

**LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING
Louisiana Municipal Association
700 North 10th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
August 3, 2006
10:00 a.m.**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Christine Weeks called the meeting to order at 10:10.

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members present:

Christine Weeks	Susan Reed
Susan Turner	Mary Joseph
Juana Woodard	LeAnne Weill
Susan Brunner	

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members absent:

Jose Canseco	Marion Drennen, <i>Proxy to S. Brunner</i>
Neil Early, <i>Proxy to C. Weeks</i>	Anna B. Ferguson, <i>Proxy to C. Weeks</i>
Angela Hammerli, <i>Proxy to J. Woodard</i>	Molly Sooter
Cynthia W. Weirick	Frederick L. Zeagler

Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) staff present:

Veronique Le Melle	Sparkle Hurst
Dabne Whitmore	Dee Hamilton
Maida Owens	Ann Russo
Pearlie Johnson	Katherine Marquette

Pam Breaux, Assistant Secretary, Office of Cultural Development

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Susan Reed motioned to approve, and Susan Turner seconded. Minutes approved as presented.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Weeks attended the Southern Arts Federation (SAF) spring Board meeting with Ms. Le Melle and Ms. Breaux. Ms. Weeks reported that Le Melle had been asked to Chair the Disaster Preparation Task Force, which will work on an Emergency Preparedness Plan for arts organizations and artists. Breaux is the Chair of the Program Committee for Southern Arts, and the Cultural Economy Taskforce for the Southern Region. Breaux is bringing her experience with the Cultural Economy and the work of Mt. Auburn Associates helping to spread that knowledge and expertise. SAF is the fiscal agent and the driving force behind the National Endowment for the Arts "Operation Homecoming Project" which is a project designed to engage military personnel and their family members, by encouraging them to write about their wartime experience or what it was like to be separated and worried about someone. All branches of the services were involved. A book is to be published this fall and Southern Arts will receive the royalties. There were significant artists who participated with the military personnel and their families. Authors, like Tom Clancy, to major poets who traveled around the United States and the Middle East participated in this project. Weeks encouraged the Council to support the military if they live in an area that has a military base. Weeks also asked the Council to encourage our elected officials to be there to help educate the people as to

the basic necessity of the arts in dealing with life, especially the tough things in life. Gerri Combs, Director of the Southern Arts Federation, is planning to attend the October meeting.

The Office of Boards and Commissions will begin looking at appointments to the State Arts Council. Current members continue to serve outside of their original terms of appointment. The enabling legislation says a certain number of the 15 council positions will be chosen from nominations from the field through the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts or other arts organizations. That process has begun, LPA is asking the regional administrators to work within their regions to present nominees. Ms. Weeks asked the LPA to be especially mindful that the Council should consist of people who are artist, from arts organizations, who are civic leaders, and who are in the business world to have a well balanced Council. She also asked that they be aware of ethnicity, geography, urban, and rural. They have gotten a list from the Regional Distributing Agencies (RDA) and are going through it. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House each have an appointment. By January 2007, letters of appointment/re-appointment are expected to go out.

Ms. Weeks stated that the Arts' staff has done an excellent job with the implementation of the new grants process. It's going to be very exciting to see how grants that were approved will play out over the next year or two. To see how arts organizations are strengthened and become more viable parts of their community and strengthen their own community. Kudos to everyone who worked on it.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Le Melle referred to the information contained in the Council packet and introduced the new staff reports. This year staff reports were not sent to panelists, but in the future they will be sent to the panelists when they receive the applications. This allows the panelists to have background information on the organization when they are doing their individual reviews. Also in the packet is the breakdown of grants funding recommendations including the final scoring sheets for each grant category. There is also a synopsis of backgrounds on the fellowship winners. The 2007 Budget, prepared by Johnson, with input from Le Melle was included.

We received slightly less money from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The bottom-line figure remains the same, a total of \$618,000. The Endowment has created American Masterpiece as a new category. It is part of the NEA chairman's new initiatives. The general operating which is the basic state grant, and Challenge America have decreased by \$20,000. The state direct general fund was \$4.9 million, that is \$600,000 short of our original request.

Allocations have gone out to all regions for Decentralization (DAF). Statewide grants included the new stabilization category. 49 applications were received in the Stabilization category, and 42 organizations were funded across the state. Le Melle reminded the Council the Stabilization category replaced General Operating Support (GOS) that funded 16 organizations last year. 65 Letters of Intent were received for the Capacity Building category. 46 of those organizations followed through with applications and 24 were funded. 25 applications were received in Arts-in-Education and 17 applications were funded. Folk Arts received 3 applications and 2 of them were funded. 99 applications were received for Individual Artists, and 21 were funded. The Council was informed at the March meeting that only 10 fellowships would be awarded this year.

