

**Minutes**  
**COMMISSION ON THE ARTS**  
**Council Chambers**  
**City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue**  
**Monday, September 9, 2019**

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair Steve Sullivan. Members present were Tom Lockhart, Troy Rutter and Natalie Robinson. Deanne Brill was absent. Staff member Tasheik Kerr was also present.

**Public Forum**

Heather Johnson, of The Octagon Center of the Arts, announced that the Octagon Arts Festival will be held on Sunday, September 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Downtown Ames. The Octagon will be partnering with a variety of arts organizations.

**Approval of August 5, 2019 Minutes**

Moved by Tom, seconded by Natalie, to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2019 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of 2018/19 Annual Grant Final Reports**

Steve announced that the Commission approved the majority of the Annual Grant Reports at its August 5, 2019 meeting with the exception of KHOI's and The Ames Childrens Choirs'. Troy noted that he reviewed the documents. Moved by Troy, seconded by Tom, to approve KHOI and The Ames Children's Choirs Final Report.

**Approval of Spring 2019 Special Project Grant Final Reports**

Tasheik stated that the Ames Community Arts Council submitted its report after the due date. Moved by Tom, seconded by Troy, to approve the Ames Community Arts Council Special Project Final Report. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion with Craig Kaufman regarding Auditorium User Meeting**

Steve informed the audience that the Commission had some questions regarding the increase in the City's auditorium rates, which have resulted in increased cost for some COTA organizations.

Craig stated that the auditorium staff received frequent complaints about the auditorium fee structure. The priority for staff was to simplify the fee structure. Staff also looked to close the subsidy gap and evaluated the auditorium fees in comparison to peer communities and organizations.

For most of the groups, the auditorium fee increase was not substantial. However, it was substantial for organizations who were on the old fee structure and had long term rental agreements in place. These organizations include Co'Motion Dance and Story Theater Company. Craig also mentioned that other components such as the discount for Ames Community Arts Council (ACAC) users were eliminated. To simplify the fee structure ACAC users were moved to the nonprofit category.

Craig noted that the auditorium fees got behind the times. Fees were not changed often. Parks and

Recreation made an increase that was comparable with where the fees should have been. Craig added that staff also wanted to prevent for-profit agencies who join ACAC from getting the discount that is meant for nonprofit agencies.

Steve inquired about the frequency of auditorium use in a given month. Craig responded that there are unique shifts in the year and that it all depends on the month. Tom noted that for the nonprofit agencies that used the auditorium, it seems the Commission is awarding COTA organizations city funds which they use to give back to the City. Tom added that it does not seem an effective use of COTA funds. Craig replied that he has had this discussion with some agencies. He mentioned that the funding streams are different in terms of how the auditorium is funded (General Fund) versus the grants that are award to COTA agencies, which comes from Local Option Sales Tax.

Craig provided examples of how other communities allocate arts funding. Valerie Williams of Co'Motion Dance, noted that there was an auditorium user group meeting and users were provided the opportunity to ask staff questions. Craig noted that he was informed by artists that it is difficult to grow the number of arts organization in Ames because of the limited funding.

Steve advised Craig to pass along issues to the Commission that come from art organizations given his level of interaction with those agencies.

Craig mentioned that there is potential for a City Council Workshop focused on arts and culture. He noted that he does not know who is driving this discussion. Heather Johnson, of the Octagon Center of the Arts, added that it might be helpful if a letter was sent to the City Council regarding the struggles non-profit art agencies are facing.

Tasheik noted that a COTA Commissioner meets with the City Council during its budget workshop. If the Commission has funding concerns they could raise the issue then. Steve suggested that the Commission discuss the issue regarding funding at the next Commission meeting. He noted the Commission will reach out to art organizations and figure out what next steps they want to take.

### **Approval of COTA funding acknowledgment statement and COTA logo**

Steve noted that the Commission discussed the inconsistencies with how organizations acknowledged they had received COTA funding. Steve reviewed the newly created instructions and provided examples on how organizations can acknowledge that they received COTA funding. Troy added that the acknowledgement statement needs to be on all the organizations printed materials as appropriate. It was moved by Troy, seconded by Tom, to approve the COTA funding acknowledgement wording and COTA wordmark.

### **Spring Special Project Grant/Annual Grant Workshop**

Tasheik reviewed the COTA Annual and Spring Grant process. Steve noted that the Commission has \$4,480 reserved for Spring Special Project Grants.

Ben Siegel, of Central Iowa Touring Ensemble, announced that the organization did not exist at the time of the Annual Grant. He asked if the organization can submit for a grant this year. Steve responded that the organization can apply.

Paul Hertz, of the Ames Children's Choirs, noted that it would be great if art organizations could have some promotion on the facade of the auditorium. He noted that it is difficult for individuals to tell that an event is going on.

**Upcoming Important Dates**

Steve reviewed the upcoming dates.

**Adjournment**

Tom moved the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.