



Meeting Minutes

COCA Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, September 7, 2023

4:00 p.m.

In-Person — Amanda Clements, Haiqiong Deng, Carol Hill, Beth Keating, Paul Lewis Jr., Katherine Maiorana, Ayne Markos, Jeremy Matlow, E. Marie Sissle, Kristen Summers, Dan Taylor

Virtual — Rachele McClure, Brinda Pamulapati, Brian Welch, Reenee Williams, Jennifer Wright

Absent— Donmetrie Clark, Kim Harding, Michelle Personette, Heather Thomas

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

Members of the public — Kerri Post

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

I. CONSENT AGENDA

No members of the public were in attendance. The COCA Board had no questions. Carol moved to approve the consent agenda; Paul seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Balance Sheet as of August 31 / Budget v. Actual Statement as of August 31 / FY24 Operating Budget

Nick delivered the FY24 budget. He explained that, as of this meeting, COCA has no confirmed funding for the upcoming fiscal year from the City of Tallahassee. He stated that Tourism Development Tax (TDT) funding has increased steadily and that COCA will have \$1.3 million to distribute for the Cultural Grant Program and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant. Nick stated that the current budget only reflects funding that has been confirmed and that some funding is still pending. Nick stated that membership has no significant increase, that advertising has decreased due to the loss of a few advertisers and an overall decrease in marketing spending.

For COCA's grant programs, Nick explained that outside of TDT funds, COCA has a \$25,000 award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) that can be regrant. Nick stated that COCA will be funding the arts education grant unless the pending grant application to Duke Energy is awarded. Nick stated that operating expenses have a 5% increase due to inflation, the cost associated with a new auditor, and equipment costs associated with hybrid/remote work, but that space rental costs have significantly decreased. Nick stated that in FY23, dependents were added to COCA's insurance and covered 100% by the employee; in FY24, COCA will cover a portion of this cost.

Dan asked Kathleen about the other grants COCA may receive. Kathleen answered that COCA has pending grant applications to Duke Energy, the NEA, Florida Humanities and South Arts. Kathleen explains that these are project grants, though some of the funds may be used for administrative expenses related to the project.

Paul moved to approve the budget. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Nominees for Volunteer Seat (County)

Kathleen explained that the Volunteer Seat is currently held by Beth Keating, who is seeking reappointment, but that per County policy COCA is required to submit three names. Dan added that Beth has also agreed to serve as Secretary on the COCA Executive Committee for 2024. Kathleen explained that the Board is voting to forward this slate of candidates to the County, who will select the candidate. Paul motioned to forward the slate. Kristen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. Nominees -At-Large Seat (City)

Kathleen explained that the At-Large Seat (City) was previously held by Nathan Archer, and thanked Nathan for his service. Kathleen explained that for this seat, a candidate must first be selected by the Mayor, then approved by the County. Beth moved to forward this slate to the Mayor's office. Ayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Nominees -Marketing Seat (County)

Kathleen explained that this seat received numerous applications and thanked the Board for sharing the application. Kathleen confirmed that this seat is currently filled by Lucia Fishburne, who is reaching the end of her second term and is not eligible for another term. Amanda motioned to forward this slate to the County. E. Marie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Nominees - History/Heritage Seat (County)

Kathleen explained that this seat is currently held by Paul Lewis Jr., who will not be seeking reappointment. Rachele motioned to forward this slate to the County. Beth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

d. FY24 Board Slate of Officers

Kathleen thanked E. Marie and Kristen Summers, who are stepped down from the Executive Committee. Kathleen thanked Dan, Katherine and Rachele for their continued service, and welcomed new Executive Committee members Beth, Ayne and Haiqiong. Kristen motioned to approve the slate. Amanda seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

e. FY24 Board Meeting Schedule

Kathleen stated that the FY24 meeting schedule takes academic and City/County meetings into account, and that meetings can be adjusted throughout the year if needed. E. Marie motioned to approve the schedule. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

f. Bylaws Revision

Kathleen explained that in late May of this year, the City/County revised their policy and now require an additional step for COCA City seat appointments. Once the Mayor has appointed the seat, the appointment

will be passed to the County Commission for final approval. However, COCA bylaws language already reflects this approval authority, and no additional change to the bylaws is needed. Kathleen stated that the COCA bylaws are currently undergoing legal review to ensure COCA compliance with this new City/County policy.

g. FY24 Grant Program recommendations

Sahara stated that the FY23 Arts Education Grant Final Reports will be due September 15. Sahara stated that the FY24 applications became available August 28 and will be due October 1. She confirmed COCA has \$8,000 for regranting in this program, with more funding from the Duke Energy Grant pending.

