



Region of Waterloo Arts Fund

Minutes

Thursday, January 14, 2021

3:00 p.m.

Meeting held electronically

150 Frederick Street, Kitchener

Present were: President B. Chesney, M. Braun, L. Golds, H. Jowett, D. Kirton, R. Nixon, I. Ring, S. Scott, P. Shannon, K. Sheehy and C.A. Treitz

Not Present: K. Redman

Staff Also Present: H. Chimirri-Russell and T. Plummer

Election of Officers

B. Chesney advised that he would be stepping down from the Arts Fund at the end of 2021.

Moved by H. Jowett

Seconded by M. Braun

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approves the re-appointment of Bill Chesney as Board Chair and Lindsay Golds as Vice Chair, for a term ending December 31, 2021.

Carried

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund

None declared.

Approval of Minutes

Open Session – November 12, 2020

Moved by L. Golds

3524054

Seconded by C.A. Treitz

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the open session minutes of the meeting held on November 12, 2020.

Carried

Closed Session – November 12, 2020

Moved by I. Ring

Seconded by K. Sheehy

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the closed session minutes of the meeting held on November 12, 2020.

Carried

Committee Appointments

Moved by L. Golds

Seconded by I. Ring

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund appoint the following members to the following Committees for a one-year term, ending December 31, 2021:

Nominating/Membership Committee (4 members)

- Bill Chesney, Chair
- Lindsay Golds, Vice Chair
- Peter Shannon
- Doug Kirton
- Ian Ring

Final Reports Review Committee (4 members)

- Bill Chesney
- Lindsay Golds
- Carol Ann Treitz
- Ian Ring

Communications Committee (4 members)

- Susan Scott, Chair
- Lindsay Golds, Vice Chair
- Bill Chesney
- Monica Braun

Ad Hoc Committee for BIPOC Strategy

- Bill Chesney

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- Lindsay Golds
- Rick Nixon
- Doug Kirton
- Ian Ring
- Susan Scott
- Peter Shannon

Ad Hoc Committee – 20th Anniversary Event (2022)

- Bill Chesney
- Monica Braun
- Susan Scott
- Carol Ann Treitz
- Peter Shannon

Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes**a) Online Application Portal - Review/Feedback**

L. Golds introduced the series of proposed recommendations for Board applications review during the Spring 2021 round, which had been distributed to the Board in advance of the meeting. The required actions were recorded and will be included in the revised Recommendations document.

Moved by L. Golds

Seconded by S. Scott

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the recommendations for Board applications review during the Spring 2021 round, as amended.

Carried

Recommendations for consideration**A. Recommendations Re: Application**

1. **Length of application.** The number of questions and length of the application do not align with what we focus on during the review. (Put another way, the application is long relative to the amount of funding we provide.)

[L. Golds will provide a revised draft of a new grant application and will send to all for review.]

Recommendation(s):

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- Review the application to eliminate unnecessary and/or redundant questions
- Reduce the word count applicants have in which to answer questions
- Implement more skip logic

2. Eligibility based on residency/work. A repeat concern is whether applicants in fact, live and/or work in the Region.

[If applicants do not live or work in Waterloo Region, the Board must find the application ineligible, and are directed to send an email to the Board President, Chair or Vice Chair so that it can be determined if the residency requirement has been met.]

Recommendation(s):

- We will clarify the guidelines for board members in a “review package” (see below – item A4)
- Please email Bill, Terri and Stevie if there is an applicant under review that you are confident does not live/work in the Region. We can begin working on confirming their eligibility prior to our review meeting.

B. Recommendations: Review Process

1. Volume of applications. We cannot control the number we receive and will likely see more as time goes on. Volume affects both the review process and the review meeting. Several strategies will be needed to reduce the length of time needed for either one.

Recommendation(s):

- Revise the application to focus on the questions that actually inform our decision-making
- Shorten word count in the applications so applicants really focus their answers
- Revise the reviewer-scored questions to align better with what applicants are asked

2. Varying degrees of expertise. Realistically, the board may never have an adequate number of specialists (3+ in each category), and so will continue to need to rely on the full board to review every application. That said, the expertise offered by our Artists-at-Large (A@L) is invaluable; ideally, A@L would review their category only and, through scoring, make recommendations about which applications they would/would not fund.

[As the board does not have the members/numbers with experience in the various genres currently, once the eligible applications (identified in green) have been determined, Ian will rearrange and share his screen with the Board. It was noted that board members cannot always champion the applications that are determined to be ineligible (identified in red).]

