

## Harford County Cultural Arts Board

Monday, November 7, 2022

Present: Chuck Bowden (Chairperson), Jessica Cleaver (Coordinator), Chris Depkin, Gigi Devanney, Emily Fadgen, Peter McCallum, Christina McLoughlin, Bill Rothenbach, Angie Sokolov, and Erin Whipple.

Absent: Karen Heppen, Heidi Neff Chuffo, Sierra Keys, Wendy Roberts, and Elizabeth Stevens. Aurora Kahoe who represents Councilman Chad Shrodes also was absent.

- The meeting was brought to order by Chuck Bowden at 6:05 p.m..
- The consent agenda was addressed which consisted of the following item—the October 3, 2022 meeting minutes. Angie Sokolov moved to approve this item and Chris Depkin provided the second. The consent agenda items was approved unanimously.
- Jessica Cleaver and Chuck Bowden facilitated a discussion that addressed an expressed interest in providing a virtual meeting option for those Board members who are not able to participate in person due to extenuating circumstances. While the prevailing opinion of Board members is that being present is preferred, consensus was reached that the virtual option be made available beginning at the next meeting. This is contingent upon the technology being in place to support the virtual meeting option.
- The Board discussed a request that was made for grant recipients to be able to use Harford County Public Library meeting space with the fee being waived. Jessica Cleaver will explore this possibility and the formal request to Mary Hastler will be made through a letter from the Harford County Cultural Arts Board.
- Gigi Devanney introduced a discussion about reassessing the Board’s goals for outreach and strategies to assess success. The central questions: “are we always addressing the pertinent audience?” and “are we using the best tools to communicate?” served as the guiding focal point for this discussion. Board members expressed the importance of in-person interactions with stakeholders but acknowledged that increasing the strategic use of various communication mechanisms is needed. In addition, the use of these mechanisms will need to be flexible and situation-dependent. One specific annual event, due to its nature and size, where the Board’s in-person presence seems to yield positive results is the Bel Air Arts Festival. Ideas for other forms of communication were: (a) Board business cards; (b) a hard copy calendar of events in a bookmark format; and (c) continually updating the current website and interacting with Facebook and other social media to increase their “robustness” and impact. Finally, to help assess success, arts organization that receives a grant should include the following question when surveying their audiences: “are you aware of the Harford County Cultural Arts Board?”
- Three specific initiatives for facilitating creative connections and utilizing the arts to build community were discussed. First, a key initiative discussed was planning the 2023

Arts Gathering and the Board members endorsed moving forward with this important networking event especially since it coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Harford County Cultural Arts Board. The second initiative would be quarterly happy hours organized/scheduled according to genre such as music, theater, and visual/performing arts with the first quarterly “kick-off” event being the Arts Gathering. The third initiative was assigning each Board member one or two grantees for the purpose of serving as their advocate, communicating with them periodically to see how their organizations are faring, and seeking their input regarding how to increase creative connections in the arts community.

- Chuck Bowden reviewed that remainder of the Board calendar for FY23 and highlighted key activities as well as important actions that must be accomplished. The grant application revisions that have been developed by Chris Depkin will be reviewed next month. Potential updates will be included in the Board meeting packet for discussion at the December 5, 2022 Board meeting.
- The next meeting of the full Harford County Cultural Arts Board will be held on December 5, 2022. This meeting will be held at the Abingdon Public Library. The January 9, 2023 Board meeting will be held at the Bel Air Public Library followed by a celebratory dinner at MaGerk’s Restaurant.
- The meeting was formally concluded at 7:31 p.m. by Chuck Bowden.