

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL  
BOARD MEETING  
OCTOBER 27, 2021**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Ginger Warner at 11:11 a.m. in the offices of the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) in Columbus. Board members in attendance: Robb Hankins, secretary; Tina Husted; Farid Naffah; Adam Shank; Beth Waldren; Bill White; Neal Zimmers; and Rep. Tavia Galonski. Board members not in attendance: Jim Dicke, vice chair; Jon Holt; Tom Johnson; Rita Mansour; Darryl Mehaffie; Rep. Sara Carruthers; Sen. Matt Dolan; and Sen. Teresa Fedor. Staff attending: Donna Collins, Dan Katona, Justin Nigro, Dia Foley, Kathy Signorino, Cat Sheridan, Amanda Etchison, Chaz O'Neil, and Patrick Roehrenbeck. Also in attendance: Hilary Damaser, principal assistant attorney general, and Angela Meleca, executive director of Ohio Citizens for the Arts.

Board Chair Ginger Warner welcomed all in attendance and provided an overview of the day's meeting agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Warner asked the board to review minutes from its meeting held on July 21, 2021.

MOTION by Neal Zimmers, seconded by Bill White, to approve the minutes from the OAC board meeting on July 21, 2021. **Motion carried without dissent.**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Warner invited Executive Director Donna Collins to provide her director's report.

Ms. Collins introduced the OAC's newest staff members, Artist Programs and Percent for Art Coordinator Chaz O'Neil and Organizational Programs Coordinator Patrick Roehrenbeck. Mr. Roehrenbeck shared that he joins the OAC from a background in nonprofit arts organization administration, while Mr. O'Neil said that he had worked closely with the OAC in the past through his job at the Ohio State Fair organizing the annual *Ohio State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition*. Both expressed their excitement to be joining the OAC staff in their new roles.

Regarding the investment office, Ms. Collins shared that staff has been processing grant award contracts and final reports from constituents. She reminded the board that, over the summer, the OAC had extended its practice of issuing partial payments for FY 2022 operating support grants in the Sustainability and Arts Access programs. This allows eligible grantee organizations to receive 75 percent of their award amount up front, with the remaining 25 percent awarded once a final report has been filed. The practice has significantly aided arts organizations throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Ms. Collins said. She added that the partial payments equated to \$11 million invested into the Ohio economy.

The OAC continues to work with statewide partners on several projects, Ms. Collins said. Recently, the OAC partnered with Ohio Humanities and Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's office to celebrate National Arts and Humanities Month in October, which culminated in the official recognition by Gov. DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted of Arts and Humanities Month in Ohio. The OAC is also working with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on upcoming commissions of artwork by Ohio artists to be featured at the new Hocking Lodge and Hotel at Hocking Hills State Park, as well as potential artist residency programs to be hosted at nine state lodges, Ms. Collins said.

Next, Ms. Collins shared that the OAC's Riffe Gallery is set to open its newest exhibition, the *2021 Biennial Juried Exhibition*, on October 30. She praised the gallery's commitment to offering engaging exhibition programming and invited the board to view the show while it is on view through January 7, 2022.

In her update about the Artist Programs Office, Ms. Collins spoke about the Ohio Percent for Art Program, which provides funds for the acquisition, commissioning, and installation of works of art for new or renovated public buildings. She then moved on to the Organizational Programs Office, where she discussed ongoing work with constituents in processing final reports and assisting in the application process for existing grant programs, as well as new agency funding opportunities offered through the OAC's Arts Resiliency Initiative.

Ms. Collins highlighted the ongoing work of the agency's fiscal operations and information technology staff in assisting in the processing of grant payments. She also discussed their work with the Ohio Office of Budget and Management to ensure compliance in processing various funding sources, including the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; the American Rescue Plan; and state and federal budgets.

Discussing communications work, Ms. Collins mentioned that staff has started planning the 2022 Governor's Awards for the Arts in Ohio, in addition to ongoing content development for the OAC's monthly webinar series and social media platforms.

In arts education, recruitment is underway for the 2022 *Poetry Out Loud* program, Ms. Collins said. She also shared that Arts Learning Coordinator Jarred Small has continued his work with the Ohio Prison Arts Connection and the Crisis Analysis and Mitigation coaching program for arts responders through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Coalition of Arts' Preparedness & Emergency Response (NCAPER). Ms. Warner said that the board would hear from Mr. Small about his work with NCAPER at an upcoming meeting.