Recommendation:

To maximize contributions of our A@L and general board expertise, and to focus our discussions on comparative criteria, we will invite our experts to lead the conversation for their respective category. We will still rely on the rubric, and focus only on those applications in each category with sufficiently high scores, but this way, the review meeting can proceed by zeroing in on comparable applications. (A reminder: we do not have to fund each category; we use the rubric to fund applications based on individual merit.)

- 3. Ineligible applications.** Questions in the application should already prevent applicants from submitting an ineligible application; that said it happened in our last round (outstanding Final Reports).

Recommendation:

Prior to sharing applications with the board for review, support staff will review the applications for the following:

- duplication of applicants;
- active/current granted projects;
- outstanding final reports; and,
- any other 'flags' that can be confirmed by our existing records (for example, in arrears, etc.).

[The board cannot avoid a review of an application that is later discovered to be ineligible; that said, if there is an application that a board member or an A@L thinks is ineligible, it is recommended that it be scored using the "ineligible" scoring option.]

- 4. Scoring inconsistencies.** Everyone scores in his or her own way. What is important is that we all score consistently each round. Some tips/reminders around scoring and related issues would be useful.

Recommendation:

We will update and share our Application Review Criteria and Checklist - for Arts Fund Board Members

- Bill will draft an additional document with information that is especially helpful to our review discussions. (In the future, review packages will be amended, as needed, as the process evolves or changes.)

[Review and evaluation Guidelines are currently available and will be reviewed and revised by B. Chesney and L. Golds in collaboration with support staff.]

Recommendations: Review Meeting

- 1. Length of meeting.** Here are a few strategies to keep the review meetings a reasonable length (note: such in-person meetings are typically 4 hours).

Recommendation(s):

- Address the length of the application
- If possible, defer business items that are not time-sensitive to business-only meetings; this might mean another brief meeting the week after our review meeting
- Relying on the rubric, eliminate more NOs (note: our suggestion is that these applications will not then be discussed)
- Relying on the rubric, automatically award applications with a certain high-score range (note: because these will not then be discussed, this strategy should be viewed alongside the issue of grant limits, below)
- Focus our discussion only on a certain score range; these would then be discussed by category to make the best use of A@L and board expertise
- Break the meeting into two shorter meetings, for example, one 4hr meeting followed by a scheduled 2hr meeting, if required

[Support staff will schedule an additional supplemental board meeting the day following the Application Review meeting.]

2. Documents. How to avoid confusion about which documents to follow.**Recommendation(s):**

Create a "Review Day" document to help board members follow along online and will include:

- Rubric spreadsheet with final scores sorted highest to lowest, and with a second tab that sorts by category
- Links to each online application embedded in the rubric spreadsheet
- A reminder to make notes (i.e., use the comment section of the review portal or paper)

[This document will be prepared **2 days in advance of Review Meeting** and will be provided to support staff for email distribution to the Board and participating A@L members. The document will also be 'shared' on the Zoom screen during the Review meeting.]

Members can refer to their own comments, as they recorded during their review on the Reviewer portal.

3. Categorizing applications. Correct categorization helps us match applications with the appropriate specialists/A@L.

[Board members and A@Ls can provide input about mis-categorized applications in their comments on the Reviewer's portal. It was noted that 'Community Arts' is not a grant application category but community engagement is a key element. Community Arts will be defined on the portal and through other media in future; discussion pending]

Recommendation:

Bill will confirm the category of all applications before the detailed listing is released to the board for review. We also ask that you email Bill, Lindsay or Susan about any applications you think might be mis-categorized. We want to make sure the right A@Ls/Board Members are reviewing the right applications.

- 4. Grant limits.** There is hesitation around awarding larger grants. Whether this stems from wanting to support more artists with smaller grants, or discomfort around awarding larger grants relative to the size of our funding allowance, we need to decide where our comfort lies and communicate our decision about granting limits to applicants.

[There was general agreement that this issue needs further consideration and a policy, to ensure fairness and clarity. It was noted that partial granting has an unintended impact on project outcomes and also requires consideration and a policy. It was agreed that the Arts Fund needs to increase awareness of the grant criteria and provide resources/information about other funders. Until a policy is developed and approved by the Board, the recommendations proposed will address the issue. Support staff will revise information available on website about]

Recommendation(s):

- Assign a funding limit per application (i.e., cap all RWAf awards at \$5,000) OR
- Include language in our guidelines, on the application and in the budget form that states the typical grant amount, so that applicants are clearly informed that we award an “average” amount. We would also emphasize that we encourage applicants to seek more than one source of funding.

- 5. Partial funding.** We have become used to partially funding applications, but there is hesitancy about continuing this practice.

Recommendation:

This recommendation will be based on the board’s recommendation for