



**Meeting Minutes**  
COCA Board of Directors  
Thursday, September 8, 2022  
4:00pm

Attendance: (in-person) Dan Taylor, Nathan Archer, Amanda Clements, Haiqiong Deng, Commissioner Dozier, April Fitzpatrick, Ayne Markos, Rachelle McClure, Kati Schardl, E. Marie Sissle, Kristin Summers, Jennifer Wright-Allen; (virtual) Donmetrie Clark, Lucia Fishburne, Beth Keating, Kathy Maioriana, Michelle Personette, Heather Thomas.

Absent: Faith Clarke, Kim Harding, Commissioner Matlow.

Staff: (in-person) Kathleen Spehar, Hillary Crawford, Sarah Painter, Samantha Sumler.  
(virtual) Nick Pavlovik.

I. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME GUESTS, and PUBLIC INPUT

4:00 PM- Dan Taylor called the meeting to order. Dan made introductions, including new board member, FSU liaison Jennifer Wright-Allen from Opening Nights at Florida State University; new staff members Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager; and Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager. Dan then asked Jennifer to introduce herself as the new Director of Opening Nights. Next, Dan asked Kathleen to read the Governor's ordinance, and she did.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Dan asked for questions and discussion, but there were none. Paul moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Rachelle seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

a. FY23 Operating Budget Final

Nick reviewed the document, starting with income. City and County contracts remain the same, and tourism revenue has increased from levels during the height of the pandemic. Other grants have increased for next year, due to 100% funding from the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) grant and other smaller grants, including Duke Energy, South Arts, and \$40,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Funding for the Cultural Grant is up 70%. Direct costs in the budget represent grants COCA receives for our projects. Staff expenses are up, due to hiring two more staff positions, along with payroll, insurance, and equipment costs related to the hybrid working environment. However, the office space expense is going down. Marketing costs are up due to the Tourism Development Tax (TDT) revenue increase. Otherwise, there are no other significant changes in the budget.



Kathleen added that the City Commission unanimously approved the \$300,000 request for regranting to community grant programs and asked where these funds would go in the budget. Nick clarified that those funds would go under city contracts, and grants would be under the revenue cost.

Katie moved to approve the budget with the addition of the City funds. Lucia seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### b. Strategic Plan

The executive and strategic plan committees provided feedback on the strategic plan. Dan clarified the strategic plan would last through 2024. COCA staff will provide a strategic plan update in May of 2023. Nathan thanked former COCA board member Dr. Adriene Wright for her assistance with the strategic plan. Amanda Clements moved to accept the strategic plan, Rachelle second, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### IV. NEW BUSINESS

#### a. FY23 COCA Grant Awards

The panel recommendations for the FY23 Cultural and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Programs were presented to the Board. 25 organizations were recommended for a total of \$822,638 in the Cultural Grant Program. Four organizations were determined by the County to be ineligible for TDT funds. These four applications were forwarded to panel and recommended for funding contingent on the City's appropriation to COCA's grant program. 23 organizations were recommended for a total of \$60,250 in the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant Program. Tourism collections continue to recover; however, applications are down in COCA's grant programs due to funding restrictions on the TDT funds. COCA will continue to advocate to the City for a recurring investment of general revenue in COCA's Cultural Grant Program.

Kati moved to approve the FY23 Grant Awards, Beth seconded, the motion was unanimously approved.

The City of Tallahassee has approved a one-time appropriation for COCA's Cultural Grant Program of \$300,000. COCA staff will work Grants Subcommittee to update the guidelines and remove the TDT restrictions. Staff will work with the City on updating COCA's contract to include the subgranting investment. The second round of Cultural Grant to administer the City funds to community programs will be released later this year.

Kristin moved that COCA staff continue to work with the Grants Subcommittee to finalize guidelines for City funds. E. Marie seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.



b. FY23 Board Slate of Officers

Due to staff changes, there are no changes to the Executive Committee for FY23.

Paul moved to approve the FY23 Slate of Officers. Amanda seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

c. FY23 Board Appointments

Two County positions, Rachelle and Dane, were reappointed to their County seats. In addition, COCA presented three candidates for the open City Board seat - Carol Hill, Elizabeth Payne, and Giovanna Williams. As per standard procedure, COCA will send the candidates to the Mayor for final selection. Ayne asked if the staff had a recommendation for the seat. Kathleen stated that all three applicants were strong candidates.

Rachele moved to accept the FY23 Board Candidates. Katie seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

d. FY23 Board Subcommittees

The subcommittee assignments were reviewed. Appointments for FY23 include Kristen Summers & Kathy Maiorana as co-chairs of the Membership Committee; Amanda Clements as chair of Grants; and E. Marie Sissle, chair of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Kati asked to move to the DEI committee.

Nathan moved to accept the FY23 Subcommittee appointments with the change noted above. Lucia seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

e. FY23 Board Meeting Schedule

The FY23 schedule was reviewed. All meetings are on the third Thursday of the odd months, except for March. The July meeting is listed as a placeholder. Kathleen asked that board members to attend in-person to ensure a quorum. Executive Committee meetings are on the third Thursday of the even months except in December, due to the holiday. Kathleen stated that we are looking into the Sunshine laws related to sending out a calendar invitation to the board.

