



**Meeting Minutes**  
COCA Executive Committee Meeting  
Thursday, October 12, 2023  
4:00pm

Present: Ayne Markos, Dan Taylor, Haiqiong Deng, Rachelle McClure, Beth Keating (virtual)  
Absent: Kathy Maiorana  
Staff: Kathleen Spehar, Sam Joslin, Samantha Sumler, Sahara Lyons, Summer Callahan, Nick Pavlovik (virtual)  
Guests: Kerri Post, Visit Tallahassee

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

As the in-person quorum was not achieved as of 4:05 p.m., Dan requested the COCA Executive Committee begin with old business.

I. OLD BUSINESS

a. Board of Director appointments

Kathleen informed the Executive Committee of the approval of FY24 board appointments by the City of Tallahassee (City Seat) and Leon County at the October 10, 2023 County Commission meeting. The City seat was also approved by the County during its vote.

- Beth Keating of the Gunster Law Firm for the Volunteerism (County) seat;
- Hadley Peterson of Kimley-Horn for the At-Large (City) seat;
- Kim Bryant of the Moore Agency for the Marketing (County) seat;
- Neil Mooney, retired attorney, for the History & Heritage (County) seat.

The Executive Committee had no questions or comments about the board appointments or reinstatements.

b. Arts & Economic Prosperity (AEP6)

Kathleen stated that the national launch of the AEP6 survey happened that day, October 12. Kathleen reiterated the survey findings: that nonprofit arts and culture organizations are businesses; that the arts drive commerce to local businesses; that arts travelers are ideal tourists; that \$5 billion in local, state and federal arts funding produced \$27.5 billion in government revenue. Kathleen stated that COCA will publicize these findings and assist local arts organizations in collecting their own qualitative and quantitative data for advocacy purposes.

Samantha stated that COCA shared a press release discussing Tallahassee/Leon County findings. Dan asked who received the press release; Samantha answered that COCA's media contacts received a copy. Kathleen added that the Board will receive a series of links discussing the AEP6 findings and upcoming email the following day. Dan expressed interest in an "elevator pitch" and Kathleen responded that that will be included. Kathleen reminded the board about the AEP6 events scheduled for October 24-26. Kathleen stated that the full statistics were not available for the Executive Committee meeting because



the results had been embargoed until 2 p.m. that day but highlighted some impressive statistics: over \$203 million worth of impact; almost \$86 million in event-related expenditures; about \$33 spent per person per event. Kathleen stated that tourism attendance matched AEP5, despite the pandemic's impact. Dan asked if COCA could compare AEP6 results to AEP5, but Kathleen answered that the survey methodology had evolved (including a new category on social impact) and so a broad direct comparison was not feasible. Kathleen stated that COCA had a 35% increase in participation from local arts organizations and over 800 surveys were completed (compared to over 700 for AEP5). Kathleen stated that COCA will create a rack card with key points as well.

## I. NEW BUSINESS

### a. FY24 Priorities

Kathleen discussed COCA's goals for the upcoming fiscal year. Kathleen stated that the theme or overall goal would be "COCA in the Community," mingling with local arts organizations and businesses and strengthening COCA's brand locally, regionally and nationally. Kathleen stated that COCA will integrate the Bicentennial into COCA programming, deepen partnerships and build arts & culture across sectors. Kathleen stated that COCA will continue with hybrid officing, using the DOMI Station amenities to meet organizational and community needs. Kathleen added COCA ongoing work on creating a new Cultural Plan, since the current plan will expire in 2025. Kathleen confirmed COCA will launch the AEP6 Arts & Economic Prosperity results, continue public art and arts education initiatives, develop programming (workshops, webinars, consultations and programs) to meet community need, active COCA's Bicentennial plan and participate in Bicentennial activities and plan COCA's 40th anniversary for 2025. Kathleen stated that COCA hopes to retain 300 members and improve incentive packages to increase and retain membership.

## II. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – 08/24/2023
- b. Board of Director Meeting Minutes – 09/07/2023 (for review only)
- c. Balance Sheet as of September 30
- d. Budget v. Actual Statement as of September 30

In-person quorum was achieved at this stage. Rachelle moved to approve the consent agenda. Ayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## I. ORAL REPORTS

### a. COCA Connects FY24 Sub-Committee Reports

Sahara stated that the "Build to 300" membership campaign ended on September 30 and that COCA had 302 members as of October 12. Sahara stated that a "thank you" email was sent to all subscribers. Sahara stated that COCA will be working with interns at Sachs Media to maintain 300 members. Anye asked if COCA had any plans to work with schools, to allow "school entities" to be honorary members; Sahara answered that COCA can explore that option. Kathleen stated that COCA's biggest challenge with maintaining membership was renewals. Dan asked if COCA sends reminders to lapsed members; Sahara answered that lapsed members receive follow-up emails for approximately three months. Haiqiong asked if the reminder emails were sent to individuals or groups; Sahara answered that the reminder emails are automatically-generated form letters sent to individuals.

