

**LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
Louisiana Municipal Association
700 N. 10th Street, Room 2
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
July 25, 2007
10:30 a.m.**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Ms. Weeks called the meeting to order at 10:47 a.m.

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members present:

Christine Weeks	Juana Woodard
Fred Zeagler	Mary Joseph (proxy to Brunner)
Angela Hammerli	Susan Reed
LeAnne Weill (proxy to Reed)	Susan Brunner
Susan Turner	

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members absent:

Jose Canseco	Marion Drennen
Neil Early (proxy to Weeks)	Anna B. Ferguson (proxy to Weeks)
Molly Sooter	Cynthia Warner Weirick

Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) staff present:

Veronique Le Melle	Pearlie Johnson
Maida Owens	Ann Russo
Vanessa Ledbetter	Bethany France
Kelly Pepper	Sparkle Hurst

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Joseph motioned to approve minutes and Mr. Zeagler seconded. Minutes approved as presented.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Weeks thanked the Division staff for their efforts with refining the grants process. She asked Ms. Le Melle to give a report on the RDA (Regional Distributing Agency) Process for this year. Ms. Le Melle informed the Council of the change in the review process for the RDA organizations, also known as LAA (Local Arts Agencies), or the Regional Arts Councils. During the Strategic Planning Assessment Process in 2004-2005, one of the concerns from constituents across the state was the RDAs in many regions were not there as partners but as competitors. Ms. Le Melle spoke about the RDAs becoming more of a voice, directly to the state, of the concerns in each of the regions. Ms. Le Melle and the RDAs came up with a process where they would no longer be eligible to apply directly to the state for funds in any of the grants categories. Instead, they would develop a performance plan process that would result in a non-competitive grant agreement with the state. This is the first year they are asking to do a performance plan. They have written and we have negotiated and accepted their performance plans. The Performance Plans are for 3 years.

We also changed the evaluation process. The RDAs felt the panel was allowed to comment and evaluate on things that were outside the written criteria. There is no longer the normal peer review panel process. The RDA panel consists of 2 out-of-state panelists with arts council background:

One was a fellow state arts council director, and the other had experience with regional arts councils. There was one in-state panelist who does not receive direct funding from any of the regional arts councils. Over a 2-day period the panel met with each one of the applicants and discussed the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities that were laid out in their performance plan. They conducted a 90-minute interview conversation process with each applicant. The panel then made a recommendation to Ms. Le Melle about the funding. Next year there will be another panel consisting of 3 panelists. The panel will review an evaluation of the organization's performance for their first year. Did the organization do what they said for the first year? If not, why? Are there any changes? What have they learned? What do they know differently? They will do the same thing the third year. The organization will then submit a new performance plan.

Ms. Weeks observed both days of the panel interviews. Each region presented a section on how they ran their DAF grant process, including timelines. It had to be in writing in a somewhat concise form. It made the RDAs and their directors look at all of the areas they are charged to serve. They were asked to specifically give demographic information about every parish within their region. They looked at population numbers, poverty levels, education levels, and the number of arts related organizations or those who serve as presenters. Many of the directors commented on how valuable the self-assessments were. Some of the lessons learned were regional, regarding the parish or the agency. Some of them were personal regarding their own management styles, where they spend their time, etc. The information that was provided in the application and in the performance plan will give the regional agency and division staff a more comprehensive view of those regions and parishes. It will also assist the Regional and Division staff to ask better questions when they are helping organizations gain greater capacity, and to continue to look at how they are serving the constituency. It identified a need for the regional staff to make more frequent visits to the parishes they serve. It highlighted a need across the state to continue to encourage organizations to better articulate what their accomplishments were, what their needs are, and the thinking that's going on to meet those needs in their regions. It raised awareness in many of the regions, which lead to an examination of their presence in non-urban areas. What kinds of overtures did they make to all types of artists?

The RDAs are looking more closely at how they use technology relative to staff; how they communicate with constituents; and reaching out to non-traditional audiences. Shreveport Regional Arts Council is hoping to do a website where artists will have pages, organizations can have pages, and ultimately they hope to be able to have a ticketing ability to go to one website. Another region has acquired programming to be able to do customizable emails according to what the individual constituent wants. St Tammany Parish, and some of the others are beginning to increase their use of public access television from rural areas. As the panel listened, they encouraged other regions to make use of what is already mandated availability to promote artist in their regions. There are one or two accessing 211, a non-profit website where people can sign up to be volunteers, or request volunteers if they are a non-profit organization. A lot of this has grown out of the Points of Light Foundation and those sorts of national efforts.

