

**LOUISIANA STATE ARTS COUNCIL  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
Louisiana Municipal Association  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 1  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
March 27, 2006  
11:00 a.m.**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Christine Weeks called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members present:

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Christine Weeks    | Neil Early     |
| Susan Reed         | Susan Brunner  |
| Cynthia W. Weirick | Marion Drennen |
| Susan Turner       | LeAnne Weill   |

Louisiana State Arts Council (LSAC) members absent:

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Jose Canseco  | Angela Hammerli   |
| Mary Joseph   | Molly Sooter      |
| Juana Woodard | Frederick Zeagler |
| Anna Ferguson |                   |

Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA) staff present:

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Veronique Le Melle | Dabne Liebke |
| Sparkle Hurst      | Ann Russo    |
| Maida Owens        | Kitty Pheney |

Scott Hutcheson – Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA), Arts Council of New Orleans

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Ms. Weeks welcomed Scott Hutcheson, the new President of the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA). Mr. Hutcheson is currently the Director of Operations at the Arts Council of New Orleans. Ms. Weeks asked Mr. Hutcheson if he had any comments from the LPA. Mr. Hutcheson greeted the members. The LPA is an advocacy group statewide. Its job is to work as the advocate for the Arts to help secure, retain and increase funding for state arts projects. Charlie Smith is the lobbyist for the Arts. Mr. Hutcheson encouraged all council members to become members of LPA. The members would be ambassadors on the local level to assist in spreading the word about what the partnership does and why it's important for arts organizations, artists, and anyone who is involved in the arts, at any level, to be involved with what the partnership does; why we do it, and who benefits from the work. Mr. Hutcheson will be mailing information on the partnership to the council members. The LPA meets every other month usually on Wednesday, normally in the middle of the month, but varies at times.

The Partnership is forming another organization called The Louisiana Partnership for the Arts Advocacy (LPAA). This will be a 501c4 organization to allow the partnership to do more active

advocacy. The lobbyist will be employed through this organization. LPA is currently doing two major programs:

- 1) PAN on the Road. (PAN stands for Peer Assistance Network.) This is a technical assistance and professional development workshop that travels around the state. This year PAN is concentrating on capacity building and organizational development.
- 2) The LPA is working on a partnership with the Louisiana Presenter's Network to work with presenting organizations and arts organizations on how to prepare and recover from natural disasters. We learned that some of us weren't as prepared with information, data storage, and specific things like that. This grant, through the Southern Arts Federation (SAF), will fund that type of workshop around the state.

In July, the LPA will start a new year of strategic planning and deliver new programs for the state. The Partnership's website address is [www.lparts.org](http://www.lparts.org).

The stories that come out of the storms continue. The Arts Link, a publication of the Americans for the Arts, featured the sharing efforts of the Shreveport Regional Arts Council inviting the Arts Council of New Orleans to be housed in their offices. The hospitality is featured on the front page and the inside page of the Arts Link magazine. They are telling the story of what the Arts Council of New Orleans experienced. It was really nice to see the hospitality and the sense of collaboration within our Louisiana regional agencies being highlighted on a National level. Ms Weeks also had a notification from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). They will hold their Leadership Institute in Anchorage, Alaska from September 18-20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Le Melle and Ms. Weeks will be attending the Southern Arts Federation (SAF) spring meeting the middle of April. The nine state executive directors meet, and once a year the chairs of the state arts council are invited. Ms. Weeks will give the council a report on this session at the next meeting.

Ms. Weeks commended Ms. Le Melle and the Arts' staff on traversing the state to present the new arts guidelines and the new arts processes. What categories to apply in, what the process is, and what might be best to decentralized arts grants. Ms. Weeks attended a session in Shreveport. It was a great power point presentation, with very clear and concise instructions. This will be a new year with a shift in the granting process. It was an excellent opportunity for arts organizations to strengthen themselves and focus on arts projects.

