

Iowa Arts Council Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

10:00 a.m.

Helmick Conference Room

Iowa Economic Development Authority

1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200

Des Moines, IA 50315

Board Members Present: In person: Chair Amber Danielson, Donna Dostal, and Frank Sposeto. Electronically: Suzanne Conquest, Tim Dickmeyer, Jennifer Dutcher, Lance Ehmcke, and Akwi Nji.

Board Members Absent: Michelle Hargrave and Claudia Rivera.

Staff Present: Director Debi Durham, Jon Berg, Elizabeth Ferreira, Rita Grimm, Beau Hanson, EJ Philby Burton, David Schmitz, and Deanna Triplett

Guest(s) Present: Elizabeth Pappas

Call to Order

Welcome

Danielson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Danielson called the roll. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dostal moved to approve the March 26, 2024 Minutes. Sposeto seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Danielson called for comments on the consent agenda items. No comments were made.

MOTION: Dostal moved to approve the consent agenda. Dickmeyer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Report from Chair

Recent and Upcoming Board Engagement Opportunities

Danielson thanked the team for a great Arts Summit; several board members participated in the event. Sposeto also represented the Iowa Arts Council at a statewide convening of community theater organizations. Schmitz and Ferreira to reach out with additional Board engagement opportunities.

Board member terms

Eight applications were submitted for the five open seats on the Board, including two members who are seeking reappointment. A decision is expected from the Governor's Office soon.

Mission Moment

Elizabeth Pappas of the Art Center of Burlington provided an overview of the Mayfly Mayhem Project, which was supported in part by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council.

Danielson & Ehmcke asked follow-up questions about the Art Center of Burlington's local "creative think tank" group, and Pappas provided additional details about this ongoing initiative to engage the community.

IAC Program Updates

Iowa Arts Summit Recap

The team shared highlights from the Iowa Arts Summit. Durham praised the event and the representation of Tourism and Main Street Iowa teams from IEDA. Durham also raised the opportunity to broaden the audience to include more statewide economic development attendees. Sposeto and Dostal echoed the need to build connections between the arts and economic development and local government. Dostal suggested the Board can help by sharing the language needed to have a strong voice in those local conversations.

Spring FY25 Grants Cycle

The team shared an update on the FY2025 spring grant cycle, including operating support grants of \$815,000 in approved awards to 46 Cultural Leadership Partners and \$130,000 in approved Cultural Capacity Building awards. Spring project grant cycles are also underway, and a second round of Arts Project grants are planned for this fall.

Program Updates

Berg provided updates on Community Development programs, including the certification of a new Cultural and Entertainment District in Washington, Iowa. He also shared updates on the Iowa Community Cultural Grants, the Iowa Creative Places Accelerator, and the Iowans Create Community Mural Program.

Philby Burton provided updates on artist and filmmaker grants and film festival engagement. She also commented on Liz Gilman's retirement from Produce Iowa and offered to field filmmaking questions until a more formal transition plan is in place.

Update from Director Durham

Durham provided an update on Produce Iowa's future and the film incentive legislation that was introduced in the recent Legislative session.

Arts Council Director's Report

Operations

Schmitz shared highlights of operations initiatives including the Enterprise Management System (EMS) technology project and a shift to working with the Tourism Communications team.

Regional and Federal Partnerships

Schmitz noted key partnerships with Arts Midwest and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which both award grants directly to Iowans. The NEA also recently approved Iowa's annual State Partnership award, which included a small increase for the Poetry Out Loud program.

Strategic updates

Schmitz shared progress on several strategic initiatives, including the folk and traditional arts needs assessment being led by contractor Mel Stockwell and the Iowa Great Places community needs assessment in partnership with ISU Community and Economic Development. He also shared updates on the recent hire of two contractors to lead the Poetry Out Loud program, and the potential to hire an additional contractor to help execute planned artist career development initiatives. Schmitz then provided a high-level overview of strategic plans for the upcoming year, including initiatives to engage, invest, and uplift the arts in Iowa.

Schmitz finished by highlighting Arts Midwest's Peter Cappell Award for Arts Entrepreneurship, which will focus on Iowa in its first year. Schmitz will share the link when applications open in August and asked the Board to help identify potential nominees.

Board Discussion

Create in Iowa

Dostal provided an update on the Create in Iowa initiative, which she's been working on with Schmitz and project consultant Matt McIver of McIver Communications. The initiative aims to bring arts leaders together with other community stakeholders to have arts-forward collaborative discussions around three pillars: talent attraction, economic development, and creative futures. An initial discussion with 12 arts leaders from across the state took place on May 21st and included a summary of feedback from the Regional Arts Forums.

The next step is for the group to share the messages discussed with their local communities and gather feedback through a survey, which will be distributed soon. Dostal asked the Board to help by pushing the survey out. McIver will also be conducting interviews with leaders across the state over the summer, and the team is conducting national benchmarking to look at what other states are doing. The goal is to share an interim report with the Board by the end of September.

Regional Arts Forums

Schmitz highlighted themes from the Regional Arts Forums, and the Board engaged in discussion around key takeaways.

Public Comment

No public comment was made.

Other Business

The next meeting is scheduled for September 24 at 10 a.m.

Adjournment

Danielson adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.