Furthermore, the OAC has progressed in its training of 27 Ohio artists who will develop and facilitate creative aging programs for older adults in Ohio, Ms. Collins said. She reminded the board that the OAC had previously sought funding from the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging program, a joint initiative of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

(NASAA) and Aroha Philanthropies, and secured the highest potential award of \$60,000 for its Ohio Intensive Creative Aging Training Initiative. Ms. Collins reflected on the importance of NASAA and its support of state arts agencies. Ms. Warner agreed and praised NASAA as a valuable resource for those working in the arts.

Ms. Collins then shared that Arts Midwest, a regional arts organization serving the nine-state region of Midwestern states that includes Ohio, has selected several Ohio arts organizations to receive funding through its Grow, Invest, Gather (GIG) Fund. Additionally, Ms. Collins said that Arts Midwest has committed \$157,000 to supporting Ohio arts organizations selected for one-time grant awards through the OAC's Arts Resiliency Initiative funding programs.

### **QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE REPORTS**

Ms. Warner began reviewing the agency's quarterly expenditure report covering the fourth quarter of FY 2021.

In reviewing the report, Robb Hankins asked for more information about the OAC's subscription to Gongwer News Service. Ms. Collins explained that Gongwer is a subscription news service that covers state government, and Operations and Public Affairs Director Justin Nigro explained its utility in remaining current on legislation and other agencies' actions.

Ms. Warner asked for elaboration on Percent for Art expenditures provided as part of the report. Artist Programs and Percent for Art Director Kathy Signorino reviewed ongoing Percent for Art projects around the state. Ms. Signorino explained that the expenditures listed in the report are for proposal presentations and final payments for artists. Providing examples, Ms. Signorino discussed the proposed commissions at the Ohio State University's Wooster Campus and Cincinnati State University.

Ms. Warner asked Ms. Signorino to briefly explain the Ohio Percent for Art program for the benefit of new board members. Ms. Signorino shared that Ohio's Percent for Art law provides funds for works of art for new or renovated public buildings with appropriations of more than \$4 million. For these projects, the law provides that 1 percent of the total appropriation will be allocated for the acquisition, commissioning, and installation of artwork. Ms. Signorino added that the OAC administers the program, while committees formed specifically for each project are charged with the selection of artists whose work fits their space and commission constraints. She then shared an update on ongoing public calls for future projects, including two at the University of Akron and one for the University of Cincinnati's Law School, as well as the recently completed commission at Rhodes State College in Lima.

Ms. Warner thanked Ms. Signorino for her report. Neal Zimmers inquired as to whether Percent for Art funding ever supports artistic disciplines outside of the visual arts. Ms. Signorino said that the legislation permits 1 percent of a public building's appropriation be allocated to permanent, public art. Using the case of Cincinnati's Aronoff Center for the Arts

as an example, Ms. Warner stated that, in the past, the Percent for Art allocation has been fulfilled by funding aspects of a building's architectural design. Ms. Signorino added that past Percent for Art commissions have funded landscape, design, and other similar projects.

MOTION by Beth Waldren, seconded by Adam Shank, to approve the quarterly expenditure report for the fourth quarter of FY 2021. **Motion carried without dissent.**

#### **RATIFICATION REPORT**

Ms. Warner briefly reviewed the ratification report, noting that the report contains activity on the OAC's smaller grant programs where the board has authorized staff to issue grants between board meetings. The board then reviews and ratifies these items, she said.

Mr. Hankins asked for an example of one of the grants listed in the report. Ms. Collins responded, providing an overview of the OAC's partnership with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, Manifest Drawing Center in Cincinnati, and the Cleveland Print Room. Every year, she said, these organizations teach participating high school photographers how to take analog photos that speak to contemporary issues. Selected photos from the students' body of work are then installed in the Ohio Civil Rights Commission's office on the fifth floor of the Rhodes State Office Tower, where they are displayed for a year. Ms. Warner thanked Ms. Collins for sharing this example and reflected on how much she has enjoyed attending the exhibition opening reception and speaking to the student artists in the past.

MOTION by Bill White, seconded by Neal Zimmers, to approve the ratification report. **Motion carried without dissent.**

#### **PANELIST RECOMMENDATIONS**

Ms. Warner led consideration of the panelist recommendations prepared for board review. She explained that the lists of potential panelists have been assembled in preparation for the review of Individual Excellence Award applications set to begin later in the year. Ms. Warner also remarked on the fact that almost all of the artists identified as panelists are located outside of Ohio, which she said is a conscious choice made in an effort to encourage a fair, impartial review process for all artists seeking award funding. She invited Ms. Signorino and Mr. O'Neil to discuss the panelist recruitment process in more detail.

