



Draft

Meeting Minutes

COCA Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 15, 2024

4:00 pm

Present: Ayne Markos, Beth Keating, Dan Taylor, Haiqiong Deng, Rachelle McClure

Virtual: Kathy Maiorana

Staff Present: Kathleen Spehar, Nick Pavlovik, Sahara Lyon, Sam Joslin, Samantha Sumler, Summer Callahan

Dan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Dan stated that the February executive committee meeting had begun, but they would skip past consent for now due to lack of an in-person quorum. He mentioned that there was no old or new business on the agenda, so they would proceed directly to oral reports.

I. ORAL REPORTS

a. COCA Connects FY24 Sub-Committee Reports

Kathy stated that the Membership Sub-committee had no report, but there was a meeting scheduled for the upcoming week to review results and discuss membership going forward. She mentioned that a membership report would be available at the upcoming COCA Board meeting. Dan confirmed that the meeting Kathy mentioned was on February 24th.

Kathleen delivered the Grants Sub-committee report. Kathleen stated that a committee meeting would be held in March to finalize the FY25 guidelines for all grant programs. Kathleen stated that COCA staff is considering separating the non-TDT grant panel from the TDT grant panel and adjusting some of the payout dates so that the non-TDT grants would be awarded in the spring instead of the fall. She mentioned that the non-TDT grant programs do not have a dedicated funding source at the moment and COCA continues to be in discussions with the City and County about a potential arrangement to provide funds. Kathleen added that staff is making tweaks and changes to the FY25 guidelines based on feedback from the community, grantees, applicants and the County, and will present revisions to the committee and then to the board meeting in March. Kathleen stated that the guidelines need to be approved and ready by May. Kathleen stated that though a meeting date has not been set yet as they need to finish some tweaks to the guideline, the Grants Sub-committee will meet in March to review the draft and provide feedback before the board meeting, Dan asked if there were any questions about the grant programs, to which there were none.

Kathleen delivered the DEI Sub-committee report. Kathleen stated that the DEI sub-committee discussed the "Creating Spaces" initiative for this year. She confirmed the initiative continues to about fostering inclusive collaboration within the arts and culture community. She mentioned three events were being planned for this year, the first at Anderson Brickell Gallery this spring, the second at B-Sharps over the summer or early fall, and the third a concert by Haiqiong Deng in October. In addition, an event in February was added, in collaboration with the College of Music, Florida State University. This community lunch with Vijay Sita, citizen artist visiting from Los Angeles, to discuss his collaborations with his community. She also mentioned the subcommittee was considering adding a performance element to the events. Kathleen added they are continuing to work on their DEI plan. Dan asked if there were any questions about DEI and reminded everyone that the committees do not operate in isolation. He encouraged anyone with ideas or who wanted to get involved with any of the events to let Kathleen know. Kathleen stated that the next DEI meeting would be on March 25 via Zoom.



II. CONSENT AGENDA

Because an in-person quorum was achieved, Dan asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Rachelle moved and Beth seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

I. ORAL REPORTS b. Chair Report

Kathleen delivered the Chair Report for Dan. Kathleen reminded board members to continue attending events and to send any pictures they take to Samantha. She also encouraged them to tag “Tallahassee Arts” and “iHeartTally” in any personal Facebook or Instagram posts. Kathleen stated that they are always looking for new COCA members and encouraged board members to continue recruiting. She mentioned that they still have membership cards available for anyone who needs more. Kathleen reminded everyone that there will be board seat openings in September and postings for these seats will launch in March. Kathleen announced that Jennifer Wright is no longer the liaison seat at Florida State University. She thanked Jennifer for her service to COCA and expressed hope that she would remain engaged as a supporter within the arts community. Kathleen mentioned that an interim would be put in place, which Florida State University is currently working on.

a. Staff

Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager

Sahara stated that on January 24th at the Capitol Complex, COCA hosted Chalk Walk 2024 featuring 10 groups from 7 different Leon County high schools. The event was held in conjunction with Arts Advocacy Day, and the student artworks were Bicentennial-themed. Each teacher received a stipend for participating and 2 awards were given to two different student groups. Sahara also stated that she assisted with two exhibition de-installs, including Winterfest that was de-installed on January 13th. She also assisted with the opening reception for Claire Osborne’s show at the airport. Winterfest pickup is currently at the COCA office from now through March 1st and all teachers received a stipend of \$142 for participating. Sahara mentioned that she will be tabling with interns at *Be My Neighbor Day* with WFSU, where they are expecting 500 kids. Sahara stated that she will have coloring sheets and crayons to give out, as well as some information on COCA and pamphlets for event attendees to receive COCA newsletters. Sahara stated that she gave an exhibition tour at City Hall to Sarah Black Sadler’s class at FSU and next week, she has two tours scheduled with Carrie Phee’s classes. She is also doing a podcast interview with a student at FSU for an arts administration project called *Creative Connections*. Sahara shared that she, along with Sam and two interns, assisted with the Division of Arts & Culture’s *Black History, Arts, and Culture Festival* at the RA Gray Building. COCA co-presented the festival, tabled, assisted in the Green Room and helped host performers. Over 300 community members attended. Lastly, Sahara shared that she is working with Evangeline Ciupek at the College of Music to organize a luncheon with the College of Music’s guests including violinist Vijay Gupta. Approximately 30 different community partners will attend the luncheon and are currently receiving RSVPs.

Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager

Sam stated that the *Creative Tallahassee* application is still open and the last day to apply is tomorrow. The *Mural Makeover Program* applications for interested property owners are open until March 1st. She mentioned that she has seen draft submissions in Submittable, indicating that people have started applications but not yet submitted them. Sam added that a new exhibition is up in the City Hall Gallery featuring the work of artist Jeanine Czaja-Mordon, a blend of paintings and sculpture. The reception will be on

Tuesday from 5 to 7 p.m. in City Hall. She also mentioned the Claire Osborne exhibition reception, which took place on January 25th at the airport, was well attended and successful. Sam is planning a virtual artist talk with Claire Osborne for March 12th. Sam stated that she assisted the Division of Arts and Culture with *the Black History, Arts, and Culture Festival* in the R.A. Gray building and received a lot of positive feedback. Sam stated that she is still working with the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Affairs for the *South Arts Cross Sector Extension Grant* to get more banners put up for the request of the Bond Neighborhood Association. Sam mentioned that next week, she will be meeting with the Assistant City Manager about some window art for City Hall to reduce bird window strikes during peak migration season. This idea was proposed by Erika Zambello, a local artist who works for the Audubon Society in Florida. Finally, Sam stated that she is looking for new Arts Advisory Committee members for the next season of exhibition juries. The committee members look through all of the artwork submissions for solo shows, photo fests, and Creative Tallahassee. She is looking for practicing artists in Tallahassee who bring diversity in terms of ethnicity and art type.

Kathleen stated that the new mural makeover program is seeking connections to businesses. She emphasized the importance of getting the word out about the program, especially since it's new. She mentioned that businesses unsure of their location in relation to the CRA district can apply and COCA will help figure out their eligibility to participate. She expressed a desire to get as many businesses as possible to apply to this program, which can include Bicentennial-themed art. Sam stated that the initial focus of the program is on the Frenchtown Southside CRA district. She mentioned that the prospectus includes a link where businesses can check if they are in the district. She echoed Kathleen's encouragement for businesses to apply, noting that if the first phase goes well, the CRA plans to expand the program to the Downtown CRA.

Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communications Manager

Samantha stated that they are continuing with their *Bicentennial Artistic Ambition* newsletter and the *Artistic Ambition Spotlight* for February. They mentioned that they have *Artists Inspired* for this month, which is Black History Month, and in March, the theme will be Women's History Month. They added that they had a videographer at the *Black History, Art, and Cultural Festival* and hope to work with them for multiple events this year to increase their video content. Samantha also mentioned that they have been updating the media guide and the menu links on their website. They announced that next week, they will be having the first workshop in the *COCA Connect How-To Workshop series* for the community. She also mentioned that they have published a call for a guest writer for their *COCA Spotlights*. Lastly, she stated that she met with Artropolis to allow people to possibly purchase ads on their website to streamline that process.

Dan asked if the potential to sell ads would be totally separate from the newsletter. Samantha clarified that it would be the newsletter ads. They explained that this will streamline the ad-buying process for both parties. They added that the payment would be through Stripe, which is what their membership payments are for.

Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager

Nick stated that they are moving to the next stage after the audit and looking at funding scenarios for the next year. He mentioned that the TDT grant funding trend is strong and up 40% on previous years, which is encouraging. He added that COCA will enter the fifth year of the County contract next year, which will be the last year of the contract. He explained that COCA has been aiming to align the grant funding distribution with actual TDT collections. He also mentioned that they have been raising the Cultural Grant and the Cultural Tourism Marketing Grant over 50% each year, which is likely to be the trend for next year, too. He noted that the grant funding is approaching close to \$2 million, which is good for the community, considering it was around \$400,000 five years ago.

Dan asked about the process when they write a check for WinterFest for a teacher. Nick explained that COCA emails the teacher a letter to let them know that the checks are coming. The checks come directly from the bank, but since he reconciles them on a monthly basis, he can see what checks have been cashed. If nothing is cancelled within two months, then he is quite sure they have not received the payment. He requests a stop payment, and then the bank re-issues the checks.

Sahara added that county schools can't accept ACH payments and everything has to be a physical check. She mentioned that for teachers, she has to send them a letter, submit a check request, then the bank writes the physical check. It has to be sent to the school but addressed to the teacher. The school bookkeeper will deposit it into the school's account with the purpose of redistributing it to the teacher's individual classroom.

Dan thanked Nick and Sahara for the clarification.

