

**LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
State Library of Louisiana
701 N. 4th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
December 5, 2005
10:00 a.m.**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Susan Brunner called the meeting to order at 10:20

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members present:

Susan Brunner	Mary Joseph
Angela Hammerli	Juana Woodard
Susan Turner	LeAnne Weill
Marion Drennen	

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members absent:

Brandi L. Bollinger	Susan H. Reed
Jose S. Canseco	Molly Sooter
Freddie DeCourt	Cynthia W. Weirick
Neil Early	Christine A. Weeks
Anna B. Ferguson	Frederick L. Zeagler

Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) staff present:

Veronique Le Melle	Sparkle Hurst
Ann Russo	Pearlie Johnson
Maida Owens	Kitty Pheny

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Susan Turner motioned to approve, and Mary Joseph seconded. Minutes approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Weeks is out of the country; Ms. Brunner chaired the meeting. Ms. Brunner wanted to thank everyone for what they've done to promote the arts, and encouraged everyone to continue to promote the arts because it's really important. Changes are being seen and so are increased sales.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Le Melle gave an update on the FY06 current year budget. Ms. Le Melle informed the council of an executive order issued by Governor Blanco which froze spending for all agencies including the Division of the Arts and all the grant agreements that were not fully executed by September 19th. Approximately 70 grant agreements were caught in the freeze and remain frozen. The freeze is through the end of the fiscal year. During the month of November, Ms. Le Melle and Ms. Johnson spent a majority of the time running budget scenarios for the Lt. Governor's Office and for the Division of Administration. Those scenarios will show what a 5% cut and a 10% cut will look like. The same was done with 12%, 15%, and 20%. Ms. Le Melle commended Ms. Johnson for keeping her calm through it all. The Legislature closed on November 22nd. There is a budget reduction coming to LDOA. The final first reduction has not been received. It is expected to be more than 5%, but less than 10%. The Division of the Arts took the largest share of the reduction to its own

operating budget. There is a freeze on staff using Federal Express and any kind of overnight mail. Reductions to grants were taken out of the frozen contracts and not from the contracts that are active, including decentralization. Further reductions to the Division of the Arts' budget are possible when legislature meets again in January. Those reductions would affect active contracts. The philosophy of the Louisiana Division of the Arts and concurred with the Administration is that unless things become dire, the one category that will remain held harmless is Decentralization Funding. We intend to try to get all of our smaller groups fully funded this year. We are unsure about next year, but this year Decentralization is a priority.

We were allowed to submit two requests for exemptions with the Governor's Office. The Decentralization Grant for the Lake Charles region was the first request. The Lake Charles region was changing executive director about the time the contracts were due. The executive order was issued a day or two days before the contract was received causing the decentralization funds for the region of Lake Charles to be frozen. This would have put almost 22 small arts organizations in the Lake Charles region at risk. We received notice that the exemption request was approved. Decentralization funds for the region of Lake Charles are being processed and will go out soon. The second request was for the LPA (Louisiana Partnership for the Arts). It is imperative that the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts' contract receives an exemption. The LPA has been asked to work with us in partnership in doing formal assessments of the state arts program and its arts infrastructure across the state. The LPA has also set up a process for providing technical assistance and administrative assistance to organizations to assist them in getting through this very difficult climate. They cannot do those assessments or bring in the consultants they were slated to bring in unless their contract is unfrozen. It is currently pending.

The department is in the midst of budgeting for the next fiscal year FY07. The Lt. Governor has adopted a new way of budgeting called Budgeting for Outcomes, a process where there is no continuation budget. Every office within department is currently formulating offers. The deadline for all offers is December 8th. Once all the offers are in, the Leadership Team will then review the offers. About 200 offers are expected throughout the department. The offers will then be ranked. They will make the recommendations to the Lt. Governor and Secretary Davis. The Lt. Governor and Secretary Davis will make the final "buying" decision, and will buy the programs they feel are most important to the department. All of this will be done by or before the end of January 2006. When the department receives their actual budget figure for '07, each office within the department will know what offers have been bought and what staffing will be needed. The numbers will then be applied on a priority basis from the top down until they get to the end of whatever the budget is. For example, if 20 programs made the cut, but when they see the budget, there is only money enough for 18, then they will look at what is scalable. In short, we buy what we can afford. Ms. Drennen stated to let your policy dictate your budget not your budget dictate your policy. That way you wind up with 10, 20, or 30% cuts across the board. You are making policy decisions and then having your budget applied to what your priorities are. The Cultural Economy is a large priority for the Lt. Governor.

