

Minutes

## ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION

July 17, 2017

Conference Room B, City Hall

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Susan Riedel at 4:20 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with the Iowa Open Meeting Law.**

**Commissioners present:** Mary Armstrong, Matthew Gregory, Ellen Henkels, Sue Riedel, David Schmitz, Gina Siegert

**Staff present:** Debra Alleyne, Maurice Jones

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 23 2017.** Commissioner Henkels made a motion to accept minutes Commissioner Armstrong seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### 1. DISCUSSION Role of Commissioners.

Alleyne called the commission's attention to the Roles of Boards and Commissions document and the commission's ordinance. A review of the powers of the commission began with particular attention section F "to make recommendations to city councils on the allocation of budgeted city funding for arts programs and services". Alleyne reviewed all commission minutes from as far back as 2005 and the creation of the granting program. She saw that the commission underwent an evolution of the granting processes in search of best practices. She said that the commission should continue to be an integral part of ensuring that the city arts and culture goals and the will of the council commission is embodied in the projects that they recommend to city council and that it was still possible to do that while being removed from any contentious elements of adjudication. Chair Riedel reminded the commissioners that they unanimously agreed to utilize an unaffiliated, objective jury. She reiterated that the process follows state best practice and was similar to the Art on the River Jury process. The chair reminded the commission that their function is to ensure that the processes were followed, and guidelines were equitably applied before accepting the rankings without re-adjudication.

#### 2. REVIEWS OF Grant process

Alleyne reviewed the timeline of how the commission came to the new process of adjudication. She also reviewed how the process was applied in real time and how the commissions new process was communicated to the applicants, the financial juror, and the jury panels. They discussed successes and roadblocks. Upon review of the voting for the funding scheme for FY18, she noticed some areas that could be easily improved for the next year that would provide a larger distance from conflicts of interest. She recommended applying a funding scheme blind or maintaining strict funding scheme that could illuminate any and

all conflicts. Conversations ensued about funding caps, and whether or not to make the process competitive so that caps are not reduced to an ineffectual amount. Commissioner Henkels raised the concern that stemmed from the recommendation to vote via email due to the lack of quorum at the previous meeting. Alleyne shared the directive she received from the clerk's office that this method was not recommended as it created room for ex parte communication. Alleyne did and acknowledge that Commissioner Henkel's concern was warranted.

### **3. SPECIAL PROJECTS GRANTS**

Commissioners reviewed the scored Special Projects grants. As all grants of this type are fully funded in order of rank. Therefore, the score, rank and funding scheme was presented to the commission. Commissioner Armstrong made a motion to accept the proposed Special Projects Grant ranking and funding scheme it was seconded by Commissioner Henkels. The motion passed 6-0.

### **4. RANKING OF OPERATING SUPPORT GRANTS.**

The commissioners reviewed 3 different funding schemes blind. In depth discussion of grant options were had by all commissioners. Competitive awards processes, caps standard percentages and funding scenarios were debated. Option 6 of flat 6% or cap was removed as a viable option this year as the consequence would be severe leaving some organizations unfunded. Commissioners felt that such a measure would need to be communicated to the applicants at ahead of time. Commissioner Henkels made a motion to accept Option 5 funding scheme and it was seconded by Commissioner Armstrong. Motion carried 6-0. Option 5 funding levels presented descending percentages with a new cap per quartile. Commissioner Armstrong motioned and Commissioner Siegert seconded that in Option 5 the extra \$127.05 be awarded to the application receiving the lowest dollar amount. Motion carried 6-0.

Discussion about time allocated to grants continued. Alleyne noted that in her review of the commission minutes over the years at least 50% of commission time had been used to discuss grants. She urged the commission to begin reallocating time to other responsibilities as the implementation of this new process liberates a significant portion of meeting time. Commissioners were asked to should bring suggestions for Master Plan working groups.

**Next meeting** (Tuesday July 25) should discuss changes necessary for operating grants and evaluating. Financial forms, getting jurors, workshops, evaluation forms.

**ADJOURNMENT** Commissioner Siegert motion to adjourn seconded by Commissioner Henkels at 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted:  
Debra Alleyne  
Arts and Cultural Affairs Coordinator

These minutes were passed and approved on

July 25, 2017

  
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Giha Siegert, Secretary