Kathleen stated that the Grants subcommittee has no updates, but will meet before the end of the calendar year. Kathleen stated that the chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee chair stepped down and is currently undergoing a reorganization.

b. Chair

Dan welcomed the new members of the Executive Committee: Haiqiong, Beth and Ayne.

c. Staff

*Sahara Lyons, Arts Education Manager*

Sahara stated that COCA applied to Community Foundations of North Florida’s “Helping Today, Shaping Tomorrow” for additional regranting funds for arts teachers in the surrounding counties. Sahara stated that COCA received \$5,000 from Duke Energy for the arts education grant. Sahara stated the arts education grant closed on October 8, that 16 teachers applied and that it will be possible to fully fund their applications, pending the results of the panel. Sahara stated the panel for the arts education grant will be November 14.

Sahara stated that the application to participate in Winterfest will close October 13; as of this meeting, 34 teachers signed up. Sahara stated that Griffin Middle and Buck Lake Elementary will contribute student performances, but that she hopes to find a high school to fill the remaining performance slot. Sahara stated that on November 16, she will host a Bicentennial webinar. Sahara stated that she held one class tour and has another upcoming. Sahara stated that she and the rest of COCA staff are preparing for Worlds of Work.

*Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager*

Nick stated that COCA’s revenues and expenses were as anticipated. Nick stated that COCA paid out \$1.2 million in various grants and \$300,000 in city funds. Nick stated that COCA applied to more grants than average. He stated that membership increased by 22% and license plates increased by 23%. He stated that advertising revenue is reduced due to large donors failing to renew and a lack of spending on marketing. Nick stated that operating expenses are estimated conservatively. Nick stated that insurance costs increased due to COCA’s decision to cover a portion of dependent premiums. Nick stated that COCA spent 91% of what was budgeted and that no line items went over budget. Nick stated that TDT collection increased and that COCA has already collected the funds that will be paid out as grant funds. Nick stated that COCA has over \$2.6 million in liquid funds. Nick stated that COCA will be collecting two major receivables: the DAC grant and ARPA funds. Nick stated that at the end of the fiscal year, COCA will undergo a voluntary audit and the “end-of-year” report to the City of Tallahassee.

*Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager*

Sam stated that the Art in Public Places and Photofest applications are closed and being reviewed by the arts advisory committee. Sam stated that she is preparing a pop-up exhibit in the R.A. Gray building to coincide with Randy Cohen’s visit; the exhibit will feature Alex Armitage and Nan Liu. Sam stated that Inside the Artist’s Studio with Elvie Nichols was successful and that a recording is available on COCA’s website. Sam stated that she is working with Stephen Cox of the CRA to start a mural program for local small businesses with graffiti issues. Sam stated that she is working with the Apalachee Regional Planning Council to rethink the “Cycle of the Arts” program. Sam stated that she is preparing for the



World of Work event, including creating an activity where students can curate their own exhibit. Sam stated that COCA applied for a South Arts Cross-Sector Impact Extension Grant for the Greater Art/Greater Bond project, with the goal of adding additional banners. Sam stated that the banners are ready for installation.

*Summer Callahan, Grants Manager*

Summer stated that the FY23 grant year ended September 30 and that final reports will be due at the end of October. Summer stated that she is working with grantees to get their reports submitted and amendments filed where necessary. Summer stated that FY24 awardees cannot receive funds until their FY23 grants are closed, but three applicants who did not have FY23 grants were able to receive their contracts. Summer stated that two arts administration classes visited from FSU earlier that day. Rachelle suggested a workshop on professionalizing budgets, including the use of the app Expensify.

*Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager*

Samantha stated that all new promotional items, including bucket hats and tote bags, are in. Samantha stated that the recent Artist Inspired series received multiple submissions and positive engagement on social media and that a call for the upcoming Artist Inspired series for Native American Heritage Month is currently out. Samantha stated that the COCA website has been updated to reflect the AEP6 survey results and that COCA intern Gabrielle is creating an updated “how to” document for COCA website users. Samantha stated that the video content workshops were successful, with 38 registrants and 10 attendees. Samantha stated that COCA was included in the Florida Arts Guide. Samantha stated that they are currently working on the end-of-year report for the City of Tallahassee.

d. Executive Director

Kathleen stated that she will be attending a Music Cities Conference next week in Huntsville, Alabama. Kathleen stated that COCA remains engaged in City and County events, including Family Day, Innovation Week and Worlds of Work. Kathleen stated that COCA is exploring having grantees give a presentation at the beginning of COCA Board meetings, starting this November. Kathleen stated that she is seeking a lawyer to give a presentation on the Sunshine Laws for the COCA Board, especially new members. She stated that she is also working on the end-of-year report, due at the end of October.

Dan announced that several of his paintings will be featured at Signature Art Gallery, opening Oct 26. Rachelle announced upcoming events, Shakes-Parody and a Gipsy Kings performance. Haiqiong announced the upcoming Women’s Concert with WFSU.

II. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m