

SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION
Board of Commissioners Meeting
February 6, 2025

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, Sarah Lynn Hayes, Henry Horowitz, Barbara Nwokike, Linda Stern, Bhavna Vasudeva, Richard Webb

Staff Present

David Platts, Nick Boismenu, Angela Brewbaker, Ashley Brown, Daisha Calhoun, McKenzie Drake, Amelia Dupont, Maria Earl, Jonathan Eason, Krista Grendze, Milly Hough, Daphne Hudson, Wendy Jackson, Victoria McCurry, Amanda McSwine, Mikayla Moore, Kimberly Washburn Motte, Amanda Noyes, Laurel Posey, Johnathan Rabon, Jason Rapp, Abby Rawl, Ce Scott-Fitts, Chris Scudder, Hailey Yasinski

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the October 31, 2024, minutes. Mr. Horowitz made a motion; Mrs. Nwokike seconded. The minutes were approved.

FY2025 Second Quarter Financials

Finance Director Angela Brewbaker presented the Statement of Activities. Expenditures are in line with activities that typically take place in the second quarter. ESSER funds were fully expended by the end of calendar year 2024 with the final payment and documentation submitted. Several grant categories were paid out in the second quarter, such as operating support, the festivals grant, and Fellowships. Ms. Brewbaker reminded commissioners that they can review the various funding streams in the Statement of Activities by Source of Funds.

Ms. Brewbaker reviewed the balance sheet as of December 30, 2024. Although she submitted a request for NEA funds at the end of December, the transaction did not post until early January and is not yet reflected on the Balance Sheet. Ms. Brewbaker intends to draw down federal funds more frequently this year with plans to close two of the three open NEA grants. The NEA allows the SCAC to carry forward unspent funds for up to two years beyond the original grant period, but recent and planned expenditures of federal funds should allow closing of the FY2023 and FY2024 grants this fiscal year.

Mr. Horowitz asked a question about the current federal freeze on funds. Mr. Platts replied that staff is planning for various scenarios while we wait on more details. The NEA grant is on a reimbursement basis, so we submit a draw down request after we have expenditures. Mrs. Brewbaker added that she is prepared to submit another reimbursement request soon that would cover salaries and fringe expended from mid-December through early February.

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the second quarter financials as presented. Dr. Hayes made a motion; Mrs. Stern seconded. The motion passed.

Grants Request

Deputy Director Ashley Brown presented two grant requests:

- **Summer Arts Education Projects – up to \$170,000**

When ESSER funds were available, this grant was offered as a two-year grant but will now revert to a one-year cycle. This requested funding will support one-year awards for summer 2025 grants.

- **Folklife and Traditional Arts Projects - \$37,000**

The guidelines and application process for the Folklife and Traditional Arts Projects grant will be reviewed with the goal of launching improvements for FY27 applications. To continuing funding projects while the review is underway, FY25 grantees will be offered a grant to fund the same (or slightly revised) project for FY26 without having to re-apply for the grant.

(Recusals - Barbara Nwokike, Engaging Creative Minds and Sarah Lynn Hayes, Rock Hill Symphony.)

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the grant requests as presented. Mr. Bell made a motion; Mrs. Stern seconded. The motion passed.

Governor's Awards for the Arts Recommendations

Dr. Sarah Lynn Hayes, (commissioner representative on the awards panel) and Executive Director David Platts presented the panel recommendations for the 2025 Governor's Awards for the Arts.

Mr. Platts stated that the nomination pool was robust and competitive this year, with 51 total nominations. Dr. Hayes added that the quality of the applications was high, with stellar applications including excellent documentation of impact supported by data.

Recommended recipients:

- Artist - Wade Sellers, Columbia
- Individual - Dr. Gail Barnes, Columbia
- Arts in Education – Engaging Creative Minds, Charleston
- Government – Koger Center for the Arts, Columbia
- Organization – Sumter County Gallery of Art, Sumter

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to approve the awards recommendations as presented. Dr. Hayes made a motion; Mrs. Vasudeva seconded. The motion passed.

State Art Collection Update

Communications Director Jason Rapp announced that the State Art Collection has been added back to the website and is accessible to anyone at time. Staff have worked diligently to add images and artist information to the agency's Artwork Archive database, which serves as the source for the new State Art Collection web page. Mr. Rapp demonstrated how to navigate the web pages, including how to search for certain artists. All 466 works in the collection are represented by images, along with available artist information. Commissioners are the first group to see the new section dedicated to the collection, with a public rollout planned for the next few weeks. The loan policy and acquisition policy are also included in the new information. Ms. Scott-Fitts added that staff is working with Able SC to ensure the collection is accessible. Mr. Platts thanked staff involved in creating the database, curating the art being displayed in the building, and communicating about the collection.

