



MINUTES
COCA Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 24, 2023
4:00pm
COCA Office at DOMI Station

In-Person — E. Marie Sissle, Rachelle McClure, Dan Taylor, Katherine Mairoana, Kristen Summers

Virtual — none

Absent— none

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

Members of the public — Nina Pavlovik (infant, virtual)

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

I. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – 06/15/2023 (for review only)

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

- b. Balance Sheet as of July 31 / Budget v. Actual Statement as of July 31 / FY24 Operating Budget

Nick (and Nina) presented the budget. The funds received from the City and County have remained stable for ten years. COCA anticipates receiving \$192,000 from the City of Tallahassee and \$150,000 from Leon County to be used for COCA’s general operating budget. COCA will be regranteeing over \$1.3 million in the next fiscal year, which is a 50% increase from last year. The budget reflects a drastic decrease in grant funding received, in part due to state funding and in part because some of these grant decisions are still pending. Membership has been stable. Advertising has slightly decreased due to the loss of a few major advertisers from the previous fiscal year. Marketing and insurance costs will increase next year. COCA will have a surplus at the end of the FY23 year.

Kathleen clarified the pending grants: the DAC grant funding was determined at the state level; the Florida Humanities grant, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant and the Duke grant are still pending.

Rachelle noted that when Kathleen approached the City, Commissioner Williams-Cox stated that COCA should be “looking for grants elsewhere.” Rachelle affirmed Kathleen’s point that it is difficult to run a sophisticated non-profit relying on the schedules of external funders.

Katherine moved to present the balance sheet to the board. E. Marie Sissle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Nominees for Volunteer Seat (County)



Kathleen stated that a previous candidate dropped out and therefore a new slate was created. The current nominees are Beth Keating (Gunster Law Firm), Gale Workman (FAMU) and Aaron Michael Hanselman (The Color Green LLC), with David Mullins (WFSU) as an alternate.

Kathleen clarified that this is Beth Keating's seat currently and that when Beth is reappointed, Beth will fill Nathan Archer's vacated seat on the Executive Committee.

Dan motioned to present the Volunteer slate to the board. Rachele seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. Nominees for At-Large Seat (City)

The current nominees are Hadley Peterson (Kimley-Horn), Kelly Goddard (Florida Historical Capitol Museum) and Roopali Kambo (TCC), with Lindsey Masterson (Pen and Tool LLC) as an alternate.

Katherine asked which candidate is the staff choice. Kathleen explained that Beth Keating was identified as the staff choice on the previous slate as she would be a reappointment, but these were all new candidates. Kathleen added that all the applicants were excellent choices.

E. Marie Sissle motioned to present the At-Large City slate to the board. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Nominees for Marketing Seat (County)

The current nominees are Joey Arellano (Florida House of Representatives), Erika Michelle Branchcomb (Florida League of Cities) and Kimberly Bryant (Moore Agency), with Giavona Williams (Grova Creative) as an alternate. Dan states that he has worked with both Joey and Erika and that they are both hard workers. Kathleen states that all candidates have strong marketing resumes.

Katherine motioned to present the Marketing slate to the board. E. Marie Sissle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Nominees for History/Heritage Seat (County)

The current nominees are Neil Mooney (retired), John Forrest Watson (retired) and Michael Killoren (retired), with William Mattox (James Madison Institute) as an alternate. Dan noted that this slate is entirely white men. Kathleen answered that the slate reflected who applied. Dan stated that he knows Michael and Neil.

Katherine asked why COCA doesn't have a staff choice. Kathleen responded that the bylaws do not explicitly allow for staff choice and that the seat is ultimately chosen by the Commission.

Rachele motioned to present the History/Heritage slate to the board. E. Marie Sissle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

d. FY24 Board Slate of Officers

The current slate of officers is Dan Taylor for Chair, Kathy Maiorana for Vice Chair, Beth Keating for Secretary, Rachelle McClure for Treasurer, Ayne Markos for At-Large and Haiqiong Deng for At-Large. Dan confirmed that Beth's role as Secretary is dependent on her official reappointment.