Many of the regional agencies looked at the relationships they need to form or have already formed. These include ways in which they communicate with their state and local governmental agencies, Convention and Visitors Bureaus, Civic organizations, Rotary or Lions Club, and such, to explain the whole cultural economy thing and get support that way. One region had plans for outreach to new citizens as a welcome new citizens art package to generate some positive impressions and perhaps the press. With the passing of the AIE Bill, many of the regions commented being ready to assist in arts-in-education implementation. Several addressed their needs and efforts in emergency preparedness, and how their regional organizations and artists have called on them.

The panel offered ideas in their conversation. It was a nice exchange of ideas. The RDAs expressed appreciation for the panel comments. The panelists next year will be able to ask pointed questions relative to how the first year went. What was accomplished? What did you learn? How does this impact what you're going to do in years 2 and 3? This is an opportunity to help the RDAs to continue to focus on the plan they submitted. The accountability with this and the year-to-year funding will help each region stay focused on what they said they were going to do. The panelist had thoroughly read the proposals that had been sent to them. They had good notes and pointed questions to ask. Ms. Weeks would have liked a few more questions that really focused on the plan itself, on making the RDA representatives give more information on why they chose this as one of their goals. It was very organized. The staff and the panelist were very helpful to the representatives. The panelists got a sense of the personality and the cultural strengths and differences in each region. They got a much better picture of Louisiana to take back with them.

Ms. Weeks attended the Southern Arts Federation (SAF) spring retreat in April. Ms. Breaux reported on our Cultural Economy Initiatives and what it means for Louisiana. There were questions about the nominating process for the Southern Arts Federation Board. Ms. Le Melle is on the Committee for next year to insure there is regional representation at the Southern Arts Board. There was discussion about the need for state level advocacy, regional advocacy, and national advocacy. Sarah Cunningham, the head of the Arts-in-Education section at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), was a guest speaker. She looked at educational issues from a futuristic point of view. She related how arts education provides those types of creativity in thinking, collaboration, tolerance, and diversity. She talked about young people who are artistic, creative and have an entrepreneurial spirit. Ms. Weeks thanked the Division staff for their efforts in the grants process, and especially with the RDAs.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Le Melle reported on the Division's proposed budget for FY08. The State of Louisiana's direct appropriation is \$6.03 million. According to Assistant Secretary Pam Breaux, this is the largest direct appropriation the Division of the Arts has received. Credit is given to Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu and Secretary Angèle Davis, who have supported the changes in the arts, and how the arts industry is crucial to the cultural economy of this state. Credit is also given to the LPA (Louisiana Partnership for the Arts). They have been very active in advocating for new and increased funding for the Division of the Arts, as well as the Decentralized Funding Programs (DAF). The increase in DAF funding brings the per capita amount from 42 cents to about 48 cents per person. The Division received \$638,900 in direct federal funding from the NEA including funds for Arts Education, Poetry Out Loud, and the Louisiana Masters. The Louisiana Masters is a new program that will highlight arts masters from Louisiana, and traditions or art forms that are specifically of Louisiana.

Decentralization is up to \$2.4 million

Direct Statewide Grants is \$2.1 million

Arts-in-Education has increased from \$229,000 last year to \$253,000

Folklife is up to \$253,000

Statewide Special Initiatives is \$210,000 including conferences and those things the Division will do in partnership with the LPA for the field.

The Cultural Economy and CEI (Cultural Economy Initiative) funds are administered by the Division of the Arts for the Cultural Economy Initiative.

This is the first year the Percent for Art was added to the state general fund budget and not just the IAT Budget. This is a major improvement. It allows for the creation of 2 walking tours with accompanying maps. One would be specifically to highlight the public art in the Capitol Park area in

downtown Baton Rouge. The other will be a statewide art map that will identify public art across the state. It will also highlight arts venues in each of the areas where there is public art. The Division is in the process of hiring a Percent for Art Director. Once the Percent for Art Director is hired, the Division will move forward with the creation of the walking tours.

The entire Arts Budget is \$6.9 million. One of the initiatives the Division will undertake this year is looking at conferences and workshops that provide information and professional development to the field. The Division will be conducting a 3-day Retreat for the 9 RDA Executive Directors and CDCs. This year the focus will be working with them to look at their services, how they can amend the services to individual artists, and how the services can tie in more directly to the goals of the Lt. Governor's Cultural Economy Plan and the Division's Plan for Professional Development across the regions. SB299 passed and is now Act 125. There is a 4-year roll out. The Division feels responsible for getting our organizations and teaching artists ready to meet the challenge. We will conduct our first Arts-in-Education 2-day Conference to begin getting ready for Arts-in-Education in every classroom.

