



MSAC Full Council Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2020
Maryland State Arts Council

In attendance: Council: Jack Rasmussen, Julie Spangler-Madden, Carole Alexander, Shelley Morhaim, John Schratwieser, Carla Du Pree, Joan Lyon, Jacqueline Copeland, Lily Bengfort, Timothy App, Zoe Charlton, Sumita Kim, Benny Russell. Staff: Ken Skrzysz, Steven Skerritt-Davis, Liesel Fenner, Emily Sollenberger, Laura Weiss, Derrick Quevedo, Shaunte Roper, Kayla Morgan, Keyonna Penick, Tammy Opper, Precious Blake, Rosa Chang, Lillian Jacobson, Arthur Brown. Absent: Senator Ronald Young and Dana Parsons

Call to Order and Introduction of Secretary Schulz, Jack Rasmussen

Secretary Schulz addressed the council and believes one year transition has gone well. The executive director and staff have been phenomenal during transitioning and with joint efforts she is pleased about where we are today. It highlights the strength that we have as a combined effort through the whole of Commerce. The goal is equity and fairness and with our partnership between the Office of Tourism we are making it happen.

As the legislative session is upon us, the Secretary reminded us to continue to speak about the great things we're doing if we get the call. As well as the importance of MSAC, Tourism and Film. The arts provide that community strength and we need the expansion of programs in more communities. Commerce is focusing on the retention and creation of jobs and the difference it makes to bring and retain those types of entities. What it means to the individuals in the jobs and their stories, personal prosperity. Prosperity with a purpose is the positive mission of this year.

Assistant Secretary, Tom Riford would also like to give a round of applause for the staff at MSAC doing great things. The board thanked Secretary Schulz for putting our work in a broader context and board member Shelly Morhaim thanked her and Mr. Riford for their leadership.

Equity and Justice Training Discussion

Alysia Lee, Fine Arts Coordinator for the Maryland State Department of Education led the council in an equity and justice training session. Council members shared that being able to share in a safe space is great. Carole Alexander felt sitting around with fellow council members gave her insight she hadn't known about them. Jacqueline Copeland would like to take the training to her board to bring them closer together. The council is excited to see how the training will trickle down since training has been for several arts organizations. The question now is



“how do we take what we’ve done and apply it to policy structure?”

Council members agree that we have to understand the importance of a diverse organization because that is a very important aspect and we all contribute differently.

Financial Report, Shaunte Roper

After reviewing the financial report Lily Bengfort questioned why there was a surplus. The fiscal officer explained that there are things that have not been paid as of yet, but we’re on the right road. The fiscal team reviews the budget at the end of January and once it is in front of the council, allocation is their decision. Federal money is assigned to a specific expenditure and gets spent first.

Executive Director’s Report, Ken Skrzysz

The ED informed the councilors of a new approach to submitting expense vouchers. ED shared the Poet Laureate's report as well as the staff field work report.

In our efforts of transparency MSAC staff has made several visits in all of the counties in Maryland over the last year. Shelly wanted to know if these visits were requested or a part of outreach and as the ED explained it has been a mixture of both. He also informed the council that the staff keeps an eye on the visits monthly to determine where to spend more time. Mr. Riford shared that this field work is extremely valuable to the Department of Commerce as we are not viewed as an ivory tower only in Baltimore. Carole mentioned that politically numbers are helpful, when asking for more money.

ED also shared the webinar series schedule which is an intensive period, once a year in which the staff contributed topics which range from MSAC Grant Writing 101 to Folklife Opportunities for Independent Artists.

Council comments re: Program Reports

Council member John Schratwieser- such good things happened. Very excited.

Program, Performance and Evaluation Committee Report, Carla DuPree Equitable Funding Formula

The previous policies are recommended for approval by the Program, Performance and Evaluation Committee.

Motion: Carla Du Pree

Second: Shelley Morhaim

Discussion: Policy revision and review of equitable funding came through editors meeting. Baselined distribution, then what's left would be broken down by free and reduced meals, then student population. In the proposed budget almost all counties get more. Historically teaching artists would contract with counties and they would dictate where money went. This formula allows MSAC to determine how funds are distributed equitably.