Summer Callahan, Grants Manager

Summer stated that she held a *Revenue Relevancy Partnership* workshop with grant writer Jan Rodusky on February 2nd, which was a hybrid workshop with 34 attendees on Zoom and 5 in-person. She mentioned that COCA received positive feedback and is considering offering similar workshops in the future. She added that she is working on grant applications for possible projects, including an application for more regrants funds from National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) starting in 2025 and a potential public arts collaboration with Havana Main Street. She also mentioned that they are working on specifics for the new Individual Arts Grant program and re-evaluating the funding stratifications. She stated that the National Songwriters Association International, Tallahassee Chapter, expressed interest in having a songwriting workshop at Domi Station. She was also asked to give a presentation to a grant writing class at the FSU Department of Art Education in March.

Dan asked if the presentation she is going to do in March at FSU would be videotaped. Summer clarified that it wouldn't be videotaped, but it would be about the arts administration sector. She mentioned that if a recorded version was wanted, the logistics would probably be tough, but she could certainly create a second version. Dan stated that this could be a good resource. Summer stated that a version of the presentation could be made available.

b. Executive Director

Kathleen stated that the staff has been doing a fantastic job with new projects and working with the community in many ways. She mentioned we are in week six of the legislative session and the original budget recommendations made by the subcommittees are still in place. She added COCA sent out another advocacy push to ask people to continue to write letters and call for full funding for arts and culture. She noted that in our region, if fully funded, the 33 recommended grants between the organizations and the artists would fund a little over \$2 million. She also mentioned that the Senate and the House have different recommendations for the grant line items. Ayne asked about the template that Kathleen sent last year to send out to the legislature. Kathleen confirmed that the template is in the board materials and she will send it out via email to Board members. Dan thanked Kathleen for this and stated that the template is helpful.

Kathleen stated that she has been involved in various activities, including making a Kiwanis presentation and collaborating with Independence Landing, which recently opened a gallery space with COCA's assistance. She mentioned Independence Landing is hoping to secure a free kiln, again due to COCA's connections and leadership. She highlighted the diverse range of events in the area, from large performances to smaller ones, such as gallery openings by independent artists in garages and laundry rooms.

Kathleen added that they are connecting with artists who are interested in participating in different festivals next year. She noted that these could align well with the 40th anniversary of COCA. She expressed the desire to capture unique events happening within their artist and community during this period. She further mentioned that COCA has initial plans for its 40th anniversary, which she and staff have been working. These plans will be discussed at a future board meeting. She emphasized that plans need to be addressed not only in programming but also in budget. Kathleen also referred to the COCA priorities plan for the current year, which she included in the materials. The plan covers various areas such as artistic, collaborations, organizational, facility, finance, programs, services, and memberships. She highlighted that COCA continues to integrate the Bicentennial into its standard programming, which includes *Creative Tallahassee*, the mural program and more. COCA are also tracking different Bicentennial programs that their community has been doing.

She noted that collaboration with other entities has increased. COCA staff has recently collaborated with various entities such as the CRA, Independence Landing, the College of Music, and the Division of Arts and Culture.

Finally, Kathleen mentioned that she will be attending the Local Arts Agency Summit in April, to network with other agencies around the state and attend workshops. The conference will also explore how local arts agencies can work together regionally to create stronger agencies and do cross-agency work. She mentioned having talked to Walton County, which is interested in having a stage at Word of South.

Kathleen asked the Executive Committee to let her know about possible speaking engagements. Dan inquired if Kathleen had participated in any of the rotaries recently. Kathleen responded that she had not, and welcomed Dan to connect her with those. She mentioned COCA has started planning out the workshops and COCA 101s, along with the activities in the Bicentennial Plan. She noted that their programming services had significantly expanded in the last four to five months.

Kathleen added that COCA's memberships are holding steady at around 300, a number maintained since October. She expressed the intention to continue building membership, with a goal to potentially reach 400 members during their 40th anniversary year. She affirmed that COCA is on the right track, and so far, is achieving its goals.

She also mentioned the positive reports given by Nick and Summer, and the shift in their grants program due to the increased resources available next year. She emphasized that one of their main goals as an arts agency is to service the community in various ways, with their grants program playing a significant role.

Dan reminded everyone to continue prioritizing and using their resources as best as they can. Kathleen agreed, stating there can be a need to temper enthusiasm while ensuring we are being as inclusive as possible. COCA is in demand and receives many invitations to collaborate and participate in a whole slew of projects and opportunities. While continuing to put community first, she clarified the agency doesn't have to do everything in February or March. The community continues to be eager to be with COCA.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dan started the announcements by sharing that he is included in a show with a ceramic artist named Nancy Jefferson and a photographer named Jim Miller at LeMoyné Arts. The show, called "Radiant Wonders," runs through February 24th, and they are doing an artist talk the following evening.



Samantha announced that they are part of a show that opens on March 8th and 9th, and then again from the 14th through the 16th.

Kathleen added that COCA staff is planning to attend Samantha's show. She also mentioned Sahara's upcoming wedding. Kathleen further noted that there are many Black History Month events happening, and encouraged everyone to check the COCA calendar for details as they are tracking and promoting many of them. She highlighted that while there isn't room to highlight everything in their newsletters, all events are listed on COCA's website.

IV. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Summer Callahan