Ms. Weeks informed the Council that Juana Woodard's husband passed away last week. A sympathy card is circulating to be signed before the end of the meeting. Sympathy also goes out to Veronique Le Melle whose father recently passed.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Le Melle gave an update on the new grant guidelines. We have shifted away from project-based funding and are now investment of public funds. New categories include:

- 1) Stabilization, which replaces General Operating Support (GOS). This category opens funds to midsize and smaller institutions to receive funds from LDOA directly. There are new tiers; Institution for large groups, Advancement for the mid-sized groups, Entry level for smaller arts organizations that make a parish-wide impact, and the Community Impact level for organizations that make an impact to the community they serve.
- 2) Capacity Building offers grants for Planning, Implementation, Service Providers and Incubator Support, and Artist Entrepreneurs.

The Stabilization and Capacity Building categories required a Letter of Intent. The deadline for the Letters of Intent was March 15<sup>th</sup>. As of March 15<sup>th</sup>, over 130 Letters of Intent were received. It breaks down evenly between Stabilization and Capacity Building. The reason for the Letters of Intent is not to give or overburden arts administrators. It is the first step in technical assistance for

the field. It is allowing the Division of the Arts to now see who is coming in and what they will be doing.

In Stabilization, Letters of Intent allow LDOA to ensure that groups of similar size and ability are competing for funding on an equal "playing field". It allows for new groups that are coming in that have never received direct funding from the state, and it allows us to start working with them and giving them guidance. The application deadline was rescheduled to May 15<sup>th</sup>. It is also important to note that this is not a "post-marked" deadline but a "hard" deadline. Applications must be received in the LDOA office by the close of business on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Question was asked regarding who is required to submit a Letter of Intent. Ms. Le Melle responded that Letters of Intent were not required for individual artist, but were for arts organizations only.

The Quick Wins Process is a new process streamlining the application intake process. This streamlining is allowing us to process individual applications that formerly took 44 days, now takes 16. This is a great saving from operating funds, and a saving of time and effort for the staff.

Ms. Le Melle requested moving the next council meeting from Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> to give organizations enough time to complete the applications before they go to panels.

Due to the Governor's freeze order, we cannot travel or pay for the panelists to travel. With the exception of Arts-in- Education, Artist Entrepreneurs and Fellowship Panels, every remaining panel will be remote (conducted by conference call). For that reason, the panelists must have all of their information when it is mailed out. Incomplete applications or information not received by the deadline will be ineligible. The staff and/or applicants will no longer be allowed to bring information to the panel meetings. We must give applicants a reasonable amount of time to submit something they may have forgotten.

The other change is in Arts-in-Education. We no longer fund arts camps or after-school projects. The Division of the Arts is encouraging the Decentralized Arts Funding (DAF) program to take this on at the local level. We are focusing on funding school-based, curriculum-based projects and programs that will actually move the state forward. The new categories are Planning, Implementation and Artist-In-Residency (this category remains the same). There will also be a new scoring process for applicants. Panel meetings are open to the public. We are providing a space within the building where applicants can come and listen to the remote panel.

Ms. Brunner commended the efficiency of the new system but voiced one concern. Because the panelists are from different disciplines, the applicant's are concerned with the evaluation of applications by a panelist of a different discipline, such as a visual arts discipline panelist evaluating performing arts applications. Ms. Le Melle answered the artist panels are discipline specific. The Arts Division staff came up with a process of dealing with the artist fellowships and artist panels:

- 1) These panels are not remote. We felt that if we are judging an artist's work and granting funds based on artistic merit, the panel physically has to be together, looking at the same artwork at the same time.
- 2) The panels should be discipline specific. Ms. Liebke explained that the artist fellowship programs and the artist entrepreneurs are going to be a little different. The Entrepreneurs Panel is comprised of primarily business development specialists, to help evaluate the artist's professional development plan. The Fellowship Review is a 2-day panel process. There will be 3 discipline panels on Day 1. Visual Arts and Design, Folklife, and Dance and Theatre. These are review panels and they will review applications. Day two is the Media and Music review panel. A question was asked regarding the Literature Panel. Ms. Liebke answered the

Literature Panel will be 14 days in advance. Those panels happening over a two-day period will review all the disciplines. Generally there have been about 25 fellowships awarded. This year it was reduced to about 10 awards. One representative from each discipline-specific panel will take those recommendations in ranked order to a "Mega" panel at the end of the second day. The disciplines will identify who the key people are. It's going to be highly competitive within the discipline. The mega-panel will view all the samples and resumes, understanding that we are trying to create a pool for fellowship winners.

