



# MSAC Emergency Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2020  
Maryland State Arts Council

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Council Members present: Jack Rasmussen, Benny Russell, Carole Alexander, Anne West, John Schratweiser, Zoe Charlton, Jacqueline Copeland, Shelley Morhaim, Sumita Kim, Lily Bengfort, Joan Lyon, Timothy App, Carla Du Pree, Julia Madden, MSAC Staff Present: Ryan Patterson, Liesel Fenner, Ken Skrzysz, Steven Skerritt-Davis, Catherine Frost, Derrick Quevedo, Precious Blake, Chad Buterbaugh, Dana Parsons, Rosa Chang,

Chair Jack Rasmussen called the meeting to order.

Dana Parsons provided an overview of the grant staff recommendations process.

## Emergency Grant Applications:

- By May 1 at midnight, 165 total applications were submitted totaling requests for \$2,675,172
  - 10 applicants were ineligible
- 155 applications were reviewed and evaluated
- 1M recommended across 125 applications
  - 65 arts organizations (869,318)
  - 60 independent artists (130,682)
- Description of modified/canceled events/operations
- Description of additional funding needs
- Financial comparison of projected budget (before COVID) vs. actuals (as a result of COVID)
  - Arts Organizations only
- Budget for Funding Request
  - Includes a comparison of finances to a similar time period mirroring the request
- Description of how the funding request supports significant need and essential operations

## Emergency Grant Review Process:

- Submitted, eligible applications were assigned to (1) Ken, Steven, or Dana and (2) a Program Director specializing in the applicant's artistic discipline
  - Assigned staff scored the applications in connection to the rubric.
  - Assigned staff recommended a funding amount based on



application score, need for funding (Question 5 of the application), and overall budget of 1M.

- Applications whose recommended funding amounts did not match (by the 2 submitted staff reviewers) were brought to discussion.
  - Based on the discussion (re-evaluating the applicant's score, need for the funding request, and the overall budget of 1M), a final recommendation was recorded.
- At the end of the discussion period, Ken, Steven, and Dana worked through the final recommendations to arrive at a budget of 1M. This discussion included:
  - Re-evaluation of the applicant's score, need for the funding request, and the overall budget of 1M
  - For arts organizations: The percentage of the request in comparison to their overall operating budget
  - For arts organizations: The ineligibility of the organization to receive funding from other state/federal resources (PPP, SBA, NEA, NEH, MD Humanities).

[Emergency Grant Recommendations](#) presented and reviewed by the council.

**Emergency Grant Funding Executive Committee Vote:**

Julie Madden made a motion to fund regarding \$2,001-\$5,000 funding recommendations. Shelley Morhaim seconded the motion. All in favor. Carole Alexander, Julie Madden recused themselves from individual artist Nicoletta de la Brown.

**Emergency Grant Funding Full Council Vote:**

Benny Russell how the amount was determined for Baltimore County Arts Guild. Dana explained that the comparison of their grant amount and operating budget were taken into consideration. A larger grant request would have been disproportionate to how other organizations would have been helped.

Julie questioned how many county arts councils applied. Dana informed the council that only two applied. John Schratwieser commented that although only two were being funded, it doesn't mean we weren't able to reach county arts councils. Others may have not had the need and made the appropriate decision to leave this particular funding to where it could do more good.

Jackie Copeland inquired about the issues with Center Stage's grant request. Dana explained that the application was stunning and impact clear, but the need was not as strong as other organizations.

Councilors raised questions about independent artist Jeffrey Auxer's request. Emily Sollenberger shared that he's a glass artist in Berlin, MD and majority of



his requests are for utilities. Dana confirmed that he lives and works in his studio so the request is to maintain both home and studio. John asked if there is a county breakdown. Dana will follow up with the information. Carla Dupree asked if any of the artists stated how long they could get the requested funds and Ken Skresez informed the council that a timeline was requested with all applications.

John made a motion to fund \$5,000 or more funding recommendations. Carole seconded the motion. All in favor. Julie recused herself from the Academy Art Museum Inc. Jackie recused herself from Maryland African American Museum Corporation. Jack recused himself from Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture Inc.

Shelley asked if there would be another round in the next fiscal year. Ken shared that once the updated allocation from the Department of Budget and Management then that information will be provided by the June council meeting at that point the council can recommend an emergency grant line.

Anne West asked when applicants would get the money. Dana reassured the council that after grant agreements are signed applicants should receive funds within 6-8 weeks.

Keyonna Penick presented Article IV Section 2 Elections from the by-laws in regards to the nominating committee.

Lily Bengfort made a motion to elect Carole, Shelley and Zoe Charlton for the nominating committee. John seconded the motion. All in favor. Julie recused.

Jack named Carole as chair of the nominating committee.

Nominating committee to meet and make nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer positions. Slate of nominees to be sent out to the full council by May 11, 2020. Elections to take place June 10, 2020 during the annual meeting.

Zoe asked if the grants to individual artists are taxable. Steven Skerritt-Davis informed the council that they are.

Jack shared that the staff have done an incredible job and it's an honor to work with the staff. Anne West and the rest of the council members agreed. Ken thanked the council for their support.

John mentioned that the arts task force group is meeting soon and the taxable piece might be helpful for legislators and lawmakers. Anne mentioned also would like that group to consider extending non employment benefits for the whole arts industry.

Timothy App asked if the council would meet in person for the next council meeting. Ken informed the council that meeting in person is highly unlikely as things are constantly changing.

Jack adjourned the meeting.