

CITY OF SURPRISE
ARTS AND CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – Approved

May 1, 2023 / 6:00 PM

Community Room
16000 NORTH CIVIC CENTER PLAZA
SURPRISE, ARIZONA 85374

CALL TO ORDER:

A. Roll Call

Chair Rhiannon Miett, Vice-Chair Kathie Morgan, Commission members, Susan deJong, Margaret Lieu, Jo Grant, Christopher Whitwell and Jay Lickus.

Staff: Danielle Osborne - HSCV Administrator, Julie Akerly – Arts & Culture Manager, Heather Donaldson – Arts, Culture & Library Management Analyst, Sr., Kelsey Lamphier – Arts, Culture & Library Director and Robert Wingo – City Attorney.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Current Events Reports

Chair Miett moved this section to the end of the agenda for efficiency.

D. Staff Reports

None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

None.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS – NON PUBLIC HEARING

Item 1 – Consideration and action pertaining to the minutes of the April 3, 2023 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting.

Commissioner Jo Grant moved to approve the April 3, 2023 Arts & Cultural Advisory Commission meeting minutes. Vice Chair Kathie Morgan 2nd. 7 Yes votes. Motion carried.

Item 2 – Consideration and action pertaining to the Arts & Culture Grand funding recommendations.

Ms. Osborne provided an overview of the grant application review procedures for the 2024 grant cycle and announced that presentations would be conducted in the order in which the applications were received. She also stated that the commission would take action to recommend prospective awardees to the Surprise City Council, and that all decisions by

Council were final. She asked that any commissioners who wish to abstain from any items do so prior to the presentations and advised that those commissioners should not participate in any discussion about the application or proposals.

City Attorney Wingo advised the Commission that if anyone would be recusing themselves from voting on a proposal then they would have to recuse themselves from the entire process. He explained that there is no legal conflict of interest if a commissioner is a non-salaried officer, member, or board member of any organization who is applying for a grant.

There were no commissioners who elected to recuse themselves from the 2024 grant cycle process after receiving the explanation from City Attorney Wingo.

Ms. Osborne advised the Commission that the West Valley Arts Council has been disqualified from participating with their application packet as their annual report is pending approval with the Arizona Corporation Commission at this time, and all their scores have been removed from the cumulative scores in this process.

Ms. Osborne shared with the Commission that Tina Ferguson of HeARTsy was not able to make it to the meeting due to a medical issue. Ms. Osborne read a statement that Ms. Ferguson sent to be read into the record.

Commissioner Lieu is concerned about the applicant stating they will be working with the Parks and Recreation department when there is no such agreement. She stated that this puts undue pressure on the City that was not previously discussed or agreed upon. She is also concerned that the application says they have not secured any locations which should be done already. She also noted that there were no letters provided from partners saying they are willing to or able to accommodate this program. Chair Miett suggested deleting this application from the grant process as they do not meet the criteria as they have not secured the locations for the programming. She asked if a motion would be necessary to pull the application from the process. City Attorney Wingo advised that motions should be limited for recommendations to Council.

WHAM Executive Director, Connie Whitlock, made two presentations to the commission.

Vice-Chair Morgan asked if there is a limited number of seats for either of the programs and if anyone has a preference between students and the public. She also inquired about how people will know about the programs. Ms. Whitlock advised that both programs are on a first come first served basis and will be advertised on Facebook, with flyers, and through word of mouth. Commissioner deJong asked how the public will become aware of these programs. Vice-Chair Morgan asked if the art program will be part of the students' tuition. Ms. Whitlock advised that Ottawa students receive 2 ½ hours of professional growth per session, and therefore they would receive 2 ½ credits for the art program which would take place on the Ottawa personal growth days (Wednesdays). She also advised that this program will be free to the public.

Commissioner Lickus confirmed with Ms. Whitlock that the students would receive college credits for this program and advised the commission that they cannot fund any programs involving post-secondary degrees per the grant guidelines. Chair Miett confirmed that there are no credits received for the poetry program and said that she thinks the program is fun and creative. Commissioner Grant mentioned that she hopes

there is a way to keep track of the student and public participation numbers for the poetry program.

