



Draft

Meeting Minutes

COCA Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2023

4:00 p.m.

Present: Ayne Markos (virtual), Beth Keating, Dan Taylor, Haiqiong Deng, Katherine Maiorana, Rachelle McClure

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

Additional Board member present: Neil Mooney

Dan called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

I. CONSENT AGENDA

Dan asked for questions regarding the consent agenda; there were none. Rachelle motioned to approve. Kathy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. OLD BUSINESS

The COCA Executive Committee had no new business to discuss.

III. NEW BUSINESS

a. FY24 City/Community Grant Program recommendations

Kathleen stated that, though a COCA Board of Directors vote on September 7 authorizing COCA staff to address the City grant/Community grant funding tasks and decisions, staff is asking the Executive Committee to review and vote on a grants program decision for the use of National Endowment for the Arts funding for three organizations approved for COCA non-tourism development tax funding (TDT) and who did not qualify or apply for TDT-funds. Kathleen stated that staff has looked closely at the guidelines, available funds and timing of programs to align payouts to best meet grantee needs. Kathleen stated that after weeks of report consultations and reviews, COCA has paid out or is currently paying out all grantees who qualified for TDT-funded grants. Kathleen stated that while COCA continues to work with the City and County on the use of a portion of its City general operating funds for the City Funds/Community grants, staff identified three grantees who have not received any funding yet this year. Kathleen stated that, to assist these organizations and stay fair in funding distribution, the staff is allocating NEA re-granting funds to these three organizations. Kathleen stated that the NEA re-granting pool is not large enough to fully meet these needs, so COCA staff has reduced all three recommendations by 10%. Kathleen asked the Executive Committee to approve this decision, in accordance with COCA's procedures whenever an allocation change impacts a grantee's payout.

In reference to the administrative forms, Dan asked if the asterisk next to "Cool Breeze Art and Smooth Jazz Festival Railroad Square, Inc." signified anything. Kathleen answered that it did not.

Rachelle motioned to distribute the COCA NEA funds to the three City Fund-only grantees, adjusting each allocation by 10% to match funding availability needs. Beth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. ORAL REPORTS



a. COCA Connects FY24 Sub-Committee Reports

Sahara delivered the Membership Sub-Committee report. Sahara stated *the Build to 300* membership campaign closed at the end of the past fiscal year and that the goal of 300 members was successfully reached. Sahara stated that next membership drive started November 28 on Giving Tuesday. Sahara stated that the 2023 Giving Tuesday theme is “Unleash Generosity,” so the COCA membership drive is called “The Arts Unleash Generosity”; for this campaign, COCA will highlight local organizations alongside a “soft ask” to become a COCA member. Sahara stated that COCA is working with Sachs Media interns on a project to update the membership process. Kathleen stated that the next goal is to attach 40 new or renewing members, and as part of the campaign, asked for the Board’s assistance in recruiting new members and making a personal donation to COCA. Kathleen stated that emails about this will go out in December. Kathleen thanked the Sachs Media Group for their assistance and stated that the interns’ findings will be reviewed more closely on December 20 at the membership subcommittee meeting.

Kathleen delivered the Grants Sub-Committee report. Kathleen stated that COCA distributed 100 grants in FY23, which is the highest amount of grants COCA has ever given out in a single year, and includes the highest level of BIPOC organizations in COCA’s history. Kathleen stated that staff shared the results from the FY24 grantee and grant applicant survey and presented a list of possible changes to the guidelines and application. The FY25 guidelines and applications are currently under review, and Kathleen stated a major goal is stabilization of the program. Kathleen stated that the next step in the review process is to provide the updated application and guidelines to the County for a courtesy review, with a plan to discuss at the end of January 2024. Dan thanked the staff for their work facilitating 100 grants.

Kathleen also provided the DEI sub-committee report. She is working with the new committee chair and anticipates the next meeting with be in January. Kathleen stated that COCA has been involved in community DEI initiatives, including United Partners in Human Services (UPHS) and Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6). The AEP6 DEI component should be available for rollout in 2024.

b. Chair

Dan had no chair report.

c. Staff

Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager

Nick stated that COCA has \$1.3 million in grant contracts for FY24 and that payments have been issued since November. Nick stated at that of the Executive Committee meeting, 60% of first payments have been paid and that the goal is to pay out all first payments by December 22. Dan asked if any payment requests still required his signature; Nick responded that he did not believe so. Looking at other revenues, Nick stated that advertising and license plate revenue has generally decreased, but recently increased slightly. Nick stated that the City’s annual contracted funds should come through in January. Nick stated that all arts education teacher grants for FY24 have been distributed. Nick presented the balance sheet. He stated that there is almost \$3 million in the bank account, including funds from the County, the State, and the City (from the ARPA contract). Nick stated that tourism development tax (TDT) collections are expected to increase. When distributing these funds through COCA’s grant program, COCA only distributes actual funds that are currently in the bank, not anticipated funds as was past practice. Nick stated that he met with the auditor on the FY23 audit, and that the auditor will attend the next board meeting to present the audit to the board. Dan asked that Nick was



confident in the auditor; Nick answer that he was and that the auditor was happy to hear that COCA's financial operation is "all online."

Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager

Sahara stated that COCA held the Winterfest reception on December 1 and that it was successful. Sahara stated that approximately 250 to 300 people attended, and two ensembles from Buck Lake and Griffin Middle School performed. Sahara stated that 11 awards were presented to student artists and that most students and teachers were able to attend the ceremony. Sahara stated that all the teachers were thanked for their participation and that, due to support from the Division of Arts & Culture (DAC) and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant, teachers received a \$140-150 stipend to participate this year. Sahara stated that her next event will be Chalk Walk 2024, which will be January 24, same as Arts Advocacy Day. Sahara stated that she has contacted high school teachers about participating and that Florida House Representative Allison Tant has agreed to sponsor the event again this year. Sahara stated that she has started the reservation process for that day. Sahara stated that the December Arts Education newsletter has gone out and that the January newsletter will be completed before holiday break; the January newsletter will also highlight Bicentennial programs and offerings. Sahara stated that she and Sam anticipate hosting two Florida State University (FSU) interns in spring who will be working on both arts education and public art programs, as opposed to previous years where each intern's experience was siloed by area.

Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager

Sam stated that she is still working with the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on the Mural Matchmaking program, including a call for interested property owners; that application window should be open January 15 to March 1. Sam stated that for Randy Cohen's visit, she collaborated with the DAC staff to place an exhibit in the R.A. Gray Building, which will come down December 8. Sam stated that the R.A. Gray Innovation Gallery is typically empty, so she, a new artist and the DAC staff will work to install a new exhibit in 2024. Sam stated that the Art in Public Places 2024 exhibition schedule is confirmed and that she is conducting studio visits as needed. Sam stated that she also worked on Winterfest with Sahara. Sam stated that she is working with Neighborhood Affairs and the City of Tallahassee to install placards for the Greater Art for Greater Bond project that happened last year. Sam stated that COCA received a South Arts Cross-Sector Impact Project Extension Grant for \$10,000 to create more banners for the Bond neighborhood, which was highly requested by the neighborhood and City. Kathleen thanked Sam for her work creating the new Mural Matchmaking Program.

Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager

Samantha stated that the Bicentennial Arts and Culture Newsletter will launch in January, and the newsletter will include an Artist Spotlight. Samantha stated that the Tallahassee Democrat will publish one article per month focusing on an artist or organization, emphasizing Bicentennial events; the first "Artistic Ambition" article will be highlighting Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra and their "200 Years" concert. Samantha stated that social media engagement remains high and that they are currently scheduling posts to keep arts & culture event news active over the holiday break. Samantha stated that the community has been notified of COCA's holiday break via newsletter. Samantha stated that they will be hosting a "how to" workshop series from February 22 to March 6, which will cover posting events, artis profiles, classifieds and more to the COCA website.

Summer Callahan, Grants Manager

Summer shared that COCA had a presence at both *Family Day* (the Friday after Thanksgiving) and the inaugural *Stop @ the Station* (December 1) and that both these events were well-attended. COCA also helped

create, organize and co-produced each event. Summer stated that 90% of grant contracts are out for signature and that 6 organizations have outstanding final reports, but that she is working with grantees to resolve their issues. Summer stated that after the Grants Sub-Committee meeting, the revised application and guidelines will be forwarded to the County for a courtesy review. Summer stated that, since the Executive Committee approved this motion, COCA will go forward with regranteeing the NEA award to the FY24 awardees who did not receive any TDT-funded grants. Summer stated that since TDT collections are increasing, COCA is researching the possibility of adding an individual artist grant. Dan thanked Summer and Nick for processing the FY24 payments and asked about the turn-around time for the grantee to receive a award; Nick answered that it was one day, because the process is electronic.

d. Executive Director

Kathleen stated that pictures and articles from Randy Cohen’s visit are on COCA’s AEP6 webpage. Kathleen stated that COCA will continue to look for federal funding opportunities, in order to support robust programming at COCA. She stated that advocacy efforts continue, in hopes of reversing or mitigating cuts made to arts education on the federal level; Americans for the Arts provided guidance for that advocacy that has been shared with the Executive Committee. Kathleen stated that for Arts Advocacy Day on January 24, COCA will be working with the Florida Cultural Alliance to host arts advocates from all over the state. She shared that all arts advocacy updates will be shared in the Thursday COCA newsletter. She also shared that COCA staff will continue working with local government on funds to meet the City Grant requirements. Kathleen stated that COCA participated in Impact Week in November. She shared that she will be speaking at Notes on Nonprofits, an online talk show hosted by Alyce Lee Stansbury. Kathleen stated that the Bicentennial Launch is planned for December 31, including a concert in the park, and a marketing rollout planned for January 9. Kathleen stated the Bicentennial celebration continues with a Day at the Capitol on January 11, both inside and outside the Capitol, and that event will include vendors, speeches and entertainment. Kathleen thanked the community, the staff and the Executive Committee for their continued work and support of arts & culture in the region. Kathleen stated that the COCA office will be closed December 25 through January 2, barring emergencies.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathleen encouraged everyone to check COCA’s events calenda for holiday events.

VI. ADJOURN

Beth motioned to adjourn the meeting. Rachelle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan and Sahara Lyon