Ms. Hammerli asked how the announcement would be made. Ms. Le Melle responded that no public announcement would be made. Each assistant secretary will find out what the priorities will be for their office. Ms. Breaux will find out what the priorities are for OCD. The Division of the Arts does not submit directly into the process. The Division of the Arts submits to the Office of Cultural Development (OCD), and Ms. Breaux will submit the package that will include the Division of the Arts, the Division of Historic Preservation, and the Division of Archaeology. The Arts' program staff was given an opportunity to submit 9 total offers to Ms. Le Melle. Ms. Le Melle put together the package and Ms. Pearlle Johnson included the budget. Ms. Le Melle is writing the grants

package that she will review with the council later including the new grants categories. By noon on Tuesday, the following day, the Arts' package will go to Ms. Breaux. We will know by the end of January what has been accepted. At the March meeting our process and programs will reflect what was brought.

Ms. Le Melle stated that with the Division's new Strategic Plan, the grant categories have changed. There is no longer project assistance. The two new and largest categories will be Capacity Building grants for the arts and Stabilization, which replaces the former General Operating Support. Capacity Building program funding will not be based on projects. It's building an organization's capacity. It is looking at having them institutionalize their operations.

Stabilization grants will consist of 4 tracts. One for the largest institutions, the second is for mid-sized groups. There are 2 new categories for stabilization support. The third tract is the entry-level tract for small organizations that are usually 1 or 2 people who have not been able to compete for general operating support. The final tract is the community tract. In the community tract, an organization can have a fully volunteer staff, but if they can exhibit and show that they impact their entire parish, they are eligible. For instance, an entry-level tract has to impact regionally. A community tract impacts in their community, and they have a wide spread impact that they really are integral to the fabric of their parish or community. They would be eligible for stabilization grants.

There will be Cultural Tourism funding. There will be Research funding, and there will also be Venture Capital Investment funding. We are proposing in our offer to the Lt. Governor to create a Venture Capital Program for the arts. Ms. Drennen liked the idea of encouraging people to generate their own funds so they wouldn't want a constant handout. Once a program is accepted into the Venture Capital Program, it is probably a three-year process. If we receive enough funding through the BFO process, to do it right, it needs to be a three-year program. They would receive seed money to actually plan and put together their business plan. Two years worth of investment funding to get their project off of the ground would follow. The change with those programs is the applications will not go before a panel process. We will actually convene bankers and investors to do an interview with the groups applying. Internally we will look and assess the groups, but it will not be a non-profit kind of panel process. It will be a true venture capital assessment and interview.

The division had advertised for the two open program positions, but was unable to fill them. Hopefully on July 1st we will be able to reopen the search for two people. Also included in the freeze is travel. Once we find out what's happening with our pending exemptions, we will petition Secretary Davis to allow us to put in a third exemption request for division staff to travel during the winter (February and March) to conduct workshops and talk to the field about the new grants process and application. If not, then they will do the workshops as day trips. Also, the division cannot pay for panelists to come into Baton Rouge to set on our panels because we can't pay their hotel or travel expenses. The program staff go through a lot to try to get really good strong objective panelist to travel when we are paying for their expenses. Without paying for their expenses becomes another issue. Ms. Drennen asked if we could possibly have enough panelists regionally. Ms. Le Melle responded that it wouldn't be fair to have a panel consist of all Baton Rougeans or regional people. Ms. Le Melle is looking at a new panel process. One of the things that may be done is to have a rating system where they actually mail in some of their comments and then do some through conference calls. Ms. Le Melle is on a panel for the Winton Marsalis' Higher Ground selection for his Higher Ground Foundation. They have a National Selection Committee and are doing all of their panels via conference calls.