Data Report

Data Strategist Jonathan Eason demonstrated a Tableau dashboard of FY24 grants, which is now available to the public on the website. Because it is interactive and includes so much information, Mr. Eason made an extra effort to ensure the dashboard has an intuitive, clean layout.

Viewers can choose several filters – such as county, specific grantee, or area of focus – to view the number of grants, dollars awarded, and impact beyond the original county where the grant was awarded. Using Tableau data visualization allows the agency to clearly illustrate the impact of grantmaking statewide by mapping activity location zip codes, which is data required by the NEA and collected from grantee final reports. In a response to a question from Ms. Nwokike regarding rural counties, Ms. Brown stated that the best way to understand how the SCAC is serving those counties is to focus on the impact instead of the number of grants awarded.

Mr. Eason reminded the board that the FY23 dashboard is also on the website.

Mrs. Vasudeva commended staff for a valuable advocacy tool that can be used to inform legislators about the agency's work in their districts.

Agency Updates

Executive Director David Platts reported that today's meeting is the last one for Commissioner Dacey Bell, who is moving to Louisiana to take a new job. Mr. Platts expressed appreciation for Mr. Bell's service on the board.

Mr. Platts reported that the federal Office of Management and Budget has directed federal agencies to freeze payments for grants and contracts. This includes the National Endowment for the Arts. This is new territory for both federal agencies and Congress, so there is much that is not clear currently. Staff is working on several scenarios to allot funds to priority needs while we await more information. Travel and some other administrative spending have been paused. Rolling grants closed just a few weeks early, with applicants already in the process of applying being allowed to complete their applications within a reasonable deadline. Mr. Platts assured commissioners that the agency has a fiscally responsible contingency plan to complete the current fiscal year if the remainder of the FY25 federal funds are not available.

The FY26 state budget request process kicked off October 1 with a presentation to the governor's staff, followed by the presentation to the House Ways and Means subcommittee January 15. The Senate Finance subcommittee presentation is scheduled for Feb. 19. The request is for \$7 million in new, recurring funds to support additional operating support applicants, increase access to the festivals grant, establish a cultural districts grant, and continue development of the new Arts Hub Regions.

Mr. Platts introduced three new staff members.

- Johnathan Rabon, who joined the staff January 2 in a new position – multimedia manager. Johnathan most recently worked as an integrated marketing producer at WLTX. He has worked as a media and facilities specialist for the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and as a production assistant at Prime and Prim Studio of the Arts. Johnathan earned a bachelor's degree in digital media and cinema from Columbia International University.
- Chris Scudder, who joined the staff January 2 as arts industry director. Chris most recently worked as development director at the Lancaster County Council of the Arts. He has worked as the grants and stewardship manager at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston-Salem, N.C., as grants officer at the Columbia Museum of Art, and at the University of South Carolina as director of

development for corporate and foundation relations. He holds a bachelor's degree in art history and political science from the University of South Carolina.

- Amanda McSwine joined the staff January 17 as grants manager. Amanda most recently worked as grants administrator for CivicSpark AmeriCorps Program/Public Health Institute. She has also worked for the United Way Association of South Carolina as deputy director. Amanda earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and theatre from Butler University in Indianapolis and a master's degree in social work from the University of South Carolina.

Mr. Platts mentioned that the S.C. Arts Alliance will present Arts Advocacy Week beginning February 10, with an Arts Summit on Wednesday, Feb. 12 in the Spearman Center downstairs. The Legislative Breakfast is Thursday, Feb. 13 beginning at 8 a.m. in the Blatt Building on the Statehouse grounds. After breakfast arts advocates from around the state will visit their legislative delegations to express their support for the arts and for the SCAC's budget request.

Strategic Plan Update

Senior Deputy Director Milly Hough shared an infographic of Canvass of the People highlights that will be given to Arts Summit participants next week. The infographic is a preview of the topics mentioned at the Canvass in-person forums and through the online survey. The infographic also includes details such as number of surveys completed, the number of forum attendees, and the form locations withing future Arts Hub Regions. The timing of the new Strategic Plan is on track for commissioners to review in April, with a final vote scheduled in June. The new plan will cover July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030.

Ms. Hough shared highlights of strategic plan accomplishments for second quarter FY25. (complete report attached.)

Board Member Updates

There were no board member updates.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

Mrs. Crawford called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Harton made a motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.