Summer stated that the Cultural Grant received 32 applications, two of which were initially deemed ineligible during the required County application review. Summer stated that one of these grants was revised and accepted and one chose to withdraw from consideration. Summer stated that all grants were recommended for funding by COCA panelists during COCA's panel review in August.

Summer stated that the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant received 31 applications, two of which were deemed ineligible by the required County application review. Summer stated that one of these grants was revised and accepted and one chose to withdraw from consideration. Summer stated that all grants were recommended for funding by COCA panelists during COCA's panel review in August.

Anye asked what the group number denotes. Kathleen answered that the group number denotes the organization size, with "group 4" being the smallest organizations and "group 1" being the largest.

Kathleen explained that, following COCA Board approval, the Cultural Grant and Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant applications will be forwarded to the Leon County Tourism Development Council for approval.

E. Marie asked if COCA does any marketing to publicize the list of grant awards, such as a social media campaign. Kathleen explained that the information is made available, and a specific social media campaign can be done.

Katherine motioned to approve the list of Cultural Grant recommendations and forward to the County. E. Marie seconded. Dan abstained from voting due to his position on the LeMoyne Art Foundation Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Beth motioned to approve the list of Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant recommendations and forward to the County. Amanda seconded. Dan abstained. The vote passed unanimously.

Summer stated that the Cultural Grant (City/Community) received 28 applications, one of which was found ineligible during staff review. Summer stated that all applications were recommended for funding based on their scores at the panel. Kathleen explained that the City has not currently earmarked any additional funds for this grant program, though conversations are ongoing. Kathleen confirmed that the NEA did provide \$25,000 that can be used for regranting purposes. Kathleen explained that the Board needs to approve these recommendations and allow COCA staff to distribute the funds in priority order and in accordance with COCA grant guidelines, i.e., funding applicants who would not receive TDT funds first. E. Marie motioned to approve the Cultural Grant (City/Community) recommendations and to allow COCA staff the authority to distribute the funds in priority order. Beth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. ORAL REPORTS

a. COCA Connects FY23 Sub-Committee Reports

Kathleen delivered the membership report. Kathleen confirmed new members have joined, but approximately the same number of members lapsed. Kathleen stated that the “Build to 300” campaign will continue through the end of September. Paul asked about the average number of members; Kathleen answered that the average number of members has increased from 250 to 260.

Sahara provided more information on the “Build to 300” campaign, explaining that 14 emails were sent out to approximately 13,000 people and that this contact list was shaped by click rate and open data. Sahara explained that the campaign was featured on social media, including Instagram and Facebook. Sahara stated that COCA saw a plateau in viewership/engagement that COCA staff attributes to “e-mail fatigue.” Sahara stated that the campaign is taking a short communications break and that contact will resume in the last two weeks of September. Sahara stated that, later this year, COCA’s Giving Tuesday campaign will be a priority and that they want to ensure viewers/audience members will be receptive to COCA emails and social media at that time. Sahara added that COCA mailed postcards, designed by Samantha, with different postcard designs for current versus lapsed members.

The Grant and DEI sub-committees had no updates.

b. Liaisons

Jennifer Wright with Opening Nights delivered her liaison report. Jennifer stated that Opening Nights launched its new season on August 1. The FSU Museum of Fine Arts opened a new exhibit, “Intertwined: Labor and Technology in Contemporary Textile Art.” The College of Music announced its 2024 season. No other liaisons were present, so no other reports were given.

c. Chair

Dan thanked Lucia and Paul for their years of dedicated service to COCA.

Dan and Kathleen introduced new board member Reenee Williams. Reenee asked for an updated membership list to contribute to COCA’s “Build to 300” campaign; Kathleen promised COCA staff would provide that list.

d. Staff

Due to the robust agenda, Kathleen stated that a staff report was added to the board materials and staff will provide update highlights in person.

Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager

Sahara stated that, in addition to administering the Arts Education grant, she and Sam recently submitted the Florida Humanities grant to cover Bicentennial programming. Sahara announced her intention to record virtual tours of solo shows at City Hall and the Artport, and teachers can use these recordings as a virtual field trip. Sahara stated that she is working with Eric Clark from Leon County Schools to develop a Bicentennial workshop. Sahara stated that she is working with Dr. Shields at Florida State University (FSU) and the



Tallahassee Symphony to present a workshop for music teachers. Sahara stated that she anticipates continued class tours this fall.

Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager

Sam stated that the 2024 Art in Public Places exhibition application is now open and will close September 30. Applications for Photofest will also be accepted until October 6. Sam confirmed that COCA is having new pedestals made to better showcase 3D work in the galleries. Sam stated that she will be keeping online galleries live, even after the show is taken down. She stated that she is working on an online version of the scavenger hunts that accompany each exhibition. E. Marie asked what will happen to the old pedestals; Sam answered that she will find them a new home in the community.

Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager

Samantha stated that COCA e-mail open rate increased to 45%, which is a 9% increase and 9% higher than the industry average. Samantha stated that a monthly newsletter featuring Bicentennial events and programming will launch January 2024. They stated that COCA has received new merchandise, including t-shirts, hats, coasters, pins and keychains, to be used for tabling in the next fiscal year. Samantha stated that they and Sam have been creating posters for each of the public art exhibitions, which attendees sign and then present to the exhibition artist/s at the end of the exhibition. Samantha stated that the accessibility features on the website were updated, and the workshop series “How to Make Video Content” will begin the following week.

Summer Callahan, Grants Manager

Summer stated that the FY23 grant year will end September 30, after which the FY24 grant contracts can be created and executed. Summer stated that she spoke with Jan Rodusky about creating a workshop to help arts and cultural organizations professionalize. E. Marie asked if this was scheduled and Summer answered that it is not yet. Kathleen thanked Amanda for moderating the FY24 grants panel and Summer for administrating the entire panel process.

Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager

Nick stated that he is closing out the fiscal year, including paying grants, complying with all grant reporting requirements and renewing insurance. Anye asked if a new auditor was selected; Nick responded that Grayson Accounting was selected.

e. Executive Director

Kathleen reviewed Arts Advocacy updates. She stated that, nationally, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funding pools increased in 2024. Locally, the CRA funding to LeMoyne Arts Foundation, Challenger Learning Center and Indaba Theatre was approved and contracted.

She continued with an Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 update. The survey closed with over 90 program participants and 850 surveys in, well over goal and AEP5 metrics. Kathleen stated that Americans for the Arts will hold a virtual launch of the report on October 12. Randy Cohen (Americans for the Arts) will visit Tallahassee between October 25 – October 27, as part of a tour of north Florida counties that she organized. During this tour, COCA plans to hold a “state of the arts” talk at the Governor’s Club, including a lunch and presentation. Kathleen reports that, although the specifics of AEP6 are not yet available, initial findings indicate that despite the impact of the pandemic, cultural spending has markedly increased. COCA will also partner with the Division of Arts and Culture, WFSU and the Florida Cultural Alliance to maximize events



during Randy's visit. These events will be open to COCA members and non-members, but this is a good opportunity to offer something extra to offer members. She offered the board opportunities to share ideas and suggestions.

Kathleen stated the planning for the Bicentennial continues; in addition to serving on tasks forces, COCA has Bicentennial programming planned within all its regular program, with special projects including Tallahassee Music Week and Florida Humanities lectures (grant pending).

Facility updates include the Bradfordville Blues Club, which is still seeking a facility. Kathleen stated that, as requested by community members, COCA will hold another community conversation about the Warehouse facility on September 12. Kathleen stated that the former venue managers of Warrior on the River are attempting to open a space for sound/music production and music classes on Monroe Street.

Kathleen shared that she was accepted to the Jim Moran Institute for Nonprofit Leadership, Cohort 8. Kathleen stated that she attended the free *Access for All* arts and cultural tourism and sports tourism in West Palm Beach. COCA community events and partnerships include "COCA Happy Hour" hosted by Hearth and Soul on September 26, where candle sales will benefit COCA. She and Kristen Summers will be participating in the Tally Trash Challenge on September 9, picking up trash around the murals and Gaines Street art walks. She asked the board to participate in both. In addition, she and Dan will be participating in the pledge drive for WFSU on September 13.

V. ADJOURN

Kristen motioned to adjourn the meeting. Carol seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5.22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan and Sahara Lyon