



ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, July 21, 2020

TIME: 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Via GoToMeeting

Regular Meeting

Commissioners Present: Ali Levasseur, Nicholas Halder, Susan Riedel, Ryan Decker, Gina Siegert, Susan Riedel, Tyler Daugherty, Paula Neuhaus.

Staff Present: Jennifer Petersen-Brant

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Levasseur at 3:33 PM. following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Review of Minutes: Motion to accept minutes of June 23, 2020 with corrections by Commissioner Neuhaus, seconded by Commissioner Daugherty. Commissioners Levasseur, Halder, Riedel, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, and Neuhaus voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

FY21 Operating Support Grant Scoring Review: Staff presented scoring of the 19 Operating Support grant applicants ranked according to combined scores. Four (4) tiers of applicants were identified based on a traditional grading scaling (A- to A+ = 90-100%, B- to B+ = 80-89%, C- to C+ = 70-79%, D- to D+ = 60-69%, F = 0-59%) of combined juror's scores. Three (3) funding scenarios were provided by Staff for Commissioners to consider:

- Option 1 offers potential awards if all applicants could receive 6% of their previous year's operating budget or a maximum of \$30,000 as noted in grant guidelines. This option not possible as \$314,744 would be needed to fulfill all maximum requests.
- Option 2 offers potential awards at four (4) tiers based on funding ranging from 4.25% to 3% of previous year's operating budget or a maximum of \$30,000. This scenario offers funding tiers that are less competitive while arriving at total line item expenditure within the FY2021 allotment of \$250,000.

- Option 3 offers a more competitive four (4) tier funding structure with funding ranging from 5% to 2.75% or a maximum of \$30,000 to arrive at total line item expenditure within the FY2021 allotment of \$250,000.

Discussion followed highlighting that option 3 awards applicants receiving the highest marks with the most significant percentage of funding allowed within the \$250,000 overall FY2021 line item allocation while providing all eligible applicants with some funding. Commission voiced appreciation for work done by Staff in calculating funding tiers and sharing in advance of meeting; approach of letter-grade rankings appreciated.

Motion by Commissioner Daugherty to recommend funding as outlined in Option 3 to City Council for FY21 Operating Support grant awards, seconded by Commissioner Halder. Commissioners Levasseur, Halder, Riedel, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, and Neuhaus voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Commission directed Staff to draft the required memo to the City Manager outlining their recommendation of Option 3 funding levels in advance of August 3 City Council meeting. Commission requested Staff to share the memo back to the Commission and include reviewer comments with award letters to applicants. Request to share reviewer comments with Commission as well.

Additional discussion on use of unawarded funds (\$4,718) followed. Motion to request that if unallocated funds remain available after any COVID-19 budget reductions, these funds be reassigned to Arts Mean Business activities by Commissioner Halder, seconded by Commissioner Neuhaus. Commissioners Levasseur, Halder, Riedel, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, and Neuhaus voted to approve motion; Motion passed.

Status Updates from Staff

FY21 Special Projects Grant funding / applications: Staff provided brief overview of 8 applications totaling requests of \$48,618. One organization has withdrawn application due to impacts of COVID-19 on their season reducing total requests to \$40,618. Scoring complete but City leadership has yet to notify Staff how much of the \$35,000 FY21 Special Projects Grant allocation is available for awarding out. Commission should wait to draft recommendation until they know the funding amount they are working with.

Art on the River: City direct investment in this year's AOTR was limited to \$1,200 down from the \$32,500 approved in the FY21 City budget due to COVID-19 impacts on general tax revenues by the City Manager on June 25, 2020. Staff directed that AOTR could move forward if funds could be raised through private sources; efforts to raise minimum of the \$18,000 needed to pay artists, juror, and new signage were unsuccessful and decision made to cancel this year's exhibit. Staff reported that focus will shift to planning for a 2021-22 exhibit including funding sources. Current artists have been invited to leave their sculptures in place through up to July 2021 with no additional stipend; 1 has agreed thus far and waiting for other responses. Staff will issue a press release on the cancellation. Commissioner Neuhaus will forward IAC Art Project Grant and Humanities Iowa Grants information as possible grant funding

options; idea of walking tours program mentioned to expand programming related to AOTR to expand funding opportunities.

