



MINUTES
COCA Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, March 30, 2023
4:00pm
COCA Office at DOMI Station

Attendance – Dan Taylor, Kathy Maiorana, Kristen Summers, Nathan Archer, Paul Lewis, Jr., Carol Hill, Ayne Markos, Commissioner Jeremy Matlow, Commissioner Brian Welch
Virtual – Amanda Clements, Rachele McClure, Beth Keating, Jennifer Wright, Donmetrie Clark
Absent – E. Marie Sissle, Haiqiong Deng, Lucia Fishburne, Michelle Personnette, Kim Harding, Heather Thomas
Staff – Kathleen Spehar, Hillary Crawford, Sahara Lyon, Samantha Sumler, Nick Pavlovik (virtual), Sarah Painter (virtual)
Guest – Kati Schardl

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm.

Dan asked Kathleen to read the Governor’s orders for hybrid meeting, and she did. Dan thanked former Board member Kati Schardl for her service. Kati will be attending a Master of Fine Arts program for writers at the University of Georgia-Athens. Kathleen presented Kati with a caricature from artist and Board member Nathan Archer. Dan welcomed the new Board Member Commissioner Brian Welch to the board.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

Dan asked for questions or discussion regarding consent agenda. Kathy moved to approve the consent agenda; Nathan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. REPORTS

a. Subcommittees

Kristen Summers, Membership Subcommittee Co-Chair, presented the report. The Membership Subcommittee has met twice to discuss the “Build to 300” membership campaign. COCA currently has 272 members; the goal of this campaign is to build membership to 300. Each month, the campaign will feature stories from different members as part of the campaign. Sahara added that a message will go out at the end of each month to any members who have not renewed in the last three months. This list will be cross referenced with NEON and TAG, COCA’s membership software systems. Paul Lewis, Jr. asked about the percentage of renewals. Sahara did not have an exact percentage available, but stated the numbers are not where we would like them to be, so we’re aiming to improve these levels with the campaign. Kathleen offered that staff start tracking monthly percentage of renewals.

E. Marie Sissle, DEI Subcommittee Chair was absent, so Kathleen presented the DEI report. Kathleen affirmed that Creating Spaces is a new talk series that was kicked off last week,

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featuring special guest Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas from Americans for the Arts. Dr. Styles-Lyas is the AEP6 Director, Community Engagement & Equity. COCA is planning to offer these conversations quarterly, with the next one tentatively planned around the National Civil Rights Conference happening in June. COCA is in contact with the conference director.

Amanda Clements, Grant Subcommittee Chair, had audio issues so Hillary presented the report. Hillary shared the sub-committee approved the guidelines for the FY24 grant round on Tuesday, March 28. Main changes include incorporating the Marketing Grant as an add-on to the Cultural Grant. Hillary explained that the hope is to improve efficiency and increase organizational eligibility to the Cultural Grant. There is a 40% increase in the funding amount applicants can ask for. Dan asked if the increase is across the board and Hillary confirmed that it is. Hillary also added the option to request an additional \$10,000 through City funding, pending the availability of additional City funding to re-grant. Dan thinks it's great that we're planning to ask for funding and that this is exciting news. Hillary explained this funding can ensure there would be less eligibility issues this way.

b. Chair Report

Dan Taylor presented his report. Dan mentioned that Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas from Americans for the Arts was here for Creating Spaces. Dan attended the luncheon, and Dr. Genna mentioned that Tallahassee/Leon County has done exceptionally well with their survey collections. Dan thanked the staff for their hard work last week at the advocacy events. He mentioned the need for unrestricted revenue for COCA and asked that board members let Kathleen know of any potential new funding opportunities. Dan announced Springtime Tallahassee this weekend, Chain of Parks and PrideFest on April 15 & 16, and Word of South happening the third weekend in April.

c. Liaison Reports

Florida State University

Jennifer Wright shared campus events, including FSU School of Opera and the Spring production of *Streetcar Named Desire* starting this evening and runs through April 2. Opening Nights has three more events in the 22-23 season. These included a talk by visual artist John Ensor Parker as part of the Chain of Parks festival; Prism on April 16th, and Piano Battle on April 26th. The FSU Flying High Circus is presenting *Cosmic* April 7 – 22. On June 12, Opening Night's new season will be announced.

Tallahassee Community College

Donmetrie Clark announced that *Head Over Heels*, the GOGO's musical opens April 6th. On April 5th from 7-8pm, there is a fine arts and performing arts showcase of local student work.

d. Staff Reports

Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager

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Sahara provided an update on a recent field trip with Success Academy that was given in conjunction with Railroad Square. COCA is working on offering virtual field trips for all exhibition shows and public art programs. She worked with Dr. Shields from FSU, who presented a workshop for visual art teachers. Dr. Shields and another professor are working with Leon County Schools classes to create large scale prints. Chalk Walk was held last week at the Capitol building. Student artists completed 10 squares in total representing 16 students from 6 schools. All the feedback, from the public to the participants, was positive. Sahara is hoping to use the same location next year. The Tallahassee Democrat covered the event. COCA will be running a call to artists on behalf of the Junior League to create a mural at Sabal Palm Elementary. Sahara is connecting COCA programs to museum studies classes, too. After this meeting, there is a closing reception for COCA's *WEFT (Women Empowering Fiber Arts)* exhibition at City Hall. *Creative Tallahassee* will be the next show at City Hall. An awards ceremony for this exhibition will take place in late April or early May. Sahara will be presenting a workshop at the FAAE (Florida Alliance for Arts Education) conference in Jacksonville March 31-April 2.

