MINUTES

COCA Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 15, 2023

4:00pm

COCA Office at DOMI Station

In-Person — Rachelle McClure, Dan Taylor, Nathan Archer, Katherine Maiorana, Kristen Summers

Virtual — E. Marie Sissle

Absent— Lucia Fishburne

Staff—Kathleen Spehar (virtual), Summer Callahan, Sahara Lyon, Samantha Sumler, Sam Joslin, Nick Pavlovik (virtual)

Members of the public — none

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. CONSENT AGENDA
   1. Executive Directors Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2023
   2. Board of Director Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2023
   3. Balance Sheet Statement as of May 31, 2023
   4. Budget v. Actual Statement as of May 31, 2023

Nathan moved to approve the consent agenda and Rachelle seconded. The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

1. Old Business
   1. Auditor recommendations

Kathleen reminded the Executive Committee that our current audit is no longer offering yellow book audit services and that Nick has been searching for a new auditor. Nick shares the two audit possibilities: Thomas Howell Ferguson and Grayson Accounting. Between these two companies, they are both qualified and have significant nonprofit experience. Both proposals are strong, and Nick stated that he has no preference. Dan clarified that Ferguson costs $9,000 more than Grayson. Dan confirmed that the staff has no preference and stated his preference for Grayson, due to cost and the fact that Grayson is a black-owned business. Rachelle moved to accept Grayson. Nathan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

1. New Business
   1. Board of Director Seat: Volunteer (County)

Kathleen stated this seat is currently filled by Beth Keating, who requested to serve her second term. She confirmed the process for nominations changed in 2022 as per new County policy; instead of one board seat renewal moving forward, a slate of three candidates needs to be submitted.

Dan stated that the COCA Board of Directors is reappointing Beth Keating and is pushing forward candidates Michael McDougal and Carla Richardson.

Nathan asked why Michael and Carla were selected to move forward. Kathleen answered that she and the COCA staff reviewed applicants and the board makeup. Michael is younger and has a lot of volunteer experience. Carla is a physical therapist, African-American and an active volunteer. Kathleen stated that all candidates are qualified to serve.

Dan asked for questions and received none. Nathan moved to advance this slate. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

* 1. City Funding

Kathleen provided an update on City funding for the Cultural Grant program. In FY22, COCA asked the City for additional funding for local programs that did not qualify for tourism funding. COCA entered into a contract with the City that allowed funds to be used over the next two years. All funds from that contract ($300,000) were distributed. Based on mid-year reports, all grantee projects are moving forward and no grantee is returning funds. Kathleen said she met with City staff about FY24 funding and will continue after applications are submitted. Kathleen stated that in FY22, 22 grantee organizations served low-income constituents and 10 new applications were from BIPOC organizations, so this is an excellent use of funds based on City priorities.

Katherine asked if COCA will request the same amount of money from the City budget for FY24. Kathleen answered that there is concern about budget deficits, but that COCA received $25,000 from the NEA that can be used for re-granting and has committed to match that grant. Kathleen added that COCA would only request redistribution dollars, so the total request to the City would depend on the number of applications to the City grant.

1. Reports
2. COCA Connects FY23 Sub-Committee Reports

For the Membership Subcommittee, Kathleen stated that Katherine and Kristen are co-chairs, but gave the update. Due to the board and staff’s increased efforts since May, there has been a 7% membership increase. COCA currently has 255 members. New members have been added to all levels except students. Kathleen specifically thanked Paul Lewis Jr. for his work promoting the membership drive within his network. Sahara stated that the *Build to 300* campaign was launched April 1 and additional marketing followed at the end of May; this included three social media posts and three emails, with social media and emails going out this upcoming Friday (to prevent competition with the Thursday newsletter). Sahara stated that she compiled a list of all inactive groups and business members, which she will provide to board members. Sahara stated that she, Kathleen, and Samantha plan to create a “kit” for board members to use when contacting potential members. Sahara also shared that COCA staff anticipate that membership numbers will continue to improve.

Dan stated that the Grants Subcommittee and the DEI Subcommittee had no updates.

E. Marie Sissle informed the board about RISE (Representation, Inclusion & Support for Employment). RISE is a national registry/directory of theatre workers, emphasizing diverse candidates. She suggested that COCA post about RISE on our website, social media and newsletters.

1. Liaisons Report

There were no liaison reports.

1. Chair Report

Dan stated that he has no report. He confirmed that there is no need for a July Board meeting. Kathleen stated that there is no July agenda outside of approving the Volunteer seat.

Dan proposed skipping the July meeting, except in case of emergency. The Executive Committee agreed unanimously; no motion was required.

1. Staff Report

*Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager*

Sahara stated that the DAC/NEA partnership grant application for an expanded Winterfest event was submitted. The second summer newsletter, emphasizing summer camps and profiling grant recipient Noel Stillman, was sent out in early June. Sahara stated that she, Sam Joslin and a COCA intern deinstalled Creative Tallahassee. Sahara shared that she selected an artist for the mural at Sabal Palm Elementary School: former COCA staff member Sarah Painter. Sahara stated that she is working with Sabal Palm staff and the Junior League of Tallahassee to complete this project by August 2, when teachers return to school. Sahara stated that she is currently working on the Duke Energy grant application, with an internal deadline of June 30. She confirmed she spoke with Eric Clark from Foundation for Leon County Schools and head of the Education Task Force for the Bicentennial; she plans to hold a grants education workshop as part of Bicentennial programming and a Bicentennial workshop for teachers. Sahara stated that she has class tours starting on June 29 and that she hopes to plan more. She stated that she is currently rehabilitating the Innovation Station (a mailbox with take-home crafts) and should be finished by early August. Sahara stated that she is working with her intern to revamp COCA’s Arts Education website resources.

*Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager*

Samantha stated that they are planning on a newsletter campaign in July or August that will emphasize both membership and Bicentennial events. Samantha stated that they are considering crafting an advertising package for bicentennial events. Samantha confirmed that COCA’s public art walks are part of Visit Tallahassee’s Summer Bucket Challenge. Samantha shared that they are meeting with blindCAN Film Festival to create a “How to Make Video Content” workshop for August. Samantha stated that they hope to choose an advertising agency for COCA’s Bicentennial involvement by August. Samantha shared that COCA is participating in Pride on social media and will be included in guide of LGBTQ+-friendly guide of Tallahassee businesses. Samantha also shared that COCA received new magnets and has placed a QR-code outside the office door at DOMI Station, which will take visitors to our website; the code received positive feedback at our recent First Friday event. Samantha stated that they will work on finalizing new designs for tote bags and stickers.

*Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager*

Nick stated COCA has been collecting grant payments and anticipates receiving a payment from the City of Tallahassee. Nick stated that COCA staff is working on the state grant application, which should be complete by the end of this week. Nick confirmed that he is working on IT updates and is excited about proceeding with the new auditor.

*Summer Callahan, Grants Manager*

Summer stated that grant applications to COCA grant programs will be due next week and that she has been holding consultations with applicants. Summer shared that she has identified all her panelists for the FY24 application cycle and is working on a “run of show” for the panel meeting and a panelist training webinar, scheduled for June 28. Summer also stated that she is participating in the Bicentennial History Task Force; COCA has not been asked to contribute to this task force yet. Summer stated that she is working with Kathleen and Nick to submit the Division of Arts & Culture (DAC ) grant for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025; this should be submitted by Friday afternoon.

*Sam Joslin, Public Art & Exhibitions Manager*

Sam stated that she and Sahara deinstalled Creative Tallahassee and installed Tracy Foutz-Hunt’s exhibit. The online gallery has been posted and the scavenger hunt is in place. The reception was rescheduled due to a request from City Hall; Eventbrite has been updated to reflect this. Foutz-Hunt’s exhibit will be installed until August 1, when it will be replaced by Wright Dobbs and Alex Anderson. Sam stated that she and Kathleen met with the airport staff; airport staff stated that the downstairs gallery will continue as usual. Currently this gallery is showcasing Isabella Alsharif. A new artist, FAMU painting Professor Nan Liu, will be installed in the airport gallery from June 30 to August 15. His reception is scheduled for July 20; the reception Eventbrite and online gallery have already been created. Sam stated that Asphalt Arts was successful, and COCA has aerial footage and video of the event. Sam stated that the final report for Asphalt Arts will be completed by the end of the month. Sam stated that she worked with the City of Tallahassee to submit another Asphalt Arts grant application, which was submitted the previous Monday. Updates on that application should be available by November. Sam stated that she is working with Sahara on the Innovation Station repair. Sam stated that she and Samantha met with Emma Whitmer of Roland Publishing to potentially craft an article about the future of the public art program. Sam stated her plans to create a “mural matchmaking” program, connecting muralists to available sites.

1. Executive Director Report

Kathleen thanked the staff and announced that it is Pride month.

Kathleen stated that the federal government is considering an increase in funding to the NEA and NEH for FY24 and stated that she will provide Arts Action updates as they occur. She announced that the governor signed the state budget, which means that the DAC grant to COCA was approved for $76,369.

Kathleen stated that the CRA initiative involving LeMoyne Arts, Indaba Theatre and the Challenger Learning Center will go forward to the contract stage.

Kathleen stated that Americans for the Arts extended the AEP6 survey until June 23. The initial goal has been met. Currently 55 organizations in COCA’s network have completed surveys; Kathleen stated that 70 organizations is COCA’s new goal. Kathleen stated that Randy Cohen from Americans for the Arts will visit Tallahassee in October and she is looking for venues.

Kathleen stated that she provided a “why arts matter in Florida” one-sheet and a piece on local arts agency impact to the board.

Kathleen stated that she is on the Bicentennial steering committee and that they are working with the Marketing task force to decide on messaging.

Kathleen stated that the History & Culture trail installation was postponed, but that Sam is continuing to work on this project. Kathleen stated that COCA is finishing the Greater Bond public art project, which experienced delays due to requested changes. Kathleen stated that Tallahassee Music Week, which went dormant in 2017, will return in 2024; COCA is working with FSU’s Opening Nights and Commissioner Rick Minor on that initiative.

Kathleen stated that COCA is working with Bradfordville Blues Club to find a new location. The Bradfordville Blues Club is temporarily housed at the American Legion and will launch their new season on July 7. Kathleen stated that COCA is working with the Club and a Miami-based architect to convert the former Gramling’s Feed Store into a new venue, with a possible goal of creating a music complex with multiple buildings and artist housing.

Kathleen stated that COCA will have two open board seats (Marketing and History & Heritage) at the beginning of the next fiscal year. Kathleen stated that applications are currently being gathered and the request for applications will remain open through the end of July. Kathleen asked that if the board is aware of possible candidates, please ask them to apply.

Kathleen informed the board of Mike Sheridan’s illness and Ron Sach’s family bereavement.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan announced that Artopia will be held at the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center on June 24, 6:30 p.m.

Kathleen announced that Juneteenth will be held at Cascades Park on June 17 at noon and that the National Civil Rights Conference will be held June 19 and 20. COCA will attend both.

Samantha announced a Pride Decades Dance at Mickee Faust.

Dan asked for a motion to adjourn. Nathan motioned. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1. ADJOURNMENT to Closed Session for Evaluation of Executive Director

*Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan and Sahara Lyon*