Honor Dance founder, Rachel Eastburn, made a presentation to the commission.

Vice-Chair Morgan proposed that the classes take place at community-based sites and asked if there have been any location commitments made. Ms. Eastburn advised that she is working with the Dysart Unified School District and has received letters of support. Once she has the funding, they have agreed to provide program sites. Vice-Chair Morgan asked what percentage of Surprise students in the proposed program age range are underserved. Ms. Eastburn advised that they don't ask the students to provide that information. She stated that all the program locations are within the Surprise school district boundaries. Commissioner deJong commented that the Dens Club is for students staying after school. Vice-Chair Morgan asked how they quantify the number of underserved participants. Ms. Eastburn responded that they rely on the program managers from the school district who know the students and families.

Vice-Chair Morgan asked if the instructors are on staff or contract based. Ms. Eastburn responded that the instructors are paid and that there is not a prescribed curriculum, so classes are suitable for all participating students. Commissioner deJong asked if DUSD provides anything besides the facility. Ms. Eastburn advised that DUSD handles the permission slips, administration duties, and coordination efforts for the participants' registration. Chair Miett inquired as to who has funded this program in the past. Ms. Eastburn informed the commission that the program has been funded through donations from public, friends, corporate and business donations, and a small grant in the past. She also advised that she obtained the funding and not DUSD.

Commissioner Lieu asked if the applicant has applied for any additional grants for this program in this fiscal year. Ms. Eastburn said that she has applied for the Surprise Community Outreach Grant for the next school year. Commissioner Lieu asked if the program could accommodate participants with different mobilities. Ms. Eastburn responded that they try to make accommodations for every child to touch the arts. Commissioner Lieu noted that the grant application did not provide a means of measurable results and asked what method is used to measure success. Ms. Eastburn responded that they measure success through program growth, number of students provided with services, number of sites hosting programs, and number of hours taught.

One Step Beyond (OSBI) Grant Writer, Jacquelyn Ahrenberg, made a presentation to the commission.

Commissioner Lickus asked if this program is limited to OSBI members. Ms. Ahrenberg responded that it is. Commissioner Lickus inquired as to the budget breakdown for materials, etc. Ms. Ahrenberg advised that materials cost 2/3 of the budget and the items that they need to create the art with, including a kiln, cost 1/3 of budget. Commissioner Grant asked if the remainder of the program budget, outside of the \$5,000.00 requested this evening, would be paid by corporate sponsors. Ms. Ahrenberg responded that this is correct. The funds are raised through an art showcase festival which will be taking place on May 7th where people can buy the art. They also had a show at Arts HQ and where they sold the art. Chair Miett asked how long the equipment funded with this grant would last. Ms. Ahrenberg replied that the equipment should last at least 5 years however not the consumables. Commissioner Lieu asked if there are measurable results for the

program. Ms. Ahrenberg responded that the outcomes are all qualitative. OSBI chose this type of art for the visually impaired so they can touch the glass and arrange it without seeing it.

Stage Left Productions Managing Artistic Director, Cody Dull, made a presentation to the commission.

Vice-Chair Morgan identified an error in the proposed income within the application packet. Mr. Dull advised that there was a mistake in the application packet and the numbers reflected as proposed income were identified as actual current numbers to date. Commissioner Lickus asked what the average ticket price is for a performance. Mr. Dull advised that full youth tickets cost \$15.00 for youth plays and \$20.00 for musicals and adult tickets cost \$30.00. Chair Mielt asked if the presenters are paid to be on the Board. Mr. Dull advised that he is a paid managing artistic director but not a paid board member. Commissioner Lickus asked how many shows are put on each year. Mr. Dull advised that they put on an average of 12 to 13 shows a year and 80% of the patrons are from Surprise.

Stage Left Productions Youth/Education Director, Amber Ryan, made a presentation to the commission.

