SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES • 18 June 2026

Thompson Construction Services, Sumter

Board Members Present

Flavia Harton (chair), Heidi Carey, David Hodges, Barbara Nwokike, Rip Parks, Jessica Rourke, Linda Stern, Danielle Thompson

- Absent: Bhavna Vasudeva (travel), proxy held by STERN.

Staff Present

In Person: David Platts, Ashley Brown, Ce Scott-Fitts, Kimberly Washburn Motte; Jonathan Eason, Wendy Jackson, Jason Rapp

Virtual: Angela Brewbaker, Daisha Calhoun, McKenzie Drake, Taylor Dublin, Amelia Dupont, Julia Greene, Krista Grendze, Trinity Howell, Wendy Jackson, Amanda McSwine, Mikayla Moore, Amanda Noyes, Laurel Posey, Johnathan Rabon, Abby Rawl, Harvee White, Hailey Yasinski

Others Present

Virtual: Amanda Garris (public), Ian Grenier (media), Jeff Robinson (public)

Call to Order

HARTON called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Executive Session

- HARTON called for a motion for the Board of Commissioners to enter executive session.
    - ROURKE made a motion.
    - STERN seconded.
- A vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously. The Commissioners and PLATTS entered Executive Session.
    - PARKS made a motion to exit Executive Session.
    - THOMPSON seconded.
- The Board exited Executive Session at 10:30.

Executive Session Business

Discussion in Executive Session was related to the search for a new Executive Director along with legal advice matters. No votes were taken.

Approval of April 2026 Minutes

Meeting minutes from the April 22 and April 23, 2026 meetings were presented for approval and/or comment.

- HARTON called for a motion to approve.
    - NWOKIKE motioned to approve. PARKS seconded.
- A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved as presented unanimously.

Grants Request

Before beginning a presentation of grants recommended for approval by category, BROWN made a statement for the order that Operating Support categories were to be voted on in a later meeting as announced the previous day (22 April 2026).

Recusals were noted for these Commissioners in the categories noted:

- CAREY (Term Arts Education Project Support).
- HODGES (Festivals and Partnerships).
- NWOKIKE (Partnerships).

BROWN outlined requests in the following grant categories:

- ARTS INDUSTRY
    - Folklife for orgs 16 grants totaling $88,583.
    - Public Art $86,315 for seven visual arts projects.
- ARTIST DEVELOPMENT
    - Fellowships had multiple categories where multiple people qualified for awards by rubric score (ties). All will receive funding. Rather than five category recipients, there will be eight awards totaling $80,000. BROWN shared that moving forward, we will note in the grant guidelines which section of the scoring rubric will serve as a tie breaker, should this occur again.
    - Emerging Artists for summer/fall projects. This is FY27 Rd1. $12,265 is recommended to cover seven grants.
    - Emerging Artist Alumni grant has one artist at $5,000.
        - HARTON asked a clarifying question about applying for this grant. Answered by BROWN and SCOTT-FITTS. Around 75 people qualify to apply. These must be previous emerging artist grantees.
        - PARKS asked a clarifying question about funding allocation from the overall pot per category. BROWN answered with examples about baselines for funding grants.
- ARTS LEARNING
    - Term Arts Education Projects request is $565,689. This would fund 45 grantees.
- MULTIPLE/OTHER
    - Barrier-Free Arts SC will have two cohorts this year. The category would provide $57,000 among 12 grantees.
    - The Festivals Programs grant would split $203,166 among 33 grantees recommended for funding.

    - Hub Services provides the five Arts Hub Region partners a total of $110,000.
    - Partnerships/Special Projects grants total $3,708,569

  NWOKIKE expressed thanks from Engaging Creative Minds for continued SCAC support. ECM summer camps have the highest enrollment this summer ever for them.

