

**SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION**  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting**  
**August 17, 2023**

*Note: The time, date, location, and agenda for this meeting were publicized as required by South Carolina laws covering meetings of public bodies.*

**Members Present**

Dee Crawford, Dacey Bell, Flavia Harton, Dr. Sarah Lynn Hayes, Barbara Nwokike, Linda Stern, Dr. Richard Webb, Shani Blann (Foundation President)

**Staff Present**

David Platts, Nick Boismenu, Angela Brewbaker, Ashley Brown, Nicki Brown, Tanisha Brown, Amelia Dupont, Jonathan Eason, Nigel Espey, Kevin Flarisee, Laura Marcus Green, Krista Grendze, Milly Hough, Daphne Hudson, Victoria McCurry, Kimberly Washburn Motte, La Ruchala Murphy, Amanda Noyes, Rebecca Pearson, Laurel Posey, Jason Rapp, Abby Rawl, Margot Strasburger, Amber Westbrook

**Call to Order**

Chair Dee Crawford called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to accept the June 15, 2023, minutes. Mrs. Stern made a motion; Mr. Bell seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**FY2023 Fourth Quarter Financials**

Finance Director Angela Brewbaker reviewed the FY2023 fourth quarter financial statements. The cash balance as of June 30 included \$286,896 in state carryforward. The ESSER III cash balance reflects the decision to expend some arts learning costs from EIA funds and state funds, rather than ESSER, to spend down EIA carryforward and to meet the state proviso requiring 70 percent of state appropriations be spent on grants.

Ms. Brewbaker reviewed the Statement of Activities and encouraged Commissioners to review the ending income and expenditures. Some administration costs increased, partly due to upfitting new staff with equipment and software. The agency's contractual agreement for IT services with the state also increased.

Statewide arts services reflects all program expenses and all grantmaking. For FY2023, several program expenses were combined into one line, for example, panel fees, consulting costs, and software.

Ms. Brewbaker reported that the agency successfully completed the annual audit mandated by the state and received recommendations for creating new procedures to support good practices already in place.

Mr. Platts commended Ms. Brewbaker and Accountant Daphne Hudson for their work with the audit and year-end closeout, which occurred simultaneously.

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the FY2023 fourth quarter financials as presented. Mrs. Harton moved to accept. Mrs. Nwokike seconded. The motion was approved.

## **FY2024 Budget Update**

Ms. Brewbaker reminded the board that the budget approved at the June meeting was tentative because the state had not finalized the overall budget at that time. With the official budget now in place, the board is asked to again review and approve the FY2024 budget. No additional line items have been added since the June approval, but income has been updated to reflect the actual carryforward amounts and some planned expenses have increased slightly, such as the contract for IT services mentioned earlier.

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the FY2024 budget as amended. Mr. Bell moved to accept. Mrs. Stern seconded. The motion was approved.

## **Grant Requests**

Deputy Director Ashley Brown reviewed a request to add additional funds to FY2024 grant categories already approved at the June meeting:

- General Operating Support \$500,000
- Operating Support for Small Organizations \$50,000
- Horizon Opportunity \$20,000

**TOTAL REQUEST: \$570,000**

Grantees already awarded operating support grants will receive an increase with this approval. Horizon Opportunity grants are used by staff working to place grants in opportunity counties. This year, the entire program staff has quarterly goals to award Horizon Opportunity grants. Ms. Brown reminded the board that Tier One counties have averaged less than one grant over three years, and Tier Two counties have averaged less than two grants over three years. Tier Three counties have moved off the official opportunity county list, but staff continue to pay close attention to the number of grants awarded to ensure continued progress.

Dr. Hayes made a motion to approve the grant request. Dr. Webb seconded. The motion passed.

## **Data Visualization/Opportunity County Report**

Senior Deputy Director Milly Hough shared that the agency's goal of upgrading technology resources – software and hardware – has been made possible by additional funds. One of the new platforms recently purchased is Tableau, a data visualization software. She asked Data Strategist Jonathan Eason to create and present the annual Opportunity County report in Tableau to demonstrate its capabilities.

Mr. Eason stated that Tableau reports can be used to simplify complex data and tell multiple stories at the same time to illustrate impact. He first presented the current list of opportunity counties in a Word document and then demonstrated the same information in an interactive Tableau report of counties on a state map. The Tableau report also allows the ability to “drill down” to view just one county's data or to view multiple counties while comparing the number of annual grants and the three-year grants average.

Mr. Eason also used the Tableau report to illustrate the growth or decline of grant awards for all counties and how changing circumstances can impact whether a planned grant is officially awarded. Laurens County School District, for example, was initially awarded a district arts coordinator grant, but was unable to accept the grant when the hiring was delayed. This resulted in Laurens County remaining on the Tier Two list. Similarly, a planned grant in Dillon County was not finalized, resulting in no grants directly awarded.

Mr. Eason plans to create a Tableau report to illustrate that some counties such as Dillon, receive services via grants awarded in other counties.

Ms. Crawford commented on the amount of information included in Mr. Eason's report compared to previous reports. Dr. Hayes commented on the quality of the presentation and having access to a powerful data tool that illustrates progress.

### **Foundation Update**

New S.C. Arts Foundation President Shani Blann introduced herself. She works for Unum, the parent company of Colonial Life, and joined the Arts Foundation board four years ago because Colonial Life was a long-time donor and supporter of the arts. She is a resident of Lexington and appreciates the importance of the arts and specifically arts education.

The Foundation ended the year in a positive financial position and is gearing up for several activities in the current year. The Find Joy in Art holiday card design is being finalized, and the annual fund drive, which relies heavily on Foundation board member donations, is in the works. The Foundation will also hold its first in-person gala in several years, with the exact date to be determined. Plans include reinvigorating existing corporate donor relationships, developing new connections, and being more strategic about outreach and communication to donors. Mrs. Stern asked for clarification about corporate donations. Ms. Blann replied that a corporation might be asked to help cover gala expenses in exchange for tickets or sponsor the annual fund drive and receive recognition based on the level of giving.

Three new members have joined the Foundation board: Dr. Stephanie Milling, chair of Dance Education at USC and an active S.C. Arts Alliance board member; Dr. Hope Rivers, president of Piedmont Technical College in Lexington; and Vida Miller of Pawleys Island, a long-time art gallery owner and former legislator.

### **Agency Updates**

Executive Director David Platts shared several updates:

#### Downstairs Renovation

The downstairs renovation project has met state requirements and has been approved to move forward, with an estimated time frame to start renovation in November.

#### New Staff Member

Mr. Platts introduced new Digital Communications Manager Amelia Dupont, who joined the staff July 24. She most recently worked as regional marketing manager for Campgrounds of America, creating and managing strategic marketing plans and managing websites and social media content for multiple campgrounds. She has also worked as a marketing specialist for a creative firm, managing social media accounts for seven brands.

#### Cultural Districts

Staff recently visited three cities in the process of applying for cultural district status: Aiken, Georgetown, and Hartsville. Each is in a different phase of application and process.

#### South Carolina Arts Alliance

The South Carolina Arts Alliance recently held a board retreat in Sumter. Sumter arts organizations co-hosted an Arts After Dark event, where House Speaker Murrell Smith was in attendance and shared supportive remarks about the arts, including how the arts had transformed downtown Sumter. Mr. Platts and Arts

Alliance Executive Director Melanie Colclough attended a meeting in Atlanta of all directors of state arts agencies and state arts alliances in the Southeast.

#### First Steps Partnership

The Arts Commission recently partnered with First Steps SC to sponsor the keynote address at their conference, which was attended by 600 First Steps teachers working at pre-K program sites. The keynote speaker was a representative of the Wolf Trap Foundation, a key SCAC Arts Grow SC partner working in the pre-K arts arena. Teacher response was overwhelmingly positive.

#### Other Activities

Mr. Platts had a productive conversation with S.C. Commerce Director Harry Lightsey about the economic impact of the arts and the creative industry on the state's tax revenue and the creative workforce that contributes to this industry.

Mr. Platts and Public Art Coordinator Margot Strasburger met with Duane Parrish, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, to discuss potential partnerships around public art projects inside state parks and on public trails, and the value that cultural districts bring to tourism in places outside of the largest cities. Mr. Platts is hopeful there will be opportunity for further discussions.

#### **Strategic Plan Update**

Ms. Hough referred to the Strategic Plan Progress Report included in the meeting packet and shared highlights from each of the five outcomes (full report attached to minutes.)

#### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **Adjournment**

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Nwokike made a motion, seconded by Mrs. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.