Sarah Painter, Public Art Manager

Sarah thanked the board and staff for her experience working at COCA. Sarah is wrapping up loose ends in her last 2 weeks, as her last day is April 13. Exhibitions have been lined up through the rest of the year. Voting for COCA's Asphalt Art is currently open and will close on Monday. The final artist designs will be chosen, and the murals will tentatively be executed at the end of April.

Hillary Crawford, Grants Manager

Hillary announced that she has accepted the position of Assistant Vice President of Programs with South Arts, the regional arts organization in Atlanta. Her last day at COCA is April 14. Hillary enjoyed her time working with COCA, and she thanked the staff and board for the opportunity to serve her local community. Hillary will be working remotely and will continue to support COCA in any way that she can. Hillary announced that the FY24 Grant Programs are ready to launch May 1 in Submittable. The FY23 grantee mid-year reports are due at the end of April, and second payments will go out after the reports are approved.

Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager

Nick has made technological updates on Submittable, upgraded COCA's Zoom accounts and worked with Artsopolis on the new membership portal in the Tallahassee Arts Guide (TAG). Nick is updating QuickBooks. Our auditor will not be able to do our FY23 audit, so we will be looking for a new firm. A proposal will be presented at the next board meeting. Kathleen added that our current auditor has provided a list of suggested replacements. They are currently being vetted by staff and will be presented at the next meeting.

Samantha Sumler, Marketing and Communications Manager

Updated monthly newsletter, curated by topic, went out to all subscribers in March. There was a 10% increase in open rates. The first was sent to all subscribers, and the second will go to all

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Monday subscribers. A tourism marketing workshop presented with Visit Tallahassee will be presented April 5th at DOMI station. The meeting is hybrid. Signage is being worked on, including a new COCA flag, which up in the parking lot. Volunteer sign-up sheets are available in the board portal of the Tallahassee Arts Guide for upcoming events, including Chain of Parks, Pride, and Word of South. Promotional items updates include new rack cards; a waterless tattoo with the rainbow version of the COCA center logo. Other items being looked at include sticker sheets, magnets, hats, and bookmarks. The decal of COCA values has been installed on the glass office wall, and the logo is on the office door. We will replace the paper signage on the door with the QR showing office hours and staff contact info with a decal.

e. Executive Director

Kathleen Spehar gave her report. Both the Public Art and Grants Manager positions have been posted, and interviews are underway. Sahara has taken on extra duties from Sarah's position as a Public Art assistant. In advocacy, Kathleen reviewed federal and state updates. She asked the board to continue advocating for the National Endowment for the Arts & National Endowment for the Humanities increases. She sent out information to board members requesting action on advocacy by contacting state representatives, leadership, and committee members to request full funding for the Florida Division of Arts & Culture grants.

COCA hosted Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas from Americans for the Arts March 20-22, in coordination with the Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Cultural Alliance. She has a wonderful time in Tallahassee, and COCA hopes to bring Dr. Genna and Randy Cohen, Vice President of Research at Americans for the Arts, back in October to present our AEP6 results. COCA will partner with other North Florida local arts agencies to plan the trip.

Kathleen shared updates on the CRA recommendations from the recent County commission meeting. There was a robust conversation on eligibility, and the recommendations will be presented to the City Commission in April.

Due to time constraints, other updates were tabled.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Board of Directors nominations- Practicing Artist (City Appointment)

Kathleen presented the staff recommendations. Staff presented three candidates to be forwarded to the mayor for a final selection. Kristen moved to approve the nominations; Nathan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

b. FY24 Grant Guidelines

Dan asked for any questions or discussion regarding the guidelines, and there were none.

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Nathan moved to approve the guidelines, giving staff the ability to make any necessary technical changes as needed. Kristen seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Commissioner Welch asked to be excused to attend another event.

c. COCA Priorities

Kathleen presented the COCA priorities (attachment 9).

Dan expressed concern about the staff being spread too thin with the upcoming staff changes. Kathleen expressed gratitude to the board for stepping in and volunteering to help staff. Dan asked if Kathleen had any more information from her report. Kathleen will summarize the upcoming events in April and send them to the board via email.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan mentioned that Kathleen and Kathy were hosts for the WFSU pledge drive. Dan stated that the Artists and Autism show is opening at the library and Railroad Square. Dan has a piece in the Obsessions Gift Shop.

Kathleen thanked Hillary and Sarah for their time at COCA and presented them with gifts from the COCA staff and board.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Hillary Crawford and Kathleen Spehar