The executive committee elected to move this item to the full board.

e. FY24 Board Meeting Schedule

Katherine stated that she vetted these days with the Executive Committee but that the dates are flexible. Rachelle requested calendar invitations. Kathleen stated that that is possible, but the full board should affirm these dates first.

The executive committee elected to move this item to the full board.

f. Bylaws

Kathleen presents the changes to the bylaws. Kathleen stated that in May, a decision was made that all BOD seats should be determined by Leon County and that the bylaws should be revised to reflect that. However, based on Kathleen's research to date, COCA bylaws already meet that standard and may not need revision. COCA legal has been consulted and is awaiting further guidance.

The executive committee acknowledged this update.

g. FY24 Grant Program recommendations

Summer stated that the panel for the FY24 grants was held yesterday. E. Marie Sissle asked if the new applicants were the applicants flagged in the County tourism review; Kathleen and Summer stated that they were not. Kathleen stated that the review with the County went extremely well and that this is the first time all three applications have been combined. Kathleen stated that although the City funds from COCA's two-year contract were exhausted, COCA has received some regranting funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) that can be used to cover some of the City grant applications. Kathleen stated that COCA has a limited ability to use TDT funds for general operating costs and general operating costs to pay out City grants, but that COCA would be short approximately \$200-210k.

Dan asked about potential consequences to using TDT funds to pay general operating costs. The County would need to approve any TDT operational usage request.

Kathleen stated that COCA would fund the City grants as ranked, fund all eligible applicants a percentage and/or fund City priorities (BIPOC and applicants who did not receive TDT funding) first. Dan stated that the decision would be up to staff.

The Executive Committee asked for clarification regarding the applications that withdrew from TDT consideration; Summer answered that one applicant (Opening Nights) was accepted with revisions and another applicant (Cool Breeze) opted not to revise as their Visit Tallahassee funding could be jeopardized. Katherine stated that the City grant was meant to be reserved for only applicants who could not qualify for

TDT; Kathleen answered that many of those FY23 applicants still had some of that funding and therefore did not apply for this funding cycle. Katherine stated that due to TDT-eligible organizations requesting City funds, City funds will be exhausted. Katherine added that the long-term solution to this problem would be steady funding, such as a fee.

Dan stated that he sits on the board of the LeMoyne Art Foundation and therefore cannot vote. Katherine motioned to forward this to the COCA board. Kristen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. ORAL REPORTS

a. COCA Connects FY23 Sub-Committee Reports

Kathleen stated that the Grants and DEI subcommittees have not met. Kathleen stated that the membership campaign is ongoing and has received new members, but lost an equal number of old members. Sahara noted that COCA has published regular weekly emails to a mailing list of 3,500+. Samantha stated that these emails have a 75% open rate but a 1% click rate; Sahara suggested this could be due to “email fatigue” and that COCA should hold off on emailing until Giving Tuesday. Samantha stated that COCA received a positive response to the postcards. Sahara stated that addresses for the postcards came from NEON, as TAG does not currently require addresses. Samantha added that TAG will be updated soon to fix that issue.

Rachelle asked that COCA staff remove duplicates from the mailing list.

Kathleen asked the board to continue inviting potential members. Kathleen stated that COCA will make its financial goal but not necessarily the membership goal.

b. Chair

Dan stated that he had no report.

c. Staff

Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager

Sahara stated that in July, she worked to update the website and digital arts education materials. Sahara and Sam are currently working on the Florida Humanities grant application for Bicentennial programs. Based on her Elementary Art Teacher meeting, Sahara will begin recording virtual tours of gallery spaces for elementary and middle school students. Sahara will be meeting with Elvy Nichols for the Artport Gallery and Brushstrokes. Sahara has workshops planned for October to inform teachers about Bicentennial programming. Sahara has class tours scheduled for September and November. Sahara and Sam are working to execute Winterfest in December. Sahara stated that with the board’s approval, she can post about and accept applications for the arts education grant. Sahara stated that she received no news about the Duke Energy grant and that COCA will likely not receive the full \$20k requested, but may receive between \$5-10k. She is currently recruiting panelists for that grant.

Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager

Sam is currently working on the Florida Humanities grant application. Sam stated that Elvy Nichols is currently featured in the Artport Gallery and will be created a virtual studio tour in October, with the potential to become a series. Sam stated that Photofest will be posted after Nichols. Sam stated that the prospectus for Photofest and the 2024 Art in Public Places applications are currently open. Sam stated that new pedestals are

being created to better display 3D work. Sam stated that online galleries are being updated and will remain available even for shows that have been taken down.

Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager

Samantha stated that email newsletters' open rate has increased to 45% (9% increase and 9% higher than industry average) and a 3% click rate (also higher than industry average). Samantha stated that COCA will launch a monthly Bicentennial newsletter. Samantha stated that COCA is ordering new t-shirts, hats, coasters, pens and keychains, which will be announced on social media. Dan asked who this merchandise is for; Samantha answered that these will be for tabling in the next fiscal year. Samantha stated that they and Sam have been creating posters for each exhibition for the attendees to sign and artists to take home. Samantha stated that they are publishing social media content for National Black Business Month, Artist Inspire features and Hispanic Heritage Month (September). Samantha asks the board to continue engaging with COCA on social media. Samantha shared about updates to the website: improved event directory and Classified listings; accessibility features have been improved using South Arts training. Samantha stated that next month, they will be partnering with BlindCan and Ben Fox to hold a workshop on "creating your own video content." Samantha stated that COCA is updating their advertising packages (2 ads for \$200, 20 ads for \$2000) and may require board assistance in finding an ad agency for the Bicentennial.

Summer Callahan, Grants Manager

Summer stated that the FY24 Cultural Grants Panel was held yesterday. She stated that the next steps are for the board to approve the list, the Division of Tourism to approve the list, then the grant contracts can be generated. Summer stated that her next steps are to close the FY23 grants. Summer stated that she has been working with consultant Jan Rodusky to create a one-day workshop for non-profits, becoming more sustainable, creating community partnerships, but that is not currently scheduled. Summer has been assisting community members with grant applications. Summer stated that she and Samantha are sharing an intern and will be meeting with this intern next week.

Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager

Nick stated that COCA is reaching the end of its fiscal year. Nick stated that he is working on reports for grants closing at the end of September. Nick stated that he received the TDT report for July and that it has increased 35% (10% overall for the fiscal year).

d. Executive Director

Kathleen thanked the staff for their excellent work. Kathleen stated that she attended the Chamber Conference with other small businesses, but that she was one of the few arts and culture organizations who attended. Next week, she will attend a DEI in Tourism conference addressing arts, culture and sports in West Palm Beach. Kathleen stated she was accepted to the Jim Moran Nonprofit Executive Program starting September 6. She stated that she is working on getting resolution on the City funding. Kathleen stated that she has been working with the Bradfordville Blues Club as they seek a new space. Kathleen stated that the Blues Hall of Fame project will not go forward as the owner of that property passed away. Kathleen spoke at Young Actors Theatre, who would like to partner with COCA on arts advocacy. Kathleen stated that the Bicentennial website has been launched and that the Bicentennial steering committee is working on an email initiative and a "Day at the Capitol" initiative. Kathleen stated that she is working on Worlds of Work, a fall initiative about jobs in the arts and culture sector, participating in Innovation Week and planning Tallahassee Music Week. Kathleen announced the launch the AEP6 survey on October 12. Kathleen stated that she is planning a "State of the Arts" presentation with Randy Cohen (Americans for the Arts) which will take place in October, possibly



at the Governor’s Club. Kathleen stated that Randy hopes to give a presentation at the City Commission and a reception with the Division of Arts and Culture at the R.A. Gray building. Rachelle suggested a “members only” meeting with Randy to drive membership.

V. ADJOURN

The meeting with adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan