

LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL (LSAC) QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

Capitol Park Welcome Center
702 River Road North
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Tuesday, July 21, 2009
10:30 a.m.

LSAC members present: Scott Hutcheson, Rex Alexander, Marguerite Anderson, Linda Begue, Pamela Bryan, Dwayne Carruth, Michael Echols, Derek Gordon, Gena Gore, Gerri Hobdy, Angela King, George Marks, Karen Sharp, Gene Thompson, and Kim Zabbia

LSAC members absent: Pam Breaux, Patricia Brister, Representative Steve Carter, Karen Courtman, Robert Fisher, JoAnn Katz, Barbara Motley, Rose Marie Sand, and Virginia Saussy

LDOA (Louisiana Division of the Arts) staff present: Dána LaFonta, Danny Belanger, Ann Russo, Bethany France, Kelly Pepper, Maida Owens, Pearlie Johnson, Sparkle Hurst, and Vanessa Ledbetter

Guests: Kathleen Sarsfield, Office of Cultural Development

I. Call to Order and Welcome – Scott Hutcheson & Dána LaFonta

Mr. Hutcheson announced the Office of Cultural Development has a new structure. Ms. Dána LaFonta has been appointed as Executive Director of the Division of the Arts. Mr. Danny Belanger was Interim Director and will resume his role as Deputy Director. Due to budget cuts, the Office of Cultural Development lost 18 positions.

Ms. LaFonta called the meeting to order, as the chair has not yet been appointed. Expect the appointment to happen soon. Ms. LaFonta asked everyone to introduce themselves. Council members were Derek Gordon, CEO of Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge; Angela King, owner of an art gallery in New Orleans; Michael Echols, vice-president of marketing and communications at the University of Louisiana in Monroe; George Marks, visual artist from Lafayette; Dwayne Carruth, architect with Front Door in Baton Rouge; Pam Bryan, director of Operations Comeback at the Preservation Resource Center in New Orleans; Karen Sharp, art teacher and arts department head at West Jefferson School; Linda Begue, amateur artist and retired real estate broker; Gene Thompson, executive director of the Princess Theater in Winnsboro; Marguerite Anderson, former president and chairman of the Northeast Louisiana Arts Council; Kim Zabbia, visual artist and director of the Art Station in Ponchatoula; Rex Alexander, visual artist; Gena Gore, visual artist from Alexandria and a member of the Rapides Symphony Board and the Tourism Board; and Gerri Hobdy, Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Division staff were Sparkle Hurst, Administrative Assistant; Maida Owens, Director of Folklife Services; Ann Russo, Director of Artist Services; Bethany France, Director of Arts Education; Kelly Pepper, Director of Organizational Services; Vanessa Ledbetter, Grants Office Assistant; and Pearlie Johnson, Grants Manager. The guest was Kathleen Sarsfield, Special Projects with the Office of Cultural Development.

Ms. LaFonta distributed handouts from council members Robert Fisher and Rose Marie Sand for upcoming events they are involved with.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Gordon motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Ms. Hodby seconded. Vote: Unanimous acceptance. For future meetings, the council would like to receive the minutes in advance of the meeting date.

III. Adoption of LSAC Rules and Regulations – Danny Belanger

The council will vote to adopt the current rules and regulations as presented in order to move forward with the business of the day. Once the policy committee is in place, the rules and regulations will be reviewed as a committee and recommendations will be made for the new council. Ms. LaFonta explained that it is acceptable to adopt the rules and regulations as presented and amend later. Mr. Gordon motioned to adopt the rules and regulations as presented, and Ms. Anderson seconded. Vote: Unanimous acceptance.

IV. Election of Officers – Dána LaFonta

The chairperson is always appointed by the governor, as required by legislation. The council will be notified when the governor has appointed the chair.

V. Committee Assignments – Dána LaFonta

Nominations to the Executive Committee include: Michael Echols, Vice-Chairperson; Robert Fisher, Parliamentarian; Kim Zabbia, Secretary, and Derek Gordon, At Large Member. The partially filled officers of the remaining committees are: George Marks, Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee; Rose Marie Sand, Chairperson of the Policy Committee; and Gena Gore, Chairperson of the Special Events Committee. Mr. Thompson motioned to accept the slated officers and the chairs of the standing committees as presented and Ms. Begue seconded. Vote: Unanimous acceptance.

VI. State Grants – Dána LaFonta

The Division accepts applications in the office; the staff reviews them; the panel process is followed (panels are selected from all disciplines and specialties in certain areas to insure a qualified panel is considering the applications); the panel convenes; applications are reviewed and ranked in order according to how they scored in the panel. The grants criterion is in the Guide to Arts Programs distributed at the last meeting.

The Division is continuing funding applications for excellence. There is limited amount of funds available this fiscal year. Awards are also based on the funding pools that are available. The balance on the funding recommendation sheet is the amount we can honor in granting this fiscal year.

Mr. Echols asked if there is any follow up with the applicants who failed to meet the qualifications, or scored less than the cut-off score. The Division staff provides technical assistance to applicants in completing their application prior to the deadline. The panels provide comments on the grants and Division staff passes those comments on to the applicant. If the applicant has questions about a specific grant or need assistance for the next grant year, they can then take a look at the panel comments and have a conversation with the staff.

Mr. Echols asked if there is a place to review the applications that scored higher than the cut-off score. A list of all the grant awards is on the division's website. The application itself is not on the website. It was suggested to place the applicant's narrative summary on the website so that people could see what particular points need to be addressed in the evaluation. One of the top reasons applicants are not competitive is because they fail to fully answer the questions within the grant and state their case for funding.

Mr. Gordon asked if the Division could provide information in letters to applicants that weren't funded encouraging them to apply to the regional grant program. Applicants often ask for that information in advance but many of the regional grants (DAF) are due before the division's process begins. Applicants are also referred to the Cultural Economy Foundation if it is appropriate. Scheduling and calendars will be addressed with the regional agencies in the near future.

Members of the council acknowledged all the Division does to make the grant process successful and thanked them. Mr. Gordon asked Ms. LaFonta about summary recommendations. How many people asked for funds and what was the level of funds requested this year compared to last year? The amount requested this year was less than what has been requested. Ms. LaFonta explained the mid-year budget cuts which required the division to cut grants from the previous year. The division sustained a 12% cut in the overall grant pool last year. The legislature was unable to fund as initially intended. It is explained in the contracts and arrangements with applicants that there is always the possibility of funding being reduced.

The grants programs were revised a few years ago when the Division of the Arts new strategic plan was created. The grants program was revised to offer the option of 2-year funding to some of the capacity building and stabilization organizations. In addition to the organizations coming in this year, there were others from the previous year, that were in their second year of funding, to whom we had already made a commitment.

Mr. Marks asked about the large number of applicants to the fellowships and artist career advancement program compared to the amount they receive, and if there was a way the council could address this concern at a later date. The Division receives a lot of individual applications and rarely has enough funds for half of the requests. This year, the cuts that were made in the Executive Budget were to the Regional Folklife program, statewide grants overall, Decentralized Arts Funding, and Individual Artists Program.

One of the newer programs instituted with the strategic plan change was the individual artist career advancement grant which invested something that helps an artist advance the work that they do in a meaningful way. Those grants are for a maximum of \$3,000. Other services the Division is trying to provide for individual artists include the annual Creative Capital Retreat to help artist advance.

Ms. Zabbia asked what the percentage is proposed from the state budget cut. Staff responded that there are no final numbers yet. Ms. Hobdy motioned to approve grants as recommended and Mr. Echols seconded. Mr. Gordon and Mr. Thompson asked about provisions for a council member to recuse themselves if they are associated with an award applicant. Mr. Gordon and Mr. Thompson withdrew from the voting. 12 members voted to approve grants as recommended. Vote: Unanimous acceptance.

VII. Next Meeting Date – Dána LaFonta

Ms. LaFonta suggested scheduling the next meeting in late October to coincide with the Cultural Economy Summit. Dates will be sent out and the council can decide which dates are best for future meetings. It was suggested to meet the Thursday before the summit, and Mr. Gordon suggested meeting in New Orleans which might encourage the council to participate in the activities.

VIII. Public Comments

Ms. Gore wanted to emphasize the October 30th date. Ms. Sarsfield informed the council the Cultural Economy Summit is returning and gave a brief overview. The initiatives were

successful and the World Cultural Economic Forum (WCEF) will join the Louisiana Cultural Economy Summit. The summit and the forum will take place on Friday, October 30, 2009. Ms. Hobdy inquired if this is a project of the Division or the Lt. Governor. Ms. LaFonta answered it is outside the Division, and is a project of the Office of the Lt. Governor. Ms. Hobdy asked if there was going to be a scheduled orientation for new council members. Ms. LaFonta responded that the Division could arrange an orientation for new members.

Ms. Gore asked if everyone did the webinar with NASAA (National Association of State Arts Agencies). There is another one scheduled for the 30th of this month. She stated that they were very informative. NASAA utilizes special software and they invite groups to participate. Mr. Belanger added the 56 state arts agencies help promote the federal policy for arts as well as assist individual states through advocacy. NASAA assists each state arts agency meet their goals and objectives as well as budget requirements.

Mr. Belanger announced the deadline to apply for NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) stimulus funding is August 15th. Organizations can apply for \$15,000 to \$25,000 for jobs specifically targeted by the organizations that are at-risk, have been lost, or could be lost in the next 6 months to a year. The application, guidelines and rules are on the Division's website www.crt.state.la.us/arts. NEA is very specific about these stimulus grants. It cannot be for any job newly created or an existing program that you want to continue, it has be tied specifically to a job. The Division of the Arts was granted NEA ARRA Funding, as were three other organizations within the state.

IX. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss Mr. Gordon motioned to adjourn and Ms. Zabbia seconded. Vote: Unanimous acceptance. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.