner; (2) as a perennial life coach and mentor, would like to have spent more time with her group; (3) GOF fellows were amazing young people; (4) learned lessons from other mentors; and (5) overall - a great program.

Cooksey thanked Isom for her participation and invited all commissioners to participate.

ARPA for the Arts Update (Cooksey)

Cooksey gave the following update on ARPA for the Arts: (1) opened on August 1 - with 20 arts and arts organizations applications received within the first 24 hours – kudos to Tracey Morgan, ARPA for the Arts Lead, and working in cohort with MARCOMM and the Grants team to get things in order; (2) some challenges due to CDA changes in real time; (3) determined to distribute ARPA dollars before the end of 2023; (3) no small feat working through ARPA federal regulations and CDA guidelines; (4) nearly 60 applications to date; (5) grants team and Morgan working diligently to make process “painless less as possible” for the artists and arts organizations from a paperwork and reporting perspective; (6) receiving good feedback from artists and arts organizations; (7) GOS 2019 awards fulfillment grants have all been distributed; (8) receiving great feedback from applicants on pop-up location at The Foundry, and being able to get personal support from the team in this process; and (9) commitment to serve is strong.

Cooksey then shared that RAC is preparing for a challenging 2024 from a revenue perspective, Hotel/Motel sales tax, and noted the following: (1) based on Explore STL's forecast, which expects a \$100K shortfall this time of year (in 2024); (2) RAC expects a \$200K shortfall for this quarter; (3) beginning to see impact of cancelled conventions; (4) current revenue is from hotel inflation rate rather than growth; and (5) RAC team planning to scale back for next year. Cooksey then asked Haubrich to present the proposed plan for 2024 Grantmaking.

Proposed Plan for 2024 Grantmaking

Haubrich noted that the Grants team and Cooksey have been working diligently to ensure grantmaking is equitable by supplying unrestricted funds to all organizational grants. Haubrich then reviewed, in detail, the 2024 RAC Grantmaking Plan, and reminded that this information had been sent to this committee prior to the meeting. Haubrich highlighted the following: (1) applications open in February 2024 and grants paid in June 2024 [Artist Support 2nd round opens again Summer 2024 and pay end of November 2024]; (2) funding year will remain as July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025; (3) next steps will be to develop communications and payment process plan; (4) will continue robust program of workshops for applicants and reviewers; (5) in 2023 made total grants of \$4.5M; and (6) Arts & Culture Organizations - grants eligibility, criteria, what's new in 2024, proposed FY24 budget unrestricted grants for arts and culture organizations; establish a financial review panel, in addition to the artistic panel review, customized application questions in Capacity & Sustainability section, town hall for 2019 GOS cohort, and proposed FY24 budget program grants for nonprofit organizations with arts programming.

Haubrich then reviewed the RAC GOS Grants Analysis, sent to this committee by Cooksey, prior to this meeting. Haubrich highlighted the following: (1) outlines 40 organizations that historically receive money from RAC; (2) maximum 2024 award – depending on scores; (3) average grants received from 2020-2023, including ARPA; (4) organization's operating budget that RAC has on file; and (5) percentage of organization's operating budget to its RAC award.

Cooksey noted the following: (1) this analysis was created so that commissioners would have a clear understanding on what the changes mean for the organization as a whole; (2) RAC has held these organizations in the same general operating cohort since 2018; (3) it has been five years since these organizations have had to compete for funding; (4) will now compete with those organizations that traditionally apply for program grants; (5) pre-pandemic is no longer the focal point – focus is now 2020 forward; (6) last column of analysis - percent of current operating budget - gave examples.

Wilson: Interesting information and very helpful analysis; pleased team is anticipating impact and alerting organizations in advance.

Haubrich gave examples of percentage of RAC funding for larger organization operating budgets.

Cooksey noted that this commitment to equity through levels of giving will provide smaller organizations access to more meaningful dollars. Cooksey further noted that she is hopeful despite revenue challenges in 2024, and that Peters is working diligently on diversifying revenue. Cooksey added that the goal is to communicate the 2024 grantmaking plan in October at Cultura.

Feedback/Discussion

Brief discussion held on (1) elimination of GOS category which will now be titled 'Unrestricted Grants for Arts Organizations'; (2) anticipated eligibility; (3) program grants will be limited to non-arts organizations with arts programs; and (4) current revenue volatility prevents a multi-year commitment.

Additional brief discussion held regarding A&E.

Cooksey noted that exciting things are happening in direct response to the strategic plan and the arts. Cooksey then thanked Haubrich for her leadership and noted that this has been no small feat with only two [2] on the grants team, the demand for the work doubled, along with providing oversight for CAT, Gyo Obata, and MAAA. Cooksey shared that she is grateful that Haubrich has led the Grants & Programs team/function with grace, that Haubrich has done a yeoman's job in her leadership efforts, and that it is great for her (Cooksey) as a leader to have someone they can trust.

Johnson thanked commissioners, and the staff for lots of hard work, heartfelt effort, and doing the right things for the right reasons.

Adjourn

Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Isom and unanimous to adjourn the August 17, 2023 Grants & Programs meeting at **9:03 a.m. Vote was as follows:**

Yea – Johnson, Wilson, Isom

Nay - None

Abstain - None

Attachments

- Minutes – Grants Committee meeting, May 11, 2023
- 2024 Hotel/Motel Grantmaking Plan
- RAC GOS Grants Analysis

Submitted by Lea Sutherlin

Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator