

Harford County Cultural Arts Board

Monday, November 6, 2023

Present: Chuck Bowden (Chairperson), Jessica Cleaver (Coordinator), Heidi Neff Chuffo, Chris Depkin (attended virtually), Sierra Keys (attended virtually), Peter McCallum, Christina McLoughlin, Bill Rothenbach, and Angie Sokolov.

Absent: Gigi Devanney, Karen Heppen, Erin Whipple, and Jessica Boyle-Tsottles who represents the Harford County Council were not in attendance.

- The meeting was brought to order by Chuck Bowden at 6:13 p.m..
- The consent agenda was addressed which consisted of the October 2, 2023 meeting minutes. Angie Sokolov moved to approve the revised meeting minutes and Heidi Neff Chuffo provided the second. This motion was approved unanimously.
- Three Arts in Education Grant requests were reviewed for consideration. Peter McCallum moved, and Chris Depkin provided the second, to approve the George D. Lisby “Cat in the Hat” grant request. This motion was approved unanimously. The Board decided to ask St. Joan of Arc to find more reasonably-priced bus transportation.
- A discussion ensued regarding potential specific guidelines for what legitimately can be funded in an Arts in Education grant request. No consensus was reached about whether trips to Washington DC will qualify for funding. Those opposed cited that State of Maryland funds should not be spent for out-of-state trips. Proponents extolled the wide array of invaluable experiences in which students can participate that can’t be replicated outside the nation’s capital. It was decided to keep this topic on future meeting agendas for discussion until a resolution is reached. Another discussion focused on whether refreshments and site rentals can be funded as part of Arts in Education grant requests. Since Maryland State arts Council guidelines do not permit either, the Board reasserted that all grant requests need to abide by these guidelines. The Board reached consensus that grant request guidelines for FY25 explicitly state that refreshments and site rentals are not eligible for funding.
- Two areas in Community Arts Development grants were addressed. First, a preliminary introductory discussion examined the funding disparity between larger, more “grant-savvy” groups that typically receive a greater percentage of funding than organizations that are smaller and more “loosely” organized. This discussion and examination of funding data will continue at future Board meetings. Second, assignments for Board ambassadorships were discussed and presented. The following three actions need to occur for each Board member: (a) go to the assigned organizations websites and review them; (b) follow assigned organizations on social media; and (c) sign up to receive assigned organizations’ newsletters. Preliminary organization ambassadorship assignments for Board members were shared via email.

- Jessica Cleaver made the Board aware of the following state-level events and encouraged members to participate in them: (a) the Maryland Citizens for the Arts Strategic Community Gathering on Thursday, November 16, 2023 in the Elkton Music Hall; and (b) the Maryland State Arts Council online strategic listening sessions on November 4, 2023.
- Two outreach opportunities have been extended to Jessica Cleaver through invitations and she made the Board aware of them. Interested individuals are encouraged to attend. Bel Air's 150-year celebration will occur on April 27, 2024. The African Diaspora Luncheon will be held at Harford Community College on December 5, 2023. The Board determined they would like attend both but not host a table at each. Available Board members are encouraged to plan to attend.
- The proposed Sponsorship Policy and Procedure was brought forth for discussion again. Jessica Cleaver suggested rather than "levels of funding that make sense," allowing eligible entities to request amounts within the context of a "cap." Guidelines and forms still need to be developed for critique and discussion.
- The upcoming Board meeting and Arts Groups Happy Hour dates from November, 2023 through June, 2024 were reviewed.
- The next meeting of the full Harford County Cultural Arts Board will be held on December 4, 2023. This meeting will be held at the Bel Air Library in the Conference Room on the mezzanine level.
- The meeting was formally concluded at 7:29 p.m. by Chuck Bowden.