Ms. Signorino first provided a brief overview of the Individual Excellence Award program, explaining that it recognizes outstanding accomplishments by individual artists in a variety of artistic disciplines. She reiterated Ms. Warner's comment about out-of-state panelists, adding that the artwork submitted for consideration in this program is judged blindly, so anonymity of artists' identities is an important standard to uphold during the panel review process.

This year, Individual Excellence Award panels will be held virtually, as they were the year prior, Ms. Signorino said. Panel meetings will begin on December 6 and end on December 16, and Ms. Signorino extended an invitation to the board to attend virtually.

Beth Waldren asked whether the OAC is considering making the virtual panel meetings standard practice moving forward. Ms. Signorino replied that she thinks doing so would be beneficial, particularly for panelists and artists whose work is being discussed. She added that presenting the proceedings virtually makes the events more accessible for those who would otherwise have to travel to an in-person meeting.

Ms. Warner thanked Ms. Signorino and Mr. O'Neil for their commitment to including new artistic professionals on panels year after year. Ms. Signorino said that the OAC is always seeking new panelists to include in the process and encouraged board members to nominate artists who they feel would do well in scoring and offering feedback on others' work.

MOTION by Robb Hankins, seconded by Neal Zimmers, to approve FY 2022 Individual Excellence Award panelist recommendations. **Motion carried without dissent.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS: ARTS RESILIENCY INITIATIVE**

Ms. Warner asked the board to recall the Arts Resiliency Initiative (ARI), approved at the July 2021 board meeting, that aims to support organizations of all sizes and in all arts genres in the process of recovering from the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. She invited Ms. Collins and Deputy Director Dan Katona to provide an update on the initiative and the two grant funding programs it encompasses.

Ms. Collins thanked the board for its support of the ARI and briefly explained the two funding programs recently launched by the OAC. ARI General Operating Awards will support organizations not yet reached by recent state and federal pandemic-relief investments, and not already receiving OAC support for their ongoing programming, as they provide new arts activities in their communities, she said. The Community Project Awards will be made to organizations seeking to employ Ohio artists in completing local projects with a strong community planning component. Funded projects will support creative professionals working to contribute to community recovery and revitalization, she said.

Mr. Katona went into greater detail on the grant guidelines and process prepared for the ARI programs. He shared that, as part of the marketing and outreach efforts promoting the General Operating Awards program, the OAC was able to identify many organizations that met the eligibility criteria, thus significantly extending the agency's reach to a constituent base that has not yet established a funding relationship with the agency.

Ms. Collins thanked Representative Tavia Galonski and the Ohio General Assembly for their support of public funding for the arts, which she said allows the OAC to offer initiatives such as the ARI. She also expressed gratitude for arts advocacy efforts taking place statewide.

Bill White asked for more information about the letter-of-interest (LOI) review process in place for the Community Project Awards. Mr. Katona responded, saying LOIs will undergo a screening process to ensure organizational eligibility and adherence to the grant program guidelines. He also added that the review process will take into consideration project elements such as geographic and cultural representation, community impact, and diversity of artforms represented. Mr. Katona concluded by expressing his hope that the ARI programs extend the OAC's impact to more arts organizations throughout Ohio, and he drew parallels to the agency's Fund Every County initiative.

#### **NEW BUSINESS: CONSTITUENT SATISFACTION SURVEY**

Ms. Warner asked Mr. Katona to discuss the results and analysis of the OAC's FY 2022 Constituent Satisfaction Survey. Mr. Katona provided an overview of the survey, noting that this is the fifth summary report generated from the agency's approach to monitoring constituent satisfaction. He explained that respondents were alerted that their responses would be anonymous, and that completion of the survey was not required to apply for or receive OAC funds. In summarizing this most recent iteration of the constituent survey, Mr. Katona said the OAC staff was pleased with the responses collected for the FY 2022 grant application period. He reiterated the importance of collecting candid feedback about agency practices, and he said responses and data will inform future agency planning and upcoming work on the *Essentials Plan 2021*.

Ms. Waldren asked Mr. Katona to specify what performance measures are considered when asking constituents about general customer service. Mr. Katona said constituents assess their access to agency resources and staff availability.