Chair Mielt advised that Stage Left Productions is in Surprise and is the only community theater in Surprise. She asked if the funds they are requesting for this program will be used as a tuition fee. Ms. Ryan advised that they are asking for funds for production fees, royalties, etc. These funds are meant to cover production costs, costumes, sets, scripts, etc. Overhead costs are about \$8,000 per show. Stage Left Production charges close to half of what most theaters charge. Students pay anywhere from \$150 - \$200 per show. These grant funds would allow Stage Left to keep it at this rate. Commissioner Lieu asked how many students go through the program. Ms. Ryan responded that there are an average of 15 students in each show equaling approximately 150 students.

The Vista Center for the Arts Board Secretary, Kathy Knecht, made two presentations to the commission.

Commissioner deJong stated that it appears that The Vista is succeeding each year, and she asked if they think the success is a result of giving away tickets.

Ms. Knecht stated that when people come to see a show, that is when they will buy a VIP pass and tell their friends about The Vista. She advised that the Vista is on an upward cycle, experiencing great momentum, and they would like to stay on that trajectory.

Commissioner Lieu asked if the free tickets go to Surprise residents, since the commission's goal is to see the grant funds benefit the Surprise community.

Ms. Knecht responded that all outreach efforts take place in the West Valley to help ensure the success of the theater.

Commissioner Lieu commented that bringing people in for tourism is good for the City of Surprise.

Ms. Knecht presented the second proposal by The Vista to the commission.

Vice-Chair Morgan advised that she went to the show last year and brought 28 people, and not one of them knew it was a culminating event to city's MLK day event. She believes it needs to be laid out differently, and if it is going to be culminating event then that message needs to be thought out as to how it can be related to that day. Ms. Knecht responded that they are going into it with fresh eyes this year, and they want to cross promote with the city's MLK Day event. They would like to make it a unified event. Vice-Chair Morgan asked if the City will be contributing any funds for this event. Ms. Knecht advised that they are not asking the City for any funds, and they are only requesting this grant. Vice-Chair Morgan commented that there is no quantifiable data for this event, and she would like to see specific measures. Ms. Knecht responded that The Drifters show last year was one of the sold-out shows. The group this year will be one of the biggest names they intend to bring to the Vista.

Ground Floor Artists' Executive Director, Jessica Pierce, made a presentation to the commission.

Commissioner deJong thinks this is a very interesting and ambitious plan. She commented that they are basically starting an art school in Surprise. She asked how they would be able to start this in one month. Ms. Pierce advised that applications are ready and once they are approved for the grant funds, they will be able to begin the first half of the program. They will put out calls to artists for the second half of the program, and they have backup instructors. Commissioner deJong asked if they have students lined up for the program. Ms. Pierce responded that they have some students already, however they are not at full capacity yet. Commissioner Lieu stated that this sounds like amazing program. She advised that she is a teacher, and she is responsible for paying for her own fingerprint clearance card. She is concerned about having the city pay for instructors' fingerprint cards. Ms. Pierce advised that they are willing to alter that requirement and can be transparent with instructors that they must provide fingerprint clearance cards for themselves. They are open to omitting this line item from the budget.

Commissioner Lieu noted that in the budget there is a \$400 monthly gallery rental fee and asked if that meant that Ground Floor is charging itself. Ms. Pierce responded that the monthly fee is included because the program would be utilizing available gallery space which someone else would be paying for, so it is included in the budget as it is not free.

Commissioner Lieu asked for more details about Ground Floor Artists' overall. She noted she is not seeing any other funding sources listed, and she is concerned that they are asking the city to pay for the gallery space and classrooms. She asked if there is anything that Ground Floor Artists is paying for. Ms. Pierce pointed out that GFA pays rent for their facilities.

Commissioner Lieu is concerned with the operational ask.

Chair Miett asked if they could conduct a part of the program if they are not awarded the entire amount of \$30,000.00. Ms. Pierce replied that they could conduct a part of the program depending on what would be awarded. Vice-Chair Morgan asked what the bottom line to the cost would be if the program is to be altered. Ms. Pierce responded that it would depend on the amount funded.

Vice-Chair Morgan suggested that the Commission provide parameters of how funds can be spent but was curious to know if Ground Floor could work within those parameters.

Commissioner deJong asked if they have considered other grants or funding sources. Ms. Pierce advised they have not. This is the first grant they have ever applied for.

