

Minutes  
**ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
April 23, 2013  
Lacy Board Room  
Carnegie-Stout Library

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Marina O'Rourke at 4:00 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with the Iowa Open Meeting Law.**

Commissioners present: Paul Hemmer, Ellen Henkels, Louise Kames, Marina O'Rourke, Sue Riedel, Gina Siegert, Julie Steffen  
Staff present: Jerelyn O'Connor, Jan Stoffel

**Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2013.** Motion made by Henkels seconded by Riedel to approve minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Review and Scoring of FY 2104 Operating Grant Applications**

**Bell Tower Productions, introduced by Hemmer. (Riedel abstained)**

Admirable track record with summer program. They target comedy and musicals but not drama. They are achieving goals with hearing assistance goal. Strong ticket sales. Good job addressing accessibility issues. Seem to be having a dialog with the audience. They try to use their facility as much as possible. They receive multiple grants and awards from other entities besides the City. Could have included the fact they are in a historical building. Good expansion into high school. Stable financially –safe cushion of cash flow.

**Colts Drum and Bugle, introduced by Henkels**

They have evaluated what are their priorities are better than other corps in Iowa (Ankeny) and nationally. They offer free use of their hall and collaborate with Prescott school. They have 5 youth groups and many educational opportunities. They have reason to be proud of work, and will host corps in Iowa/region. Senior High Color Guard has received awards because they are fed by Colts program. Staff does outreach, and they have just celebrated 50 years. Stable budget has grown. Present business plan is reworked and good. Planning for the future is done. This is the best grant ever written from them. Restructuring with the executive director and development director makes sense. Nice to see they address economic issues – good flexibility in planning for the unknown. They give all kids a platform for success and are nationally known – a trophy in our community.

**Arboretum, introduced by Louis Kames**

They have a mission of culture and beauty. No admission fee. They host Broad Strokes, a painting group and partner with many other community groups. They have a good outreach program to seniors by arranging tours from nursing homes. (They use

the term senior instead of elderly.) The new executive director shows strong leadership, extensive fundraising experience, and strong financial back ground. They are undertaking a long range planning session in 2013. The Japanese Garden and hosta gardens provide Monet reflections. They have over 300 volunteers! Nice to see the growth in ability to hire staff. The fact that there will be a deficit is understandable because of new director. They have solid donations. They have purchased Art on River sculptures. They allow community service hours and teach participants a new skill. What they have done with just volunteers is amazing. They have between 42,000-65,000 visits per year.

**Dubuque Arts Council, introduced by Riedel (Hemmer and Siegert abstained)**

They have been successful for 40 years. The Artist in Residence program is excellent. Free study packets are provided to all of the schools involved. Music in the Gardens and the use of the trolley help attract audiences from downtown. They pay artists and promote local artists. They have a better long-range plan and solid fundraising. They do remarkable things with volunteers and ½ time staff. They constantly solicit feedback from teachers. They have served over 30,000 children from our area already. They have on- going evaluation and measure success regularly. They know their core audience and greatly assist the schools in art education. Nice variety of artists, however including more visual arts, poetry, drama, or puppeteers would be good.

**Dubuque Chorale, introduced by Hemmer.**

They have a new mission statement and provide good outreach into the community. They have had success with fundraising. Members provide feedback on program. Provide outlet for local singers to work with good music. They have three non-singers on the Board which is good for broader view. The collaboration shown with “I Have Singing” project included digital, poetry, historical and cultural elements and was excellent. They have a vocal music youth program. They are making vocal music more accessible in the community, not elite, with broader appeal. They have been around for 40 years and do an excellent job in programming. They provide another performance outlet for non-professionals outside of church choirs. They are part of the cultural vibrancy in the community.

**Dubuque County Fine Arts Society, introduced by O’Rourke. (Steffen abstained.)**

Have been a staple in the arts community for many years. They work to nurture art and artists, and focus on underserved groups with a wide variety of offerings. They have reopened the Nash Gallery in a new space and it is not clear how much that will be open. It is very reliant on college artists. They are an incubator for cultural groups and seem to be looking for community arts space. They sponsored the first art slam in the community. They are responsible for Dubuque Fest, one of the largest festivals in the City. They have talent on the board. The organization would benefit from part-time staff, focused leadership, a strategic plan and unified focus. There are many pieces to the organization with episodic leadership. Past achievements were through Voices.