Solidarity Mural / July 27, 2020 DEI Work Session with City Council: Staff reported that the project went smoothly. Commissioner Levasseur helped in her role as president of Dubuque County Fine Arts Society. Over 75 community members participated with lots of media coverage. Lowes Home Improvement assisted with supplies, Dubuque Rescue Mission and individuals assisted with food, and many independent donations both cash and in-kind as well. Informal report on Mural provided to City Manager near end of execution; Staff invited to formally report on project at City Council DEI Work Session on August 27. Email with survey to be to follow all who participated to in effort to capitalize on social justice engagement that the mural project has inspired; participants will also be provided information on getting involved with City Arts & Culture initiatives. Commissioner Siegert shared feedback on her own positive involvement in the project. Staff reminded Commission that T-shirts, prints, and other items are available for purchase through Envision to raise funds for local BLM efforts.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

MediaCom Arts & Culture Grant: Because of unknown nature of COVID-19's long term impact on City revenues, and thus the operating budget of the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, Staff discussed with Commission the increased need to stay aware of grant opportunities that might fund the Office's programs. Staff in conversation with Jill Connors and Teri Goodman will be researching and writing for more grant as time and opportunity allows. MediaCom Arts & Culture grant program currently accepting applications. Based on conversation with Jill Connors, Staff suggested that an application to support Commission's goal-setting workshop be pursued. Discussion followed based on Commissioner's awareness with MediaCom Arts & Culture grants that a specific public event or program may be a better fit. Commission recommended that Staff apply for funding for Arts Mean Business activities with dates to be determined due to COVID-19 concerns.

NEA Our Town: Staff discussed the NEA Our Town grant program due August 6, 2020 as a potential funding source for the Dubuque Renaissance Project. Request would seek to fund the hiring of a community-based artist-in-residence to serve as project director and for anticipated costs related comprehensive marketing of DRP in collaboration with Travel Dubuque. Discussion followed regarding need for Staff to have support in writing this grant; Geri Shafer, Ellen Miller, and contact suggested by DRP Steering Committee to be engaged by staff. Additional discussion on how much request might be for; Staff anticipates request of up to \$150,000. Commission supports Staff in pursuing application.

Current Events Reporting from Commissioners:

- Five Flags Dueling Dogs at Five Flags on schedule for end of July.
- DCFAS received grant from IAC for capacity building, website redesign.
- Exit Laughing will be open August 14, running through August 30.

- Train Wreck Productions' Digital Drinks & Dialogue continues on the 1st Sunday of the month
- Fly-By-Night Productions hosting virtual presentation of Taming of the Shrew starting August 13
- Loras Players to present *War of the Worlds* radio program on October 30.
- Julien's Journal highlighting education in August issue.
- Rising Star Theater Co also received an IAC capacity building grant. RSTC hosting virtual summer camps.

Public Input

Jean Tucker mentioned DSO season is on hold and Holiday concert is a maybe. DSO had considered using downtime to hold auditions but fear of travel to Iowa voiced by judges and musicians has canceled those plans. Staff suggested informing Mayor/City Council that DSO's experience with those living outside the state being unwilling to travel to Dubuque due to COVID-19.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Decker and seconded by Commissioner Siegert. Commissioners Levasseur, Halder, Riedel, Decker, Siegert, Daugherty, and Neuhaus voted to approve motion; Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 25, 2020

Respectfully submitted:

Jenni Petersen-Brant
Arts & Cultural Affairs Coordinator, City of Dubuque

These minutes were passed and approved on August 25, 2020.

Witnessed By: [Signature] (signature)

Ari Levasseur (printed)

Chair (officer position)