



# Maryland State Arts Council Program Policy Evaluation Committee

MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, August 20  
1:00 – 2:30pm  
Google Meet

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It shall be the duty of the Program Policy Evaluation Committee to review and assess, as necessary, ongoing programs maintained by the Council; to study new program initiatives for Council consideration; to direct the Council's ongoing planning process with respect to policies, programs, and Council operations; to make recommendations for Council action on these matters when appropriate; and to undertake such other duties as the Council may from time to time direct. The committee shall consist of no fewer than three members

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In attendance: Albita Rivera, Ruby Lopez Harper, Shelley Morhaim, Chad Buterbaugh, Laura Weiss, Emily Sollenberger, Cathy Teixeira, Alysha Suryah, Steven Skerritt-Davis, Leslie Gillard

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:04 p.m. following guiding documents.

**Albita made a motion to approve the May 14 meeting minutes. Ruby seconded. All in favor and the motion passed.**

## Line Items Proposal

- Steven - Reviewed the timeline options to develop proposals to implement for FY27 grant cycle. Add item to November meeting for December Council approval to still be able to operate in the guidelines for the Grants for Organization (GFO) program, and also communicate with grantees ahead of the General Assembly session so grantees are aware any actions taken in FY25 session will affect their FY27 grant.
- Any proposals would be reviewed by the Commerce Department before a vote to ensure everyone is on the same page.



- Goal for Line Items issue - Create a plan forward for the staff to create language to recommend to the PPE Committee in November for consideration:

Discussion:

- Question raised about departmental openness to a policy change, noting that the ineligibility option would be subject to greater scrutiny than the consider option previously passed was.
- Request from Council for staff to discuss with Commerce leadership to understand openness relative to equity/disparity considerations.
- Steven - Reviews Line Items Slides:
  - Clarification raised that there was no change to \$925k of line items in MSAC budget, the budget cut was to MSAC programs.
  - Steven mentioned that MSAC staff will work with the Department of Education to get clarity about the program called State Aided Institutions Funding (SAI), regarding if these grants fit the MSAC Line Items definition.
  - POCA Grants - Steven reviewed the list of Preservation of Cultural Arts Fund grants that MSAC has been directed to pay, grants that are mandated within the statute, and the BSO "Bridge" funding.

Discussion:

- Clarification about the difference between Line Items that were added into budget language by Legislators, then added to the MSAC budget and the POCA grants list, which was directed by Legislators from Admissions and Tax Revenue. Note that MCA is advocating for changing the statute to add more to the MSAC budget to offer more grants.
- Clarification that a policy if adopted would affect FY27 grant calculations. FY24 line items will be deducted from grantees allowable income for the purpose of FY26 grants, under current policy.
- Steven reviewed Points to Consider, to include a link to NASAA research on line item policies.



- Steven reviewed the Options to Consider policies.

#### Discussion:

- Council asked for staff preference. Staff expressed that ineligibility is most equitable, but acknowledged that the deducting policy includes more guardrails and the consider policy would need clear parameters to be equitable and transparent.
- Councilors asked about history, Steven stated that line items were added in FY24. The number of line items is the same in FY25 but the dollar amount is less. The POCA line list varies every year, but approximately 15 - 20 are the same from FY23.
- Shelley expressed support for the consider policy and suggested having Howard County constituents speak to the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee to advocate and educate for the arts. Ruby agreed that councilors advocating would be a good strategy.
- Ruby asked to review the national picture. Steven stated that Democratic led states have seen an uptick in line items generally, based on NASAA conversations. Steven reviewed the slides on the consider policy for New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee from the NASAA research. Suggested our staff reach out to these states in the event the consider policy is approved. Connecticut, Florida, Missouri and Ohio are ineligible. Cathy added that the majority of the organizations on the POCA are unaware they're receiving this MSAC grant.
- Ruby asked about the size of the organizations receiving POCA grants? Cathy responded, small to mid.
- Councilors stated that more education to grantees and Legislators is needed and asked clarifying questions about the timing of the approved policy, which goes into effect for the FY26 grant cycle.
- Ruby suggests keeping what we have, then have a bigger discussion on the full scope, then watch to see how it goes.
- Albita stated that if we decide to choose a different policy, we need to educate Legislators on their impact to organizations.



- Shelley agrees with Ruby and suggests having more discussions with MCA.
- Ruby agrees that a united arts community is necessary, but needs to go beyond the larger community.
- Shelley asked about MCA's position on these potential policies. Steven - MCA is against line items, and focused on redirecting POCA revenue to MSAC.
- Shelley - Do other states have an equivalent agency to MCA? Steven - Yes, and advocacy organizations coordinate nationally.
- Councilors asked about notification of the current policy and asked about response. Steven reviewed that an FYI was sent to organizations who received recent line items in these categories, and in the Grants Organization Guidelines and the policy is intentional on stating "line items that were accepted by an organization" and that is reiterated in Cathy's communications. The response has been understanding.
- Emily explained the application financial table, where specific categories are labeled "not allowable" that applicants complete.
- Steven confirmed the path forward to have staff have conversations with other states, then report back to the November meeting.
- Albita - Will it help for Councilors to reach out to other Councilors in other states. Steven - Yes, a staff level and Council level perspective are helpful.

### **Folklife Network Policy Proposal**

- Chad reviewed the policy change proposal around the budget threshold at which our Folklife Network grantees are required to provide an external audit, in order to increase their traditional arts operating budget from \$600k to \$750k.

**Albita made a motion to approve the proposal. Shelley and Ruby seconded. All in favor and the motion passed.**

### **New Business**

- No new business



The meeting adjourned at 2:11pm