Chair Miett commented that this is a great program, and a lot of thought went into this. Commissioner Grant noted that the timeline is very short. She suggested that with them targeting title one schools and charging their students, a lot of families won't be able to afford the program. She asked if there will there be a waiver. Ms. Pierce advised that there will not be a waiver of the \$40 membership. The grant would support the \$40 membership, not the students. The whole program would be free to the teens.

Commissioner Grant asked how they are going to track the impact the of the program on students over time. Ms. Pierce advised that they would like for the younger students to sign up for additional classes and with their tracking up until they exit the program, hopefully this is impressionable enough until they graduate and go on to what is next. Ground Floor Artists would keep in contact with them and their family.

Commissioner Lieu asked what would happen if a student were not able to complete the program. Ms. Pierce advised that students would have an allotted timeline, and they can miss three classes out of 52 classes in order to get a graduation certificate. Vice-Chair Morgan would like to see tracking of students that don't complete the program in order to ascertain why. Commissioner Grant asked when the classes would take place. Ms. Pierce responded that they are looking at Mondays so far but have also talked about Saturdays or Sundays.

Vice-Chair Morgan commented that this program is robust, and she is not so sure an 8th grader is at the level of this program. She thinks that 8th graders are too young. Ms. Pierce responded that learning would look different for each student. In the second half of the program, younger students will have a different course than the older students, i.e. with the social media program. Which students will get which instruction will be built into the curriculum.

Commissioner Lieu asked if they already have instructors for all programs. Ms. Pierce responded that they do have instructors line up for first six months however they are still working on obtaining instructors for the second half of the program.

At 7:40 p.m. Commissioner Grant made a motion for the commission to take a brief recess. Commissioner Lieu 2nd. 7 yes votes. The commission recessed.

The commission reconvened at 8:03 p.m.

Ms. Osborne explained the rubric and presented the average scores and funding recommendations as provided by the commissioners.

The Commission agreed not to fund the HeARTsy grant request application to cover fine art classes for senior because it did not include location agreements which are a requirement in the grant guidelines.

The Commission agreed to fund the WHAM Art Association grant request for the Celebrating Poetry in Today's World program in the amount of \$4,000.00. They agreed not to fund the WHAM Art Association grant request for the Learning Art Techniques of Masters program as it does not follow the commission's grant guidelines as it cannot fund any programs involving post-secondary degrees.

Regarding the Honor Dance After School Program grant request, Chair Miett calculated that \$3,000.00 would fund 142 students in the program. Commissioner Lieu stated that they do have other funding sources so the amount they requested was not necessarily going to guarantee 400 students and that they were just expecting 400 students to go through the program. The Commission agreed to fund the Honor Dance After School program grant request in the amount of \$3,000.00.

Commissioner Lickus stated that he was surprised at the way the One Step Beyond Inc. Glass Fusing grant application was written which was why he feels they should not be awarded any grant funding. Commissioner deJong agreed that other applications were much easier to read. Vice-Chair Morgan also did not recommend any grant funding for OSBI because they have quite a bit of additional funding sources. Chair Miett reminded the Commission that while there are other funding sources available, they are not for the arts. Commissioner Grant mentioned that they stated that they have fundraised \$2M which she wondered if they could use for this art program. Vice-Chair Morgan asked the Commission to make funding decisions based on the merit of each individual program and what is it that they are requesting and how does the Commission see the merit (value and impact of benefit) of the grant award. Commissioner Lieu feels that this is an amazing program, however it doesn't impact or only benefit City of Surprise residents. It only benefits people already enrolled in their program and as this is money coming from public funding it should have the most impact to Surprise. Chair Miett questioned how the Commission defines impact and asked if the Commission thinks that the most people equals the most impact or does changing one person's life equal the most impact, and she stated that it's up to the Commission's interpretation. The Commission agreed not to fund the One Step Beyond Inc. Glass Fusing grant request.

Commissioner Lieu recommended that the Commission focus on the applications that the entire Commission agreed upon first regarding funding and amounts, and then they can see if there are any funds left over.