**Dubuque County Historical Society, introduced by Siegert.**

Main cultural institution concerning river heritage with a good mission. Focus of historical society started with the Jail House Gallery, archives and the Ham House, but most effort and money goes to the River Museum. It seems at times if it is more of a business than a not for profit with the Mississippi River Museum, and the core historical aspect takes a back seat. Board is very good and well positioned. It is an organization that combines arts, history and cultural elements. Management is extensive and well educated. Do some of the staff positions overlap? It has a great impact on Dubuque's economy and is the focal point of tourism. It has appeal for all ages. The Museum showcase hits all the marks, but should the Historical Society be its own group? They provide excellent opportunities to learn. The Historical Society serves 170,000 people each year.

**Dubuque Main Street, Inc., introduced by Steffen.**

Demonstrates how to capitalize on culture that is here. One of the first organizations to show the economic benefit of the arts. All that Jazz secures good bands and is very popular. Facilitation of partners in the Millwork District is notable. Encourages great partnerships and serves as a conduit for exchanges. Does it have an adequate budget to grow? Goals are tied to City goals and at times the organization seems like an extension of the City. The Fall into Art event is well organized and great effort goes into the Farmers Market and Architecture Days. The budget is a bit problematic in separating Cultural Corridor from Main Street. There was a discrepancy on the budget sheet with amount of operating expenses from last full year and with the \$90,000 in-kind item for the projected budget. Staff will clarify for next meeting.

**Dubuque Museum of Art, introduced by Riedel. (Steffen abstained.)**

Serving Dubuque for 140 years, the DSO is the oldest cultural institution in Iowa, with an excellent mission, good partnerships and expanded fundraising. It is doing planning for a large capital campaign. It has expanded educational programs for children to advise home-schoolers about art curriculum. Their brown bag talks are very good. Outreach at Maria House and Teresa Shelter is very good. Admission is free and they have many ongoing partners. They have stretched their organization beyond their walls; there is no place to really show their collection. The City at Work exhibit was well done and a great opportunity to expand the audience base. Is revenue adequate?

**Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, introduced by Henkels.**

Their programming hits all of the goals. They provide live music at the Arboretum and free open rehearsals and strong youth programs with NISOM. The financials are very strong with a newly revised strategy. They have a proven track record and have received three NEA grants. The new Executive Director has a strong background specifically in symphony management. They used economic impact data from the City's economic impact of the arts study in the grant. Mentorship of 4th graders taking up musical instruments is good. They are expanding audiences out of symphony hall through Voices, the Mississippi Moon Bar and the Julien Dubuque International Film Festival. Marketing is extremely well done and addresses social media possibilities.

**Fly-By-Night Productions, introduced by Kames.**

Celebrating its 30th year anniversary, its mission is to entertain, educate and expand, which it does very well. They are looking to revitalize and have good collaborations. Funding comes from diverse sources and volunteers and is not grant dependent. It holds artists in high regard. It seeks to a small intimate theater experience. They have a unique niche. Adaptable in offerings – The City at Work play was excellent. The application could have better addressed the City goals.

**The Grand Opera House, Introduced by Siegert. (Hemmer abstained)**

The mission includes the preservation of the historical building as a venue. The marketing to fill the seats is good. Outreach strong to young non-professionals through partnership with high school youth. Collaboration with the silent film project. is good. The management is stable and is looking to ramp up fundraising. They are looking at the ticket sales procedure to make it more streamlined. The Summer Theater program provides an additional outlet in the community. The application addresses what works and what doesn't very well. Offerings bring in a large audience within a 200 mile radius. The budget sheet of the application showed some discrepancies as to the amount of operating expenses for the previous full year. Staff will clarify.