Question asked if the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) offered any kind of grants for emergency type situations. Ms. Le Melle answered there is an emergency grant called the Chairman's Emergency Grant that we are eligible for. The grants are usually about \$35,000. The NEA made an unprecedented move in September when they went to Congress requesting \$20 million in disaster relief money for the arts in the Gulf coast states. They have yet to be successful in getting any movement. We are now reverting back to the Chairman's Emergency Grants. The Chairman has identified ½ million dollars in his NEA budget that had not been spent yet. That will probably be the money that is distributed. If the amount were correct, the Louisiana Division of the Arts would be eligible for about \$70,000. Question was asked if it was a one-time item. Ms. Le Melle responded for state arts agencies, it is a one-time item. Once that funding is officially applied to our contract, that money would probably be directed to the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation because that board is about to release their relief efforts and their relief funding. That will probably be the best way to spend that money. The need is so great. \$70,000 will help with reorganization, maybe. If we put it to a larger pot, it will help artists and arts organizations across the state.

Ms. Hammerli asked Ms. Le Melle about Ms. Breaux's trip to France and was there a report or any positive feedback on that. Ms. Le Melle responded that there are quite a few outgrowths of Ms. Breaux's trip. France is working with the Lt. Governor's office on an exchange project. Additionally, Ms. Ann Russo has been working with Ms. Mary Lynn Costa on a similar project. There are quite a few small artist exchange programs that are happening with France. Ms. Hammerli asked if the NEA and SAF have also changed their granting packets. A council member reported seeing a small article in the Times Picayune that France may be going to repair the sidewalks in the French Quarters. The complete article was not read. Ms. Le Melle concluded her report. Ms. Brunner asked if there were any more questions. There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Brunner asked if there was any new business to report. Ms. Weill asked if there was any type of counter attack strategy that the state, or someone within the state is doing something about getting our artists back in the state. Louisiana is on the verge of permanently losing a lot of our artists. There is a very active group that relocated to the Austin area where they have been successful. We have a large body of New Orleanians that are extremely serious about relocating to the Austin area. Ms. Weill stated that there is a well-established plan to keep the musicians in Austin. Austin has decided, as their marketing goal, to be the live music capitol of the south. They are pulling out checkbooks and they are making things happen. They are providing housing, studio space, and they are giving all sorts of incentives. A lot of our long-established musical talents, the people we love to talk about as our billboard artist, have been waiting for some sort of word from anyone in Louisiana that we care about them and we want them to come home.

Ms. Woodard stated there was a huge concert at the Southdown Plantation the previous week. Richard Thomas was one of the people who rode out in a boat to the 9th Ward and landed on the bridge. He ended up in Charity Hospital in Houma and one of the communities took he and his family in for several weeks. He created a poster about his travel out of the darkness into the light and bringing awareness to the wetlands' situation. There were about 20 music groups, many were well known and they performed free of charge. With all of the problems the state has, and everybody else, we don't have enough time to think about such things as what we could do to stop this, or what we could do to help out? Ms. Le Melle stated that the Lt. Governor has been successful in pulling together a consensus between the Governor's office, the Office of Cultural Development, and the City of New Orleans on Cultural Economy Recovery. Last week the governor's office adopted our 4-Point Plan as the state plan for the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. The New Orleans Cultural Commission will be meeting with Ms. Breaux and Ms. Le Melle the following week.

in Baton Rouge on combining the City of New Orleans' Plan with the State's Plan. There will be one plan for culture and cultural recovery, which includes getting Louisiana artist back. It's a long-term strategy.