- NWOKIKE asked a clarifying question about getting grants in all counties. BROWN provided context that it is hard to know until all final reports are submitted and explained Opportunity Counties system.
- HARTON requested a motion to approve the recommended grants.
    - ROURKE motioned for the board to approve the funding as recommended. PARKS seconded.
- A vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

FY27 Budget

BROWN advised that, even though the new fiscal year begins in just days, there is not a budget set for FY27 because state appropriations are in conference committee for the House and Senate to agree on differences. BREWBAKER presented a flat (no change) budget. SCAC does know its partnership award from the National Endowment for the Arts and knows its NEA carryover funds. Agency income includes Education Improvement Act (EIA) funding, Expansion Arts funds from Coastal Community Foundation. The rent line is showing a considerable increase because of Arts Hub regions being opened.

- NWOKIKE asked clarifying question about America250 funding. Greenville Symphony, Arts & Heritage Center of North Augusta had projects SCAC helped to support.
- MOTTE explained NEA carryover funding from FY25 was used to purchase accessibility-enabling devices for Arts Hub Regions lending library.
- PLATTS pointed out that BREWBAKER frequently works in the context of three fiscal years.
- HODGES asked a question about expectations of funding from General Assembly conference committee.
    - There is a likelihood of a continuing resolution until committee finalizes budget.
    - Both chambers have provided additional funding, but in different pots (one in recurring funds, one in nonrecurring funds).
- PARKS asked clarifying question about which Hubs are operational. BROWN clarified that they all are; they do not each have a coordinator, but all hubs are operational.

    - MOTTE clarified that public rollout has not begun, should begin in a couple months. Some discussion centered on community development ensued.
- HARTON asked for a motion to approve flat funding budget to allow SCAC to operate as of July 1.
    - NWOKIKE made a motion to approve. THOMPSON seconded.
- A vote was taken, and the flat budget was approved unanimously.

Governor's Award Category Names

Discussion began around the idea of changing names of the categories within the South Carolina Governor's Awards for the Arts. BROWN said the name of the awards will not change, but the category names could be changed by the Commissioners. This discussion is to determine whether to name individual categories and, if so chosen, to decide upon a process for changing the names.

- HARTON asked clarifying question about forming a board committee by appointment.
- HODGES asked clarifying question.

There are three options for processes:

Option A	Nomination Driven
Option B	Application Driven
Option C	Board Driven

The options were outlined in the packet.

HARTON and HODGES praised the work that went into the proposed processes. HARTON opened discussion.

- HODGES expressed a desire for the category names to honor the deceased, which is possible in options A and C, per BROWN.
- HARTON requested a motion to entertain changing category names. STERN expressed misgivings on the idea.
    - HODGES motioned to proceed with a vote. THOMPSON seconded.
- A vote was taken, and the motion carried 7-2 in favor of changing the category names (In favor: Carey, Harton, Hodges, Nwokike, Parks, Rourke and Thompson; Against: Stern and Vasudeva).
- HARTON requested a motion on which option to use. ROURKE spoke in favor of option A. NWOKIKE spoke in favor of option C. HODGES spoke in favor of option A. NWOKIKE removed her favor for option C.
    - CAREY made a motion to approve Option A. ROURKE seconded.
- The motion to approve Option A was adopted unanimously.

Agency Updates

PLATTS provided agency updates on behalf of himself and BROWN. He made an off-the-cuff reflection of his tenure and that the agency was able to increase its income by $17 million over seven years (including one-time money). He credited the SCAC team for "saddling up" to go and make changes. He thanked the board for getting the opportunity to go from teaching music in North Augusta to his current position, which is a pleasure of a lifetime.

- HARTON expressed that he has done an outstanding job. No other comments provided.

David Platts Retirement Luncheon

- HARTON requested a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of lunch across the street at Hamptons, a restaurant owned and operated by THOMPSON.
    - STERN made a motion to enter Executive Session. PARKS seconded.
- The motion passed unanimously, and the Board and PLATTS entered executive session at 11:52 with BROWN, EASON, JACKSON, MOTTE, RAPP, and SCOTT FITTS invited as special guests.

Adjourn

- HARTON requested a motion to exit executive session and adjourn the June meeting.
    - CAREY made a motion to exit Executive Session. THOMPSON seconded.
- The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 1:02.

Executive Session Business

No SCAC business was discussed during executive session, but the food, conversation, and company were delightful and enjoyed by all present.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason L. Rapp