Creative Capital has been invited to Louisiana to conduct a 3-day workshop retreat for individual artists that focuses on professional development. This helps the artists set short and long-term goals regarding their own career. Ms. Russo will be traveling to Miami in September to observe one of their retreats where they work with 15-20 artists. They take them through the process starting on Friday evening and ending on Sunday evening. We have set aside funds for professional development for 15-20 artists. The first year, the Division will look at sending invitations to all artists who have applied in any category to the Division. We are using different directions to fund artist, and we are funding them for different things. Fellowships are about artist excellence only. We felt it was just as important, given the Cultural Economy, to begin really working with developing our artists. The Division now has a \$3000 artist entrepreneur grant to help an artist achieve a goal.

The Division is now in the second year of the major changes that were put in place with the grants categories. At the end of the second year, we realized the need to further refine and clarify our guidelines, which Ms. Owens is working on. There were many changes to the guidelines that caused confusion for a few of our applicants. In the upcoming year, the language in the guidelines will be made very clear. Submitting Final Reports was also a problem. A large number of Final Reports are late and incomplete. We requested and received a small extension from OMF (Office of Management and Finance). The Division has suggested changes in the final report process, which is under review by the Administration. If the Administration approves the suggested changes, final reports will no longer be due at the end of the fiscal year. They will be due sometime during the month of May. This will allow the Division to enforce monetary penalties for lateness. We are suggesting if an organization is 25 days late, they will lose the final 25% of their grant, and they will not be eligible to apply for funding the next year. The Division will then reallocate that money within the fiscal year. If they are less than 25 days late, it will be documented in their staff report the review panel will see the following year. The Council asked to be notified of anyone in their region who may not be receiving the final 25% in order that they can be prepared for any phone calls. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Ledbetter will send the Council a report, by region detailing, who was late, incomplete, or will not be receiving the final 25%. The Council can then see the history over the past years, and stand behind the process. We have tried to move forward on increasing accountability for funding and public stewardship of tax dollars. The Council will be able to respond to complaints or inquires, defending the process. It allows the Council to be objective.

The Division is also looking at our communication. As we are refining the guidelines, ensuring we are communicating the information properly. A Council member asked if it would be possible to

attend the RDA retreat. Ms. Le Melle left the decision to Ms. Weeks. Ms. Weeks was hesitant in encouraging attendance for the entire process, and having people coming in and out. She commented on how the regional directors appreciated having time to engage in frank conversation while no one else was there. Ms. Weeks suggested attending sections that could be mutually convenient. She also suggested looking at how we structure the retreat, detailing the topics and the timeframe, and invite the Council to join at a convenient time. She stressed the importance of the regional directors being given sections where they can clear the air. Ms. Le Melle suggested, and Sparkle will forward the workshop schedules to the Council as soon as staff is notified. In the smaller regions, it's important for the Council members to be at the workshops.

The LPA is moving ahead with new Council Appointments. With the upcoming change in administration, things have stalled again. We have not heard about them finalizing any of the new appointments. The LPA has done their work. They will be on a retreat this weekend. Ms. Le Melle will be contacting Scott Hutcheson to remind him to talk the appointments, and if there is any way to push that forward, so that we can get the appointments out before the change in administration.

NEW BUSINESS

The Council reviewed and approved the appeal from the spring grants panel. We had a single appeal from the Baton Rouge Symphony. The Executive Committee met and reviewed the budget, the questions, and made recommendations relative to communication to the organization. Their request was for \$60,000. Because of the inaccuracies and confusion within the budget, they were recommended for \$45,000. The Executive Committee recommended the funding be increased from \$45,000 to \$48,000 for the Baton Rouge Symphony, and directed staff to express to the Symphony the consequences of not providing detailed budget notes, and a very clear budget. Ms. Hammerli motioned to accept appeal and Ms. Turner seconded.

Mr. Zeagler asked about the Stabilization funding list that was included in the packet. There are organizations with the same scores and the same amount requested, but did not receive the same amount of funding. Ms. Le Melle explained the Panel no longer awards funding based on a formula. Part of the evaluation process is the score, to talk about programs, and the actual application. The panel then does a second evaluation, applicant-by-applicant, based on their budget, and their services. For example, all institutions are allowed to ask for up to \$60,000 whether they have a \$1.3 million budget or a \$3.5 million budget. When the panel begins awarding money, they look at the budget, the operating, and the level of their programming, and award funding accordingly.

Ms. Le Melle advised the Council that Region 8 had a total of 1 funded fellowship and not 8 as listed on the Funding Recommendation list that was included in the packet. Also, under the Regional Folklife Programs, it should read \$60,000 per region for 3 regions, or \$180,000 total. Ms. Reed motioned to approve the grant awards as recommended by the panel process, and Ms. Turner seconded. The grant recommendations are approved as presented with the inclusion of the appeal amount for the Baton Rouge Symphony.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Advocacy

Ms. Weeks spoke with Scott Hutcheson, Director of the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation and President of Louisiana Partnership for the Arts. He is planning to be at the October meeting to provide perspective from the organization's point of view regarding legislative advocacy and some of the steps they have taken.