Mr. Hankins asked for clarification about the mention of DataArts in one of the survey responses. Mr. Katona explained that DataArts was previously titled the Cultural Data Project and added that it is a national initiative focused on collecting and analyzing financial and participation information from arts and cultural organizations. Mr. Hankins also inquired into how much time it takes for a constituent to complete the satisfaction survey, and at Ms. Collins' request, Mr. Roehrenbeck responded, stating that that the time commitment was minimal, based on his previous work experience as an arts administrator.

#### **NEW BUSINESS: 2021 QUARTERLY COVID-19 RECOVERY SURVEY**

Ms. Warner invited Mr. Katona to share the results of the OAC's 2021 Quarterly COVID-19 Recovery Survey. Mr. Katona began his overview by reminding the board that since March 2021, the OAC has been conducting quarterly, anonymous, and longitudinal constituent surveys to help understand the pace and progress of the Ohio arts and cultural sector's

recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that the results shared at the meeting showcase responses collected in the third-quarter survey. The final quarter's survey will be sent to constituents in December 2021, he said.

Mr. Katona explained that a link to the four-question online survey was emailed to the primary contact for approximately 700 current organizational applicants and grantees. Rather than focusing on profit/loss or current revenue projections, as various surveys have, these surveys instead examine arts leaders' overarching attitudinal sense of their organizations' financial health, impression of a return to normalcy, evolving planning priorities, and perceived staff morale, Mr. Katona said. The results seek to measure the field's ability to survive and ultimately thrive post-COVID-19.

Mr. White thanked Mr. Katona for his overview of the survey's findings and shared that the data instill in him a sense of optimism as he looks ahead to the future of the arts in Ohio. Mr. Hankins agreed and thanked Gov. DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for their continued investment in and support of the arts in Ohio.

*Representative Tavia Galonski left the meeting at 12:17 p.m.*

#### **NEW BUSINESS: FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES AND ETHICS TRAINING**

Ms. Warner shared the dates of OAC board and committee meetings for the remainder of calendar year 2022. She reminded the board that meetings will take place in-person during this timeframe, as currently required by state law. Ms. Warner also asked the board to review information on ethics training requirements.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

MOTION by Adam Shank, seconded by Bill White, to go into executive session to consider the compensation of a public employee. A roll call vote was held. Ginger Warner, Robb Hankins, Tina Husted, Farid Naffah, Adam Shank, Beth Waldren, Bill White, and Neal Zimmers voted yes. Jim Dicke, Jon Holt, Tom Johnson, Rita Mansour, and Darryl Mehaffie were absent from the meeting. **The motion carried 8-0.** Ms. Warner asked all who were not board members to leave, and the eight board members entered into executive session at 12:22 p.m. During executive session, Tina Husted left the meeting.

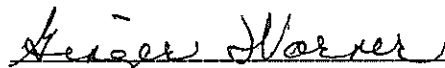
The board ended executive session at 12:38 p.m. and went back on the record.

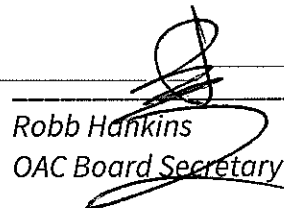
Ms. Warner reported that the Executive Committee met that morning and recommended an 18 percent increase to the executive director's salary. In considering the proposed increase, Ms. Warner said the committee and board reviewed the director's current compensation, finding it had not been increased since 2016 even as state wages generally rose by approximately 15 percent in that timeframe, and also finding it below the average when compared to executive directors' compensation across state government. Ms. Warner also

made clear that the agency's budget for grants is totally separate from its budget for salaries and administration, and while the line items for administration have remained flat, consistently conservative management of the administrative budget will accommodate the increase. Mr. White added that Ms. Collins' achievements and performance received positive reviews by the board. He said, in considering Ms. Collins' compensation, board members took note that she has successfully positioned the OAC before the state legislature, earning their confidence as illustrated by continued budget allocation increases, plus \$20 million dollars from the CARES Act as determined by the Governor, all of which flows directly to the OAC's constituents. He said she had managed the OAC during the pandemic and maintained the confidence of her staff. Finally, he concluded that Ms. Collins has managed relationships and alliances beyond Ohio, earning significant funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and other sources, that again flows directly to agency constituents.

MOTION by Ginger Warner to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation to increase the executive director's salary by 18 percent. **Motion carried without dissent.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

  
Ginger Warner  
OAC Board Chair

  
Robb Hankins  
OAC Board Secretary