Amanda moved to accept the FY23 COCA Board Meeting Schedule. Nathan seconded, the motion was unanimously approved.

V. ORAL REPORTS

a. COCA Connects FY22 Sub-Committee Reports

**Membership:**

There are currently 222 members. 80 members are up for renewal this fiscal year.



260 members have not renewed in the last five years. Sahara is working with Kathleen to contact people with lapsed memberships and ask them to renew. Our membership program helps us to continue to provide our services to the community. Dan recommended that board members consider gifting a membership. In October, we will shift to the membership portal in our website through [tallahasseearts.org](http://tallahasseearts.org). Paul asked how many of the current memberships were business memberships. Kathleen confirmed that we currently have 11 Business memberships.

**Community Outreach:** Dan stated that the Community Outreach committee is being sunsetted, and he requested that folks continue to attend events and post them on social media.

**Strategic Plan:** Since the Strategic Plan process has been completed, the committee is being sunsetted. Dan asked if Kathy had anything to add about the strategic plan. Kathy thanked the committee members and Dr. Wright for assisting in the process.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI):** Kathleen reminded the board that a discussion was approved for today's meeting to explore how the board would like the DEI committee to move forward in FY23. Kathleen shared that the committee was formed in 2021 and created an action plan based on the priorities listed in the 2018 Cultural Equity Plan. Kathleen went over the six priority areas and tasks related to each. The committee is expanding for next year and asked the board to share what DEI means to them and what they think is essential for the committee to work on regarding DEI with COCA.

There was discussion about the meaning of DEI. Dan reiterated that the board is committed to the work. DEI is a journey and not a destination. Nathan said DEI is two things – table setting (everyone is welcome) and meeting people where they are. Nathan stated that Board members should go out into the community more and bring the table to them. Kati said that DEI is an integral part of COCA's mission, and she would like to be a part of it. Dan encouraged everyone to explore the vast amount of DEI resources online. Kati suggested that we add "inclusive" to our vision statement. Kathleen suggested adding our pronouns to the board's COCA profiles.

b. Chair

Dan reiterated the importance of city funding. Dan was impressed by the community's response to COCA's advocacy efforts. Originally, COCA designed the grant program with the city as an inclusive program. Unfortunately, the TDT funds do not meet the needs of many community arts programs. And educating our community and leadership on what the community needs for arts and culture is ongoing.

c. Staff

**Sarah Painter, Public Art Manager** (read by Sahara Lyon): The Brush Strokes exhibit was installed at City Hall with the Watercolor Society; there is a reception next week. The Harris



Wilshire exhibit is being installed at Artport Gallery, with an in-person opening next Thursday. She provided an update on Greater Art for Greater Bond, murals, art advisory committee, and confirmed the Asphalt Art project was postponed to 2023. Sarah and Sahara are collaborating on the Winterfest exhibition. Sarah introduced her new intern, Paloma Ricci. Paloma is a long-time disability advocate and is consulting with COCA on how we can continue to make our programming and website more accessible for people with visual impairments.

**Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager:** Onboarding continues, which includes gaining access to software, platforms, etc. She's created an Arts Education newsletter in Constant Contact, working with Samantha to make sure we have a higher opening rate. In Community outreach, Sahara has contacted every elementary, middle, and high school art teacher and principal in all public and private schools. Sahara has also attended several arts educator meetings in various disciplines. COCA's Arts Education grant for Leon County teachers was launched in COCA's grants system. COCA will offer teacher workshops to provide CEU hours for teachers.

**Samantha Sumler, Communications & Marketing Manager:** One priority has been connecting with all artists and organizations, especially those organizations thinking they do not have a place with COCA. COCA is working on increasing engagement with these organizations by amplifying our street team presence and continuing to engage with the community. Our feature writer is working to reach out in the community to feature things we have not covered before. We're strengthening marketing and promotion accessibility by updating the media guide and advertising packages and updating marketing materials and promotional materials. We are working to increase the open rate of 28%, up to the industry standard of 35%. So far, we're up 2% in the last few weeks. Constituents are unsure what COCA is and how to use our resources. We'll engage in a COCA 101 campaign for next year- more to come on this. In the future, we'll also create how-to videos and other things to assist users.

d. Executive Director

Kathleen thanked COCA staff and Rachelle McClure for their assistance working on the message for the City and the County. Kathleen thanked Dan for attending the meetings, contacting, emailing, showing up, and being visible on his social media platforms.

Rachelle stated that the City would not have given us the funding without a complete endorsement of the COCA staff and board. Rachelle has heard a lot about tourism funding and the success of tourism dollars. Rachelle stated that if there is only one event, it does not build a cultural ecosystem that continues to build repeat tourism. We need to continue the message of DEI in tourism, be inclusive, and expand our grantees.



e. Announcements

The grand opening date of KCCI at Pedrick Park, which incorporates literary arts, was shared. Placemaking Week starts on Saturday with an event at Kate Sullivan Elementary School, and there is also an event at Hope Elementary School the following Saturday.

Dan is a featured artist in the exhibit Beaming with Pride at LeMoyne; Nathan also has some pieces there. Kathleen reminded the board that organizers can place events in the classifieds section of the Tallahassee Arts Guide.

VI. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Hillary Crawford.



*COCA's mission is to serve and support the community by promoting and advocating for arts and culture in Florida's capital region.*