



**Regional Arts Commission  
Growth & Development Committee Minutes  
September 25, 2024 via ZOOM  
10 a.m.**

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Mont Levy, chair, Beverly Isom, Roz Johnson, ex-officio

**Committee Members Absent**

Rhonda Carter-Adams, Sam Fiorello

**Staff Attendees**

Angie Peters, Savannah Babington, Nichole Belford, Jay Scherder, Jason Schipkowski, MK Stallings, Lea Sutherlin

**Call to Order & Approval of Minutes (Levy)**

Levy called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Levy then called for the approval of the minutes from the July 11, 2024, Growth & Development Committee meeting.

**Motion made by Isom, seconded by Johnson, and unanimously carried to approve the July 11, 2024 Growth & Development Committee minutes. Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Levy, Isom, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

Levy called for the following reports.

**Sources of Revenue Generation (Levy/Peters)**

Peters shared the following: (1) RAC has explored various strategies for revenue generation as part of the initiative to diversify income sources; (2) an overview of RAC's current position and direction being taken; (3) two key principles from discussions including [a] expansion of revenue streams beyond a single source, and [b] aim to avoid competing with the organizations financially supported by RAC; and (4) moving forward - five specific strategies being prioritized including [a] 50/50 raffle, which has been performing exceptionally well under Jay's leadership, [b] co-funding/Sponsorship -where RAC puts in along with other funders, [c] government funds – success of ARPA and thanks to those who attended wrap party, [d] Grants - over \$500K - for Theory of Change work already completed, work being done and as RAC moves forward, and [e] passive including Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue and contributions.





Discussion held as follows: (1) setting achievable goals/strategies in each of the above reported on categories for the remainder of this year and into next year; (2) continued thoughts toward best path forward for maximizing success for 50/50 raffle and possible discussions with CAT; and (3) notifying full commission to assist when applying for large-scale grants.

### **\$2M from Sale of 6128**

#### **Endowment Fund (Discussion)**

Levy discussed the following regarding funds from the sale of the 6128 Delmar building, which are currently held as a board-designated endowment: (1) the designation allows the Commission to make decisions about the use of the funds; (2) given the current uncertainties surrounding hotel/motel revenue and the ongoing St. Louis Convention Center expansion, the prevailing sentiment is to retain these funds for the near future and assess the situation as it develops; (3) being open to discussions about potential uses for these funds, while also noting that interest earned on the endowment is being reinvested to grow the reserve; (4) authority to make decisions regarding the funds; and (5) input on future planning.

Isom inquired about the initial options discussed when establishing the endowment fund.

Levy noted that there had not been a prior detailed discussion due to the lengthy process of selling the building and that the funds are currently characterized as a "do no harm" reserve, which is not part of the organization's cash flow but serves as an additional financial cushion. Levy further noted that the original intention was to reinvest the proceeds into a new physical location for the organization, but given the current office situation, there is no immediate need for such a commitment.

Johnson highlighted the importance of a thoughtful decision-making process regarding the stewardship of these funds, acknowledging the considerable amount of money involved. Johnson then expressed agreement with the cautious approach and emphasized the flexibility it provides for future opportunities.

Levy concluded that the current strategy would be to maintain the status quo, allowing the funds to grow through interest earnings and invited any further thoughts on the matter from the group.

### **40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Events (Levy/Peters)**

#### **Commissioner Giving in Honor of 40<sup>th</sup>**

The following discussion was held regarding the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events of the organization, focusing on fundraising and community engagement: (1) emphasis on the need for diversification of revenue and the potential role of the Commission in fundraising efforts; (2) distinction between political appointees and traditional nonprofit board members regarding expectations for giving; (3) idea of launching a 40th anniversary giving campaign, with modest goals, and the possibility of creating a Commissioner fund to support specific initiatives or an endowment; (4) possibility of an episodic initiative aimed at encouraging contributions without strict goals; (5) importance of having a clear purpose for fundraising to stimulate higher levels of giving; and (6) suggestions for a subcommittee to help define the campaign's focus.



Peters then outlined the two main events planned for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1) a business community breakfast and (2) a large celebratory party for the arts sector.

#### List Potential Sponsors (Discussion)

Peters shared the following regarding potential sponsors for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: (1) steps to engage potential partners and sponsors; (2) highlighted the importance of reaching out to vendors and organizations that have expressed interest in collaboration, including Stifel, Anderson Technology, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Armanino; (3) ongoing discussions with Nestle Purina and PNC; and (4) input on additional contacts that may be beneficial for sponsorship.

Levy suggested sharing the list of potential sponsors with this committee and possibly the entire commission for further ideas and input.

Johnson agreed and suggested adding this topic to the agenda of an upcoming meeting, while also being open to distributing the information via email if necessary.

#### **Growth & Development Department Updates (Levy)**

Levy called for the following updates from the Growth and Development team:

#### Marketing & Communications (Scherder)

Scherder provided the following update: (1) StLArts.org - noting the conclusion of their tourism campaign for the year, with plans for a smaller campaign in late fall and winter, 1.3 million unique users on the website, with hopes to reach 1.5 million by year-end; (2) StLArts.org engagement metrics showed users were spending more time on the site, with notable interest from cities like Chicago, Dallas, and Atlanta; (3) while he (Scherder) and Schipkowski built the site, the majority of the work has been done by Schipkowski, with kudos also to Babington; and (4) StLArts.org is on par with leading tourism websites nationwide.

Scherder then highlighted the success of social media efforts, particularly on Instagram, where followers have doubled from 9,000 to nearly 18,000, and mentioned a shift in sponsorship strategy, focusing on supporting emerging festivals and community initiatives, such as an art fair for veteran artists. Scherder noted that plans for the 40th anniversary of the organization include partnerships with local businesses and fundraising events.

#### Research & Evaluation (Stallings)

Stallings shared that 77 people have registered, including scholarship recipients, for the Arts & Health Symposium – October 21-22, 2024. He noted that there has been significant interest in scholarships, and the overarching goal is to reach 100 attendees.

#### External Relations (Belford)

Belford shared that plans for Arts Advocacy Day – February 5, 2025 are underway, and in collaboration with the Missouri Citizens for the Arts, where they aim to enhance advocacy efforts across the state.



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**Open Discussion (Levy)**

Levy proposed that this Committee hold a 30-minute Zoom meeting regarding the Board giving project before the Annual Board Meeting on November 21, potentially on November 7.

**Adjournment**

Motion made by Isom, seconded by Johnson, and unanimously approved to adjourn the September 25, 2024 Growth & Development Committee meeting at 11:05 a.m.

**Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Levy, Isom, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Growth & Development Committee Meeting Minutes, July 11, 2024
- List of Potential Sponsors for 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