Ms. Le Melle added that the Stabilization and Capacity Building categories being reviewed by panelists based on the business of the arts and organizational issues. In Entrepreneurs, it's a combination of the quality of work and professional development planning.

Similarly, we are now requiring in the Folklife program, the research grant plan show how that research and fieldwork is going to be used. It's about having artists and arts organizations look forward. Mr. Early stated the Rapids Foundation puts on free workshops every year.

Ms. Weill asked Ms. Le Melle to go over the chronology of how the remote panels work. Ms. Le Melle answered. The Panelists will receive their packets. Within the packets are the applications and the score sheet. The score sheet has 4 possible scores (0, 4, 6, or 10). If an application is going to receive a "0" score, the score sheet instructions make it very clear that there should be clear, concise, written comments supporting that "0" score. The application receives the panelist's score of where they feel that application should fall. The panelist will then return the score sheet to the Division in advance of the meeting. All rankings on each individual application go into the excel spreadsheet to get the average score.

By the panel meeting, all panelists will receive copies of the pre-score tallies and the review will proceed. Then panelist will re-score while we are on the phone.

The Division is now treating grants as public investments. In some instances it's fully funding a request; if the panel that looks at the budget can clearly see that the funds are needed to accomplish this, and what they are going to achieve will impact an entire region or the arts infrastructure of the state. It's not going to be a quantity issue, it's going to be quality, and it's going to be competitive. Ms. Weill asked how out-of-state people could assess what is important and what the different parts of our state needs. Ms. Le Melle replied:

1. The majority of panelists will be from within the state. No more than 1 panelist will be from out of the state. A comment was made about out-of-state panelists not understanding what we are going through right now. Ms. Le Melle answered that out-of-state panelists can ask good objective questions.
2. The Division is now requiring the staff to include a 1-page evaluation sheet on top of the application. This evaluation sheet will say who the organization is, the impact they are making to the community and within the state, what the community looks like, and how the organization fits within the state. Ms. Weill felt this to be one of the most important new components to add to the process because many times the panel process can be very frustrating. The staff members within the panel room know that information, but they are hesitant to bring it out, or they are not allowed to bring it out.

Ms. Le Melle gave an update on the '07 budget projection, explaining that LDOA had gone through the Budgeting for Outcomes process (BFO), and the Arts grants scored some of the highest scores for offers within CRT; which was a strong endorsement from the CRT Leadership Team. Unfortunately, when the preliminary budget came out, there was very little money appropriated. In the Governor's

budget, that picture has improved, however, Arts' budget is over \$500,000 short of what it needs to be. Mr. Hutcheson and the advocacy section of the LPA will be working directly with Secretary Davis and Assistant Secretary Breaux to rectify this.

There are still hiring freezes. We have been able to keep the Arts-in-Education position in the budget for next year. We raised the bar in Arts-in-Education on what we expect from Arts organizations and schools. However, there is no one on staff that has true expertise in evaluating Arts-in-Education programs. Federal money is coming through LPA to contract an Arts-in-Education specialist to help give technical assistance across the state and prepare Arts-in-Education panel packages. They will have a travel budget that the Division staff does not have. We will be doing 1-day trips, and LPA will be able to do more. The hiring freeze will remain in effect until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Weeks proceeded to the panelists' recommendations for each of the panels (inside packet). Ms. Le Melle stated that the staff selected panelists from the existing pool. Ms. Weill motioned to accept panelists' recommendations, seconded by Mr. Early. Panelist recommendations accepted.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***Governor's Arts Awards***