The Cultural Economy Initiative Part 2 is the Lt. Governor's second stage of our Cultural Economy Initiative. This is being spearheaded by Assistant Secretary Breaux. She will be working with the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation. They will bring back Mt. Auburn Associates to look at our industry Post-Katrina and Rita, make recommendations, and devise a plan for action for the future. The FY07 Cultural Economy Summit will be in Baton Rouge the first week in November.

Our operating budget for FY07 will be \$989,000. This has decreased approximately \$200,000 from what was budgeted in operating last year. The budget will be tight, but it should allow the staff to do the increased travel that was promised, and the monitoring that is now required. A breakdown of exact arts grants figures, in each discipline, was presented.

Le Melle gave the Council an overview of the new panel process. When the panels started, we were under Governor's freeze and were not allowed to conduct physical panels; we could only conduct conference calls or remote panels. Many panelists joined the meeting through a conference call. This allowed for some positive by-products; we were once again able to have out-of-state panelists as well as in-state panelists. Another by-product of having a remote panel is that, in keeping panels open to the public, we provided a separate listening room for applicants. The feedback from applicants is that they would like to be in a separate room, even if we returned to a physical panel for the next year. It allowed them to discuss what the panel was discussing and to discuss each other's applications. In some cases, it turned into peer assistance and great exchanges of ideas between applicants from different regions. Weill asked if it was well attended by the applicants. Le Melle responded it was very well attended. The applicants wanted to come and hear what was going on and how their applications were received in Stabilization and Capacity Building, the new categories. While panelists were kept to only constructive criticism, their critique of the applications were quite directed and quite open, which many of the applicants respected and appreciated.

The out-of-state panelists were very clear about shortcomings in the applications, and why it would not be competitive on a national level. Having the panel not looking at the applicant allowed them to be very clear and free to say what they felt or their reactions to some of the applications. The program staff needs additional training from the Division on assessing and assisting organizations with completing the applications. We also need to present our application instructions in a more clear fashion.

The new scoring system was utilized (gray sheet). The panelists scored organizations several times, including pre-scores before the panel meeting. Included in the Board packet are the final scores. Once the final scoring was done, the panel meeting became a closed-panel session. In past panels, the panel looked at the organizations after the cut-off line was established. Everything above that line was put into a computerized formula to arrive at funding. These were small awards of \$3,000 - \$5,000 for a \$30,000 project. This year, the panels were not bound to a computer formula. For organizations above the line, we had the panels address their budgets. They would then recommend meaningful grant amounts, meaningful investments in a project or in an organization. Only the Executive Director and the Deputy Director know the total of available funds for any given category. Brunner asked if there was a cap on the request amount. Le Melle answered in Stabilization, when the organizations received the letter to proceed, this letter told them the range of funding they were eligible for. For example, the Institution Level Funding range was between \$25,000 and \$60,000; Community Impact Groups, the small Grassroots groups were eligible for \$2,500 to \$7,500. In a blind-pot panel, there usually is money left in the category, and there was money left over in almost every funding category. Depending on the amount left over, the panel was given Phase 2 assignment. In the Phase 2 assignment, the panelists were each given a blank sheet of paper. They were asked to put their name on the top. They were then told to use their own expertise and knowledge of the state, the field, and the projects, to look at the entire applicant pool, whether above the line or below the line, and to vote for up to 3 groups. They were not allowed to discuss it at this point, they were only allowed to write it down and hand in their ballot. In Arts-in-Education, there were 6 panelists, and they were allowed 3 votes on each of their ballots. That meant 18 single votes. Of those 18 votes, 3 organizations got the majority. In Capacity Building, 2 organizations got the majority of the votes. Those organizations were then voted above the line, and the panel as a group reestablished that they