Ms. Drennen stated currently there is no venue in New Orleans. There are only workers there with very few people are living there. Not many businesses are there. If musicians are bought back and there's no one to play to, that's not good. Ms. Weill stressed the importance of having a plan to contact the artists now and remain in contact with them, and give them updates. Ensure they are educated to the fact that we want them back and we are not going to forget about them. The longer we stay out of communication with our artists, the harder it will be to locate them. After the city is rebuilt, we would hate to loose them. Ms. Woodard made a statement about a 92 year-old evacuee who wrote to the editor in California where he is currently residing with his son. He stated that everyone there is so nice to him, but he wants to come home. Ms. Weill stated that she recently heard on National Media that the evacuees feel very disenfranchised by the state. They feel like the state really doesn't care about them, and part of it is that they are being coddled at other places. It's sad that not only are our musicians affected, it's also the artists, CPAs, teachers, doctors, etc. Banks are foreclosing and there are hundreds of thousands of bankruptcies. There are movements for the artists to return. The grass roots efforts. It's so overwhelming. People are trying to come back to some semblance of normalcy.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Advocacy

Ms. Brunner met with Mr. Tommy Usrey, who is working with the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts. We've been working on reforming the Advocacy Committee with the Louisiana State Arts Council to become more of a partner with the LPA. Ms. Brunner gave a brief update, but hope to have a firm plan at the March meeting for the council to review. Because of the expenses, we need to have advocacy more on a regional level, and Mr. Usrey agreed with that. We've spoken with others on the advocacy committee and we're thinking that advocacy means to be more than something that just happens during legislative. It has to be something we do twelve months a year, all the time. We also need people represented in their region from the advocacy committee. Ms. Woodard stated that works well for DAF programs.

Policy

Mr. Canseco was absent.

Ms. Brunner stressed the importance of the council members, who have not already joined, to join the LPA. It's really important to keep the LPA working as best we can, and membership is what is depended on more than anything. Ms. Joseph agreed.

Special Events

Ms. Hammerli asked if the Governor's Arts Awards is still on. Ms. Le Melle responded that it is. It will be in August, but a date has not been received yet. Suggested Ms. Hammerli and Ms. Liebke get together and start working on that once Ms. Liebke returns. Ms. Hammerli stated we could start thinking about nominees. Ms. Weill stated that maybe we could get those people who are displaced to come back to receive awards. We need to find out where the people are located, or relocated at to even make nominations. Ms. Hammerli stated that perhaps the guidelines should be reviewed, because she didn't think people need to be living in Louisiana, but wasn't sure. Maybe we could look at how we word it in the guidelines. Ms. Le Melle stated that by the next meeting the committee is going to really have to look at that. Ms. Hammerli stated there was an increase in nominations last year.

Ms. Weill has been in contact with artist in the Chicago area. There are a lot of frustrated artists in the Chicago area. Can a dancer or dance company receive funds instead of sending a check to a general foundation? Ms. Drennen asked if funds were going to be dispersed evenly, or will they be prioritizing? Ms. Le Melle stated they are going to prioritize based on need, damages received, and any other sources of assistance the artists or arts organizations have already received. The artists and arts organizations that have not received assistance will be given priority for the first checks. They are hoping to assist everyone that applies. Ms. Weill asked if the foundation has a website or guidelines on how they are set up. Ms. Le Melle responded they do have a website, but the guidelines are not currently on the website because they haven't released them. They do have a statement and Ms. Le Melle asked the council to look at the Louisiana Rebirth website where the foundation website can be accessed. A google search on Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation should also be able to get you there. Asked if they had a board of advisors? Ms. Le Melle responded they have a separate board of directors. Asked if it was set up as a non-profit? Ms. Le Melle responded that it is a separate non-profit 501c3.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Questions asked when is the next meeting. Ms. Brunner responded Monday, March 27th. Ms. Le Melle stated that a location had not been determined. It's usually outside of Baton Rouge. At the last meeting, we were looking at Lake Charles. Ms. Drennen suggested New Orleans. Ms. Le Melle stated for the council to decide when Ms. Weeks returns.

ADJOURN

Ms. Brunner asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hammerli motioned to adjourn. Ms. Woodard seconded. Ms. Brunner thanked the Division of the Arts for their hard work. Meeting adjourned at 11:30.