

**COMMISSION ON THE ARTS  
Council Chambers  
City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue  
Monday, May 7, 2018**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Chair Steve Sullivan. Members present were Jason Paull and Natalie Robinson. Deanne Brill and Tom Lockhart were not present. Staff member Tasheik Kerr was also present.

**Public Forum**

Stan Rabe, of ACTORS, announced on Thursday, June 7, 2018 ACTORS would be holding the opening of the musical *Nine to Five*. ACTORS also received a grant from the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Ellen Rasmussen representative of Good Company, announced that Sunday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. would be the spring concert in celebration of Good Company's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Lori Sulzberger, of Story Theater Company, announced on Friday, June 15, 2018 Story Theater Company would hold its opening of *Beauty and the Beast*. Story Theater Company also received a grant from the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Heather Johnson, of the Octagon, announced on Friday, June 1, 2018, Mainstreet Cultural District will host the annual Art Walk. The Octagon would host three new exhibits and would feature demonstrating artists.

**Approval of April 2, 2018 Minutes**

Moved by Jason, seconded by Natalie, to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2018 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Fall Special Project Grant Hearings**

Steve announced that COTA reserved \$6,879 for fall and spring special projects. Organizations can qualify for up to \$1000 in grant funding.

ACTORS: Extra – Almost, Maine – Lynn McElrath, of ACTORS, noted ACTORS would be putting on a small play to be held between their normal seasons. If successful, ACTORS would continue to hold these types of plays. The plays would be small, self-contained, and would not require costumes and staging. The goal of such plays would be to reach a broader audience. Lynn noted that ACTORS had chosen “Almost, Maine” to bring new people into the theater. The cost of admission to the play would be ten dollars. The plays will be held on November 30, 2018, and on December 1, 2018. COTA funds would be used to cover some of the expenses of putting on the plays. At Steve's inquiry, Lynn noted ACTORS had held these types of plays in the past and there were problems with the availability of personnel. She added that ACTORS would work to get people and that the shows would draw different actors.

Natalie asked if there was any interest in recruiting Iowa State students and whether

ACTORS had considered advertising in the Iowa State Daily. Lynn responded that ACTORS hoped to recruit students for the show and would be considering various options for advertising. At Jason's inquiry, Lynn noted there was a difference between ACTORS expected income and expected expenses due to a possible flux in ticket sales. She added that ACTORS would be hoping for a hundred people per night and they were not seeking funds from any other organization but would in the future.

Steve observed that ACTORS had already announced the show. Lynn responded that it was announced at ACTORS' season announcement and they were going to call the show the *ACTORS Extra*.

Octagon Center for the Arts: Smithsonian Travel Exhibit: Complimentary Sports Photo Show Heather Johnson announced that the project would be part of a partnership with the Mainstreet Cultural District. She noted Ames was selected to host the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit for Hometown Teams and that the Octagon had volunteered to host a juried photography show with the theme being community sports. The exhibit would open at the end of September and would be on display through November. The Octagon hopes to connect sports with other educational components for the Smithsonian exhibit. At Jason's inquiry, Heather remarked that the budget for the project was light due to the Octagon solely focusing on the complimentary exhibit. She also noted that Mainstreet would do the marketing of the exhibit.

Steve inquired about the residency parameters for photographers. Heather responded that the photographers must be located within a hundred mile radius.

Story Theater Company: 10 Minute Play Festival – Lori Sulzberger announced Story Theater Company's proposal for a ten-minute play festival. She noted that Story Theater Company had wanted to foster a collaborative experience among local play writers, directors, and actors. The six plays would be written, directed, and acted by the youth. She noted the plays were submitted in the fall of 2016 during a playwriting workshop for the youth. The board had decided the plays would be a good extension of the organization's mission. Each play had also undergone a Judification process. The two public performances of the plays would take place in July.

Lori noted that the students who wrote the plays were in grades eight through twelve. The plays were open to central Iowa youths. All of the submissions were from students in the Ames, Gilbert, and Ballard School Districts.

Jason asked whether the plays would be ranked. Lori responded that the Judification process was solely for the play selection. There would be no awarding of prizes. Professional artists would assist with the teaching and the directing of the students to ensure successful outcomes.

Good Company: A Commissioned Choral Piece to Honor Steve Hoifeldt

Ellen Rasmussen announced Good Company would like to recognize Steve Hoifeldt, the founding director of Good Company, for his commitment to the group and to the arts in Ames. She noted Good Company would like to commission a piece of music on Steve's behalf. The members of Good Company have already fundraised \$3,500 from current and alumni members. Good Company planned to announce this information to Steve at the

concert Sunday night. The work on the commissioned piece would take place next fall. At Steve's inquiry, Ellen noted that they had not selected a composer. Since the piece would be in Steve's honor, they believed he needed to be involved in the decision-making process.

Natalie inquired about whether there was a charge for the concert. Ellen responded that Good Company typically charged \$12 per person over the age of 10 in advance and \$15 at the door. She added that COTA funds kept ticket prices low and that the singers paid annual dues. In recognition of COTA's participation in the commissioned piece, she noted Good Company would announce that they had submitted a grant to COTA and are hopefully COTA would be supportive.

### **Discussion of the India Cultural Association (ICA) Request**

Tasheik announced that the Indian Cultural Association (ICA) had requested a change in their contract for different artists and there was a representative from ICA at the meeting.

Sree Nilakanta, of the Indian Cultural Association, explained that ICA had a verbal agreement with the manager of artist Shankar Tucker and instrumentalist Vidya Vox to come to Ames for \$7,500. When he took over as president in FY 17/18, he went back to the manager to finalize the date. After several attempts to reach the manager, he was informed that the artists could perform for \$35,000. Sree added that he informed the manager that ICA just wanted the artist and instrumentalist and they were not interested in paying for the dancers that would accompany the performers. The manager refused to talk to ICA any further.

Sree informed the Commission that another manager approached ICA. The manager informed ICA of an upcoming sitar player that was well known and that had performed for international audiences. A jazz singer would also accompany the sitar player. Since ICA had already reserved a hall and its members were anticipating a concert, ICA went ahead and contracted with the sitar player and jazz singer to perform in Ames on April 29, 2018. At Steve's inquiry, Sree expressed that they had about 65 people in attendance. Seventy-five to a hundred people usually attend ICA's concerts, but they did not have time to promote the new set of artists. Sree also noted that the costs were in line with ICA's original plan. ICA paid the performers \$5,000 in fees. The other expenses such as the renting of the hotel and auditorium equated about the same.

It was moved by Jason, seconded by Natalie, to recommend to the City Council a contract modification to accommodate the change in performer.

### **Upcoming Important Dates**

Steve reviewed the process for the Commission to decide how much funding each proposal should receive. He noted the Commission would finalize the fall special project grant recommendations at the next meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Adjournment**

Jason moved the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.