were accepting those groups to be funded and decided on a funding amount. The final process, Phase 3, was the establishment of a Reconsideration Fund. The Fund provides a mechanism to reassign and redistribute the money when it cannot be used by a grantee in a timely fashion. When we know what funds are available in the Reconsideration Fund, we will bring the Council the list with information such as: what level were these organizations already funded; how much more they could possible receive; and what the staff recommendation is for reconsideration. In order to ensure the panel process was respected, the first recommendation of who is on this list came directly from each panel. It will be up to the Council to decide within that list. Question was asked if there would be any type of distribution among the different categories. Le Melle answered yes. The Division will work it out and present to the Council along with the rationale. Many of the projects may have already been completed, or may be at a point where they cannot expand their scope because of funding. Those programs would not be recommended for reconsideration from staff even though they are on the list from the panel. A sheet was distributed with organizations put in the Reconsideration Fund (legal sheet). Brunner asked for clarification on criteria for Institutional such as the Red River Festival. Le Melle answered that all institutions must have a budget over a million dollars. They also had to have a statewide, national or international impact, to be impacting the field on a much larger basis. Brunner asked if an applicant could receive a lower score but be granted more funds in this process. Le Melle answered yes. The scoring addresses the quality of the application and the program. The funding was an investment. Reed expressed great appreciation with the new process. Under the old system, the funding amount often was less than the money spent in staff time used administering the grant. This new investment approach is great. Le Melle invited the Council to come and observe the panel process. Turner thought the panelists and applicants being in separate rooms was really good.

This year we had an unprecedented number of line items that went directly to organizations. Question asked to define line item. A Legislator can award direct funding to any non-profit or organization through their line item process. This money can be designated for a specific project, program, for general operating, or for capital expenditures. The Division usually has 2 or 3 organizations per year that usually get the money for a capital expenditure, an equipment purchase, or a special program. This year there were 35 line items awarded statewide through OCD. 12 were assigned to the Division of the Arts. The problem with that is it reflects in the Division's budget. Many legislators thought the Division had their funds restored, and we received more than we had in a year, because they saw the line item total. They didn't see that the money was not for distribution across the state. \$3 million in line items were appropriated for specific groups. Le Melle will review and approve every progress report or have it rewritten. Le Melle will also conduct site monitoring. Johnson will process project finance reports monthly from the 12 groups, and quarterly from those who are getting general operating support. Joseph is pleased the groups will be monitored.

Le Melle informed the Council that in mid September there would be an RDA Retreat in Baton Rouge. We will be bringing down all of the regional development agencies, executive directors, and their CDCs. Whitemore will be working on trainings with the CDCs, and Le Melle will work with the executive directors. We are also arranging for the executive directors to tell us some areas that they feel need technical assistance in, such as facilities management, since many of them have new facilities. We will be bringing a consultant to work with them on better facilities plans and so forth. The LPA will be working with us to give all of the RDAs an updated course on new advocacy tools and how to do regional and local advocacy. We will be examining with the RDAs (the Budget page 2), the LAA extensions. That's the general operating support for RDAs. If the RDAs are expected to distribute the decentralization and work as a partner with LDOA on a regional basis, you can't work as a partner to be a leader in a region if you are competing with your region for grant money.

One of the things we have been exploring is how to develop an operating agreement with the RDAs in the 8 regions. They would no longer be eligible for funding, but they would have an operating agreement that would govern how they handle decentralization. It would also pay them an operating fee for doing that. Woodard agreed and thought this was the best idea she's heard in a long time. Reed asked if Le Melle was going to present the state panel process to the locals? Le Melle answered yes. The Council commended the staff on the creative and sensible new ideas and amazing changes that came out in a single 3-month period. Over the past several years, they have seen an increased growth in the accountability of the grants process. We are continuing in a good direction that helps us to be able to say that we are trying to be good stewards of public dollars. It's easier to explain what's going on when a solid process and accountability is there, and we are trying to close the gaps. The right road has been taken and progress is being made.

NEW BUSINESS

There were 2 appeals from the FY07 grants panel. One came from the Baton Rouge Symphony for their Arts-in-Education category. The Executive Committee met yesterday afternoon and read all the supporting materials, and held in-depth discussion. The Executive Committee recommended to the Division to uphold the panel score and the panel recommendations relative to funding. The second appeal was from the Louisiana Art and Science Museum for participation in a school-based arts program. In reviewing this appeal, the Executive Committee concurred with the panel's comments. The Executive Committee is recommending that both be upheld as recommended by the panels. Both organizations did receive funding in other categories. Woodard motioned to uphold the panel recommendations, and seconded by Weill. The panel's recommendation regarding the appeals is accepted. There was one other adjustment considered for Art-in-Education. The Baton Rouge Arts Council was originally recommended for a low level of funding. When the Executive Committee looked at the process itself, there was a consensus from the Executive Committee for that particular organization to receive funding. Le Melle stated the panel originally recommended \$5,000. The Executive Committee, upon recommendation from the staff, is recommending \$7,000. Reed moved to accept the panel recommendations for all categories, with the amendment that the Baton Rouge Arts Council AIE grant be increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Turner seconded. Grants are approved as amended.