**Julien Dubuque International Film Festival, introduced by O'Rourke.**

The recent film festival had lots of variety and diversity and was affordable. Were there some accessibility issues with some of the venues? It is a great event for Dubuque and has much potential. The financial reporting of the organization needs much improvement. The commission has a responsibility to to taxpayers to fund financially sound organizations, and it is hard to determine that on paper for this organization based on past procedures. Staff noted that the organization has made it clear that new procedures for record keeping are underway and will be used to construct the financial report on the 2013 film festival. When those reports are finished, they will be forwarded. The intentions and vision of the group are great, but organizational strength is needed as well as exact measurement of sales, revenues, expenditures and attendance.

**Matter, Inc., introduced by Riedel.**

Matter still needs to work on awareness of name and location change. New location a good fit in the Millwork district, serving on average 31 people per day from all age groups. It is able to keep offerings affordable and accessible. They have a talented and passionate leader who is not afraid to test the waters. There is evidence that they have responded to Commission suggestion to have a more focused strategic plan. The ability to secure grants is impressive, but there is still dependence upon grant funding. The field trips and Lego lab have much potential. It seems that they have opportunity to evaluate their programs but they do not report any evaluation. This application is the best written from them so far. Creating an expo event could be a big, expensive proposition. Staff will determine the difference between government grants and direct public support grants.

### **Northeast Iowa School of Music, introduced by Steffen.**

It is fun to watch this group as it expands and grows, increases outreach and sustains its efforts. They look for new opportunities to extend their reach and have increased enrollment by 30%. They are engaging students and families in fundraising and teaching them what it takes to run an arts group. They finish in the black and have secured a nice major gift. The quality of staff and instructors is high. They do a great job of engaging students while they are young. Their grant writing has greatly improved.

### **Rising Star, Introduced by Henkels.**

The organization has really taken off. The mission is not stated clearly, but application meets all of the cultural goals and shows great collaborations with Prescott School, and utilizes different venues such as the Alliant Amphitheatre and AY McDonald Park. Everyone can participate, no one is rejected. They have established a fundraising committee and are looking to form an endowment. The artistic director is very well qualified. Three summer shows attract 700 people. Outreach includes daycare performances and programming in the Millwork District. Good measurement of audiences. It is a good time to re-evaluate mission/plan. Could be more creative in show selection. Commission suggested avoiding dependence upon grant funding.

After reviewing the grants, the Commissioners took a break to score the grants. Those scores are:

	hemmer	henkels	kames	o'rourke	riedel	siegert	steffen	average
Dubuque Symphony Orchestra	100	99	100	100	100	98	97	99.1
Colts Drum & Bugle	100	93	95	96	93	99	91	95.3
Dubuque Arts Council	A	88	100	96	94	A	93	94.2
Bell Tower Productions	94	98	95	95	A	87	95	94
Northeast Iowa School of Music	96	98	97	95	92	84	94	93.7
Dubuque Museum of Art	97	95	95	95	98	79	A	93.2
Dubuque County Historical	88	94	91	95	99	67	93	89.6
Dubuque Chorale	100	84	95	95	85	79	86	89.1
Fly-By-Night Productions	93	84	92	85	90	83	90	88.1
Dubuque Arboretum Association	92	90	85	95	93	65	84	86.3
Grand Opera House	A	74	90	95	90	74	90	85.5
Dubuque Main Street Inc.	83	85	90	75	92	87	86	85.4
Rising Star Theatre Company	86	82	94	89	85	73	87	85.1
Dubuque County Fine Arts	92	86	70	95	80	81	A	84
Matter	83	74	84	60	86	82	88	79.6
Julien Dubuque International	86	68	60	55	59	74	69	67.3

**INFORMATION SHARING**

Commissioner Henkels will attend the 2103 Americans for the Arts national conference in June in Pittsburgh with staff member Stoffel.

**ADJOURNMENT**


Motion by Hemmer, seconded by Henkels, to adjourn. Motion passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2013, at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Stoffel  
Arts and Cultural Affairs Coordinator

These minutes were passed and approved on

May 28, 2013

  
Sue Riedel, Secretary