Ms. Liebke stated that plans are being made have the Governor's Arts Awards sometime after July 1, 2006 to put it in the FY07 budget. The Lt. Governor was pleased with the event last year and is considering combining the Governor's Arts Awards with the Cultural Economy Conference in August. The LDOA staff will be meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss opportunities for the Governor's Arts Awards and to separate individuals from organizations. The Special Events Committee will meet on April 12<sup>th</sup>, in Baton Rouge, for recommendations. Ms. Liebke asked for volunteers to serve on the Special Events Committee. Current members of the Special Events Committee include: Angela Hammerli (Chairperson), Mary Joseph, Molly Sooter, Cynthia Weirick, and LeAnne Weill. They will be reviewing all of the nominations that are received. Mr. Early volunteered to serve on the Special Events Committee. Ms. Liebke was asked when the nominations would be due. Ms. Liebke responded that a timeline would be created by April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Weill asked if the council could think of new and creative ways to locate people to submit nominations, because our artists are still scattered. We want to locate our displaced artists and let them know that they are appreciated, even though they may not have a home and they may have lost everything. Ms. Weeks agreed with Ms. Weill that everything is not quite business as before. Ms. Liebke restated that these issues will be discussed at the meeting scheduled for April 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m., at the Capitol Annex Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, in OCD Conference Room.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### ***Advocacy***

Ms. Brunner stated we are at a point where, now more than ever, advocacy is very important. Ms. Brunner spoke at the December meeting about reforming the advocacy committee and its relationship within the State Arts Council. The Legislative Session started today and there are many needs in our state at this time, which can be overwhelming at times. The legislators who are involved with artists are asking what the losses were and the things they have to address. Although our funding is not dismal at this time, one of the most important things that we need to do is to advocate for the arts.

Therefore, as a member of the Executive Committee of the LPA, Ms. Brunner said they have formed a sub-committee to write a platform for the legislators. This committee will provide bullet points that cover a statewide agenda, such as, "why the arts are important now more than ever." The goal is to educate our legislators to the Arts' priorities for FY07.

At the request of LDOA Lobbyist, Charlie Smith, Ms. Brunner reminded everyone that the Appropriations Committee consist of the following legislators: Alario, Triche, Cazayoux, DeWitt, Dorsey, Glover, Gray, Guillory, Hopkins, Hunter, Jackson, Jefferson-Bullock, LaFleur, McDonald, McVea, Morrish, Scalise, Jack Smith, John Smith, Thompson, and Salter. She further requested that Council members contact their legislators, as soon as possible, to discuss the importance of the cultural economy to the State's economy. Mr. Early asked about developing the materials. He reported that he received a good response from Senator Vitter and Senator Landreau while in D.C. Ms. Brunner will be calling on the Council to begin compiling information for the aforementioned "bullet points". The LPA Committee will identify the 5 most important points that we can inform our legislators of. Other than the generalized budget, which affects the arts, Ms. Weill asked if there is any pending legislation.

The arts are not going to have a huge amount of time for discussion. If there are 2 bills pertaining to the arts, we need to know what they are and when they come up. Ms. Brunner stated there is a bill that could possibly affect the Percent for Art Program. The way it is written is subject to interpretation, it is HB #773. The Bill states specifically *to provide for state building projects necessitated by a natural catastrophe; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for relative matters. Specifically not withstanding any provision of the section to the contrary, the Commissioner of Administration is authorized to determine the amount of money, if any, to be expended for the Percent for Art Program for projects for the construction, replacement, renovation, or improvement of a state building; which project is necessary due to a natural catastrophe including but not limited to Hurricanes Katrina or Rita.* Ms. Brunner felt this would potentially give the commissioner of administration sole discretionary powers. Ms. Le Melle feels it's important that the message from the field, the Arts Council and the LPA is specifically that the problem with the bill is it's too broad. If the bill said that it is specifically for repairs and replacement of buildings because of the hurricanes, there would not be concern. However, they added "new construction", that's where it becomes anything they define it to be in perpetuity. Ms. Brunner feels this bill will hurt the State's Public Art Program. We are suggesting the bill be amended to specify Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, to only deal with repairs, and to take out the words "new construction" and "necessary". Ms. Brunner asked what the council could do politically to support the kinds of things that we all agree on. Mr. Early stated that this is not a lobbying issue. If we could find out what the concern is as it relates to the future as well as the present. We are not lobbying against or for a bill. We are advocating for a reconsideration of the language. It is not taking into consideration something that serves as a need and a value for the whole. Ms. Weill stated that council members are not employees of the state, are allowed to lobby and to have a voice. Mr. Early asked if we could pass a resolution that expresses concern about this, and ask for reconsideration.