The proposed 2006-2007 meeting schedule for consideration included the following dates; Thursday, August 3, 2006; Monday, October 23, 2006; Friday, January 12, 2007; and Monday, March 26, 2007. Proposed meeting dates accepted. Sparkle will do e-mail to Council with dates of proposed meetings. Whitmore reminded the Council of the information being on the website.

GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS

Whitmore and Hammerli have been working on the Governor's Arts Awards. Hammerli was not present at this meeting. The Division staff met in March to setup a plan and get feedback. We presented it to Special Events Committee. The date is tentatively scheduled for November 8th, to be a part of the Cultural Economy Summit. The "Promotion of the Arts" award has been renamed the "Leadership in the Arts" award. If you are doing promotion, development, or leadership of arts in your community, it really represented the past winners of that award better at the title. We will continue with the special award for Cultural Economy Development, which will be determined by the Department of Cultural, Recreation, and Tourism. There will also be a special award this year to recognize outstanding service to the arts community in the state based on the impact of Hurricanes Rita or Katrina. A third special segment of the Governor's Arts Awards will be recognition of our 10 fellowship winners. There's also going to be a special award we are hoping to have designed by a glass artist from the state. The location of the Governor's Arts Awards will depend on the location of the Cultural Economy Summit. The application and deadline will be available later, and all

information will be available on-line. Weeks added that it has the potential, being tied with the Cultural Economy Summit, for a much broader audience and awareness. This is outstanding, especially for our recipients and our fellowship winners, to have people outside the immediate arts community to be aware of the gems we have in our state. They are being recognized, applauded, encouraged to continue their contributions, and their own professional development.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Advocacy

The Advocacy Committee for the State Arts Council is working with the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA) as they restructure. They met with the Executive Committee during their retreat earlier this summer. They will meet again on August 8th to review the budget and advocacy plan. A resolution was passed that will facilitate a study between the Finance Review Committee and the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism to look at the impact of giving an Arts tax credit on a state level. Breaux added that we are required to submit a report to the legislature in March regarding what Louisiana's opportunities would be in tax credits in the arts, and specifically, for artists. They have begun working on commissioning an economist, who has knowledge of cultural economy work, to help us do a preliminary report on the impact of such tax credits in other places like Ireland, Hawaii and a few others where they have been attempted. We plan to have the report completed by October to begin the process of responding to the Senate. We will be working with the Senate staff of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs, as well as the Department of Economic Development to jointly move that project forward. We will start the process with our own researcher to feed that information to the other entities. Question asked if it would be a permanent tax credit, or temporary in response to the storms. Breaux answered that most come with sunset dates, and then you always have the opportunity to renew those. We would try to encourage something that was in effect for 3 to 5 years before it sunset so that we can build some results to report. Senator Willie Mount is the legislator who introduced the Arts Tax Resolution. The Council should write a thank you note to the Senator Mount and tell her that we really appreciate what she is doing. Senator Mount has done so much for the arts. The potential of the impact to keeping artists in Louisiana and bringing the arts to the table of discussions of anything related to the economy or what could impact us is very important. We must insure that we get input from the Arts Division and the Office of Cultural Development. Thanks to Pam Breaux for her willingness to be available. Woodard asked about the legislation on consignment sales. They would have to pay an estimated sales tax or something. Breaux said that legislation was passed, but it hasn't taken place yet.

Brunner said that it's important for the Council to understand that the advocacy is not just related to legislation, it is related to how we view and how the state is able to work with artists and arts businesses, and bringing any cultural economy business to the table here.

The LPA is focusing on restructuring its plan and developing a marketing plan. They are aware that legislators are looking for issues to write bills that they are going to be able to submit soon. Brunner is encouraging the Council, if anyone who has anything in particular from their region, to contact her or someone through the LPA, because the more the legislators are aware of what the issues are while they are in the process, and there are a lot of issues out there. Even if it is an issue the legislators will not support, it is important to bring them to the table now so that they know the cultural economy is important and they have that message. Brunner will have more answers after the next meeting. Weeks asked to Council to continue to encourage the people they know in their region to communicate with their local officials as well as their senators and representatives on the state and federal level.

Policy

None

Special Events

Governor's Arts Awards – (see section above)

Special Presentation by Dee Hamilton

After almost 21 years of sharing her gifts, Dee Hamilton is retiring from the Louisiana Division of the Arts. Hamilton focused on 4 broad highlights: discipline growth in the state, service organization, artist growth, and her own personal growth. Hamilton thanked everyone and received a standing ovation.

Weeks stated the Council wishes to express their deep appreciation to Hamilton for her years of service and for all that she has done to promote the growth within the disciplines with which she worked. The State has been well served.

OLD BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURN

Susan Turner motioned to adjourn. Susan Brunner seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:58.