Ms. Brunner thanked everyone who participated in the CapWiz demonstration with Tommy Usrey at the last meeting. This year the LPA adopted the agenda as given through the Department of CRT. Every item in which the department was lobbying for, the LPA Arts Advocacy also lobbied for those items. SB299 is now Act 175, the Arts-in-Education legislation, which is to be tiered into the education process. Legislation was passed on Cultural Districts, expanding tax credits for the culinary and food science industry, and tourism information. The bill that excludes state income tax write-offs that were derived from artistic works for artists was not approved. The Louisiana Partnership for the Arts Advocacy (LPAA) will have their retreat this weekend. They will be brainstorming, talking about things that worked and didn't work, and making plans for the coming year. Ms. Brunner brought a copy of the new brochure they handed out during the session. LPAA went to the State Capitol as a delegation. It was very helpful to speak directly with the legislators while the session was happening.

Ms. Brunner also shared with the Council one of the ways the LPA is reaching out. She brought a copy of the agenda that she took to the local Chamber of Commerce. Because the department is focusing on the Cultural Economy and the significance of it being the second largest industry in the State of Louisiana, our local chamber now has a committee dedicated to the Cultural Economy. This committee is called the Cultural Economy Committee, and we have an LPA advocate working with them. The Chamber Board adopted the entire package the LPA suggested, is endorsed by our Chamber, and would then be given to our lobbyist. We now have an LPA lobbyist and a Chamber lobbyist. The local Chamber of Commerce is joining the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts. They all signed up for CapWiz and were received. Ms. Brunner encouraged everyone to become members and participate in CapWiz. Ms. Brunner will email the Council a copy of the agenda.

Policy
None

Special Events

Ms. Kelly Pepper informed the Council of the Administration's recommendation to include 2 additional awards to the Governor's Arts Awards. They are the Historic Restoration Rehabilitation Award, and a Cultural Tourism Award. We have also partnered with Main Street in the Division of Historic Preservation and the Office of Tourism. They will each have a representative working with us on guidelines and criteria for these 2 new awards. We are expecting to release the call for nominations at the end of August. Ms. Pepper and Ms. Hammerli would like to convene the Special Events Committee the first week of October to make decisions about the awards and move forward with the process. The Council will be updated through the Committee. Ms. Weeks asked that the Council be emailed the timeline once it has been established. The Council could be proactive by encouraging people in the different organizations that they come in contact with to nominate someone for some of the categories, if not all of them. Ms. Pepper will inform the Council of the timeline when it has been approved.

Ms. Le Melle explained the World Cultural Economic Forum grew out of the Cultural Economy Summit that occurred in New Orleans, and was organized by the Office of Cultural Development for the Lt. Governor. The Cultural Economy Summit is the outgrowth of 3 prior summits. It will be designed after the World Financial Summit that happens every year. This is the first pilot year of the World Cultural Summit. It is a statewide event culminating with programs in New Orleans. Ms. Gaye Hamilton was initially coming to the meeting, but due to scheduling conflicts, she was unable to attend. The World Cultural Economic Forum is a BFO (Budgeting For Outcomes) to bring international attention to Louisiana's cultural economy. This year they will have a small forum that will include an executive session in New Orleans at the end of August. Beginning August 16th, there

will be passport events included in the folder. These passport events will occur across the state. Ms. Le Melle encouraged the Council to attend one of the events. The goal of the passport events is to highlight the State's cultural economy outside of New Orleans, and the philosophy that our cultural economy affects the entire state and not just the large urban areas.

The Executive Session will include 12 countries speaking on culture and its overall impact on national economies. A Council member asked Ms. Le Melle how is the Division working with the Office of Tourism? On a state level the Office of Tourism and the Office of Cultural Development work very closely together. When they were creating a new grants process, Ms. Maida Owens worked with them detailing how our Division managed grants, so that we could help them with their processes and vice versa. Ms. Le Melle encouraged the Council to contact Ms. Gaye Hamilton with the Cultural Economy Office in the Office of Cultural Development with any questions regarding cultural economy issues. Ms. Gaye Hamilton and Ms. Pam Beaux are in charge of that and the process.

OLD BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURN

Ms. Weeks thanked everyone for their flexibility with the change in the meeting date. The next Arts Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 15th, in Baton Rouge. Fred Zeagler motioned to adjourn, and Susan Brunner seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:13.