The Commission agreed to fund the Stage Left Productions – Subsidized Tickets grant request in the amount of \$3,000.00.

The Commission agreed to fund the Stage Left Productions – Theatre Youth Program grant request in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Vice-Chair Morgan stated she would like to award the full \$10,000.00 grant request to The Vista Center for the Arts Reimbursement for Complimentary Promotional Tickets because the award last year did help to propel them into the trajectory they are currently on. Commissioner Lieu was not in favor of awarding the full amount requested because of how the application was written. She did state that she knows there is a positive impact due to the promotional tickets, however she would rather see the small Stage Left theater get the additional help. Commissioner deJong feels that giving away free tickets is not going to get people to buy tickets. Vice-Chair Morgan agreed with Commissioner Lieu and stated that The Vista is competing with The Chandler Center for the Arts, the

Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, Del Webb and the Performing Arts in Wickenburg, and she think it needs more because it is competing on a broader base than a local community theater. The Commission agreed to fund The Vista Center for the Arts Reimbursement for Complimentary Promotional Tickets grant request in the amount of \$6,000.00. The Commission agreed not to fund The Vista Center for the Arts MLK Day Performance grant request and to spread those requested funds out to other applicants.

Commissioner Lieu stated that the Ground Floor Artists Next Generation Teen Art Program sounds like an amazing new program, and if this Commission had a ton of money we could fund the entire program, however she has concerns regarding certain parts of the funding. She stated that this program will impact 20 students, so she would be hesitant about full funding of a brand-new program with a lot of details that still need to be figured out. Commissioner deJong stated that her issue with this program is the timing of it. Chair Mielt stated that she would like to award them with some seed money to start with something small and see what they can do with it in their first year. Commissioner Grant stated she thinks they need to focus on high school juniors and seniors in the first year. Vice-Chair Morgan suggested that the Commission look at what they requested for art and materials, \$5,300, and award them with that amount. Chair Mielt reminded the Commission that this wouldn't include any funds for instructors. Commissioner Grant thinks they should be able to decide how they spend the grant funding. Commissioner Lickus stated that he feels that an award of anything less than the full requested amount of \$30,000 would mean that the program would fail. Commissioner Lieu said that when there a lot of unknowns (instructors, students, etc.) that concerns her. Vice-Chair Morgan said this is like a startup organization, and if there are any of these questions outstanding, they need to come back at a later date with the request. Commissioner deJong stated she would like to give them \$8,000 or \$9,000 and see how it goes. Commissioner Whitwell stated that he noticed that they are dependent on this funding for the program and that he really likes the program. He noted that the timeline is a bit small. Commissioner Grant said she is concerned that there are only 30 days to put the program together. The Commission agreed to fund the Ground Floor Artists Next Generation Teen Art Program grant request in the amount of \$9,000.00.

Chair Mielt noted that the Commission is granting funds to three organizations which have never received funding from the Commission before which is amazing, and which proves this program is working.

Commissioner Lieu moved to recommend the following grant award allocations:

- WHAM Art Association for the Celebrating Poetry in Today's World program - \$4,000.00
- Honor Dance After School Program - \$3,000.00
- Stage Left Theater Subsidized Ticket Program - \$3,000.00
- Stage Left Theater – Subsidized Theatre Youth Program - \$5,000.00
- The Vista Center for the Art's Promotional Ticket Program - \$6,000.00
- Ground Floor Artists Next Generation Teen Art Program - \$9,000.00

Commissioner deJong 2nd. 7 Yes votes. Motion carried.

Other Business and Future Agenda Items:

None

Current Events and Reports:

None

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn 8:55 p.m. – Commissioner Grant. Commissioner deJong 2nd. 7 Yes votes. Motion carried.



Rhiannon Miett, Chair

ATTEST:



Heather Donaldson, Management Analyst – Sr.

CERTIFICATION:

I, Julie Akerly, Arts & Culture Manager for the City of Surprise Arts, Culture & Library Department, Maricopa County, Arizona, do hereby verify that these are the true and correct minutes of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission meeting held on May 1, 2023.



Julie Akerly, Arts & Culture Manager