Carla suggested we have talking points so council members are on the same page when sharing the changes. The executive director reassured the council that this formula moves us into equitable access to funding across the state. Joan mentioned that larger counties with multiple school districts, special



training/pulling boards of education or schools are also factors to consider. John suggested small grants for re engagement- traditionally no, new understanding that our connection is to fine art coordination. Everyone agreed that this is something that MSAC should be carrying. Ken reminded the council that historically there has been no coordination between state funding and school districts. Carla stated we must understand the history.

In Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Governance Committee Report, John Schratwieser Updated Bylaws

The previous policies are recommended for approval by the Governance Committee.

Motion: John Schratwieser
Second: Carole Alexander

Discussion: The governance committee met in November to review and update bylaws based on recommendations from the Assistant Attorney General's office. By laws were sent to council members for review prior to the council meeting.

In Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Strategic Planning Implementation Update, Ken Skrzesz

The executive director discussed accomplishments, goals and recommended language edits to the strategic plan. Staff are taking equitable work and putting it into action. Monthly review of goals and public calls have been made a part of procedure. Equitable, diverse, inclusion pieces have been lifted by other states.

New model for MSAC's teaching artist roster invites all artists across the state to upload their own page and then meta tagging them with other opportunities. The idea is, if you are a musician in Saint Mary's county you could tag yourself, increasing employment opportunities.

MSAC Strategic Plan Recommended Language Edits

Motion: Lily Bengfort
Second: Anne Winter West

Discussion: As Mr. Riford mentioned, "partnership" can mean monetary obligations and the council should avoid such language.

In Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

New Business, Legislative Update

Carole shared her concerns for the start of the legislative session and wanted to discuss and clearly define what the council can or cannot do as far as lobbying and who can do it for us.

Nicholas Cohen, Executive Director for the Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) explained MCA are the lobbyists. Council can share concerns and provide statements, but his office communicates with lawmakers. MSAC staff cannot



lobby. Councilors are appointed to make sure we are responsible for state money.

Understanding our impact is geared toward government and general assembly, and highlights appreciation. We provide documentation as a way to educate lawmakers and to remind them what it looks like and what is mandated. MCA meets with leadership, explains our why and our impact. Traditionally the chair was heavily involved, but now council members are more engaged and the invitation to other councilors for hearings is open. Upcoming MD Arts Day is an important day of civic engagement and advocacy training. Lawmakers show up because they know it's important.

New Business

Sunshine fund- members of council, privately- for flowers, thank you notes, etc. Once transfer has taken place, the governance chair will put it into an account and let everyone know.

Vice chair Julia Spangler-Madden mentioned an equal justice initiative in Montgomery, Alabama and would like the board to look into it.

Carla feels the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) should report to us every once in a while to let us know what they can do for us. Advisor of the People of Color Affinity group convenes by phone with people of color throughout the country and provides a safe space to discuss with an open invitation.

Emily Sollenberger- capacity grants, staff, org, researched through NASAA, in theory nonprofits move to a certain level and then need a little support to expand. Carla and Jacqueline are interested in discussing capacity building grants further.

NASAA contacted Rosa Chang for the Natural Dye Initiative.

Annual ED review next executive meeting to discuss how to move forward.

Questions were raised concerning MD Artscape. How can MSAC help artists? Is it possible for the Baltimore Office of Promotion of Arts (BOPA) to commit to some portion of the marketplace for artists at a reduced rate? Designating a stage for MD artists, BOPA have historically identified artists outside of MD.

Timothy App - Some would benefit from a booth and some would not, it has excluded artists. We would have to market opportunities. Lily wonders if there is a need for our assistance. Zoe mentioned having a way to support artists that want to participate in artscape and thinks it would be a great idea. Consider already existing networks, partner with spaces to be effective. Carole thinks we can apply these ideas once we're in our new building.

Adjourn 1:13pm

Motion: John Schratwieser
Second: Carole Alexander