Ms. Weill suggested an easier way to combat this concern. Instead of taking out "Rita and Katrina", "repairs" and "necessary", take out "the sole discretion of the Commission of Administration" and make that into some sort of panel. That would be an easier argument to take to the legislators. We don't know who the Commissioner of Administration is going to be in 2 years or in 10 years. To leave the discretion of one unnamed person in perpetuity would be the thing that would be most comfortable in changing. Ms. Le Melle stated that the Department's recommendations are 3-fold:

1. The language in the bill be amended to take out "new construction" and the perpetuity clause.
2. That decision be in cooperation between the Division of Administration and the Secretary of CRT. Together, they should have to agree on any given project.
3. It is limited to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Ms. Brunner would like to use the LPAA as the venue for advocating. We should join forces with the state organizations. Ms. Brunner will be e-mailing the council to remind them about membership with the LPA.

May 24<sup>th</sup> the LPA will have its legislative event. It will be before the next meeting, and it is in partnership with the LTPA event. The location and time of the event will be determined at a later date. This will be a great time for the Council to talk with the legislators and say "Thank you". Ms. Brunner would like to see the Arts Council become more involved with the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts, and would also like to have LPA activities listed on the Division of the Arts' calendar. She will get the information of what's happening to the Council, through the Division of the Arts. Mr. Early noted that almost every school district within the state has to go through drastic re-budgeting processes. One of the things for advocacy is talking to those local school boards and superintendents to talk about alternatives in the budget. Ms. Weeks stated that we are in contact with arts organizations in our locale, and we certainly don't want arts positions or arts programs to be cut in our schools. The Council could remind people whom they come in contact that the arts are basic. The arts are not just the local symphony or the museum arts association.

Ms. Phenev asked about the second item of legislation. Ms. Brunner responded there is a Resolution to provide tax credits for the arts industry. Ms. Le Melle stated this is not the year where the legislature can make any decisions on tax credits. The department has asked the legislature to consider a bill to do the research this year to be ready to recommend a tax credit for the arts in the appropriate legislative budget year. This is just a resolution to endorse the research.

### *Policy*

None

### *Special Events*

Ms. Weeks stated that we spoke about special events and asked if there were any particular comments about special events. The Special Events Committee will be working with Ms. Liebke to begin with the April 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Weill stated there were discussions in the past regarding absentee council members. We're all very busy and going through an awful lot, but quorums are important. There was discussion awhile back about possibly contacting some of our absentee members or having a letter drafted and sent to them. Ms. Weeks stated that it's been about 2 years since we contacted the Governor's Appointment Office. There have been 2 members to resign.

Ms. Weeks and Ms. Le Melle had a conversation earlier to remind the Boards and Commissions that the council members have continued from their appointments for three years, and that's past. Ms. Weeks stated that Ms. Breaux had been informed in the past that the Arts Council would continue "as is" because they were really worried about filling other boards and commissions and that sort of thing. It's probably time to remind them again that we have unfilled positions. Ms. Weill stated that she wasn't referring to unfilled positions, but to attendance. Ms. Weeks reminded the council that the Arts Council positions are at the discretion of the governor. Ms. Weill thought there were some attendance requirements to remain on the council. Ms. Le Melle responded there are requirements, but neither the Council nor the Division of the Arts has the authority to remove a member. The governor has the authority to remove.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Weeks thanked Scott Hutcheson and the Division of the Arts' staff for attending. Ms. Weeks informed the council to stay tuned for more news to be forwarded to them before the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

## **ADJOURN**

Ms. Weeks asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Drennen motioned to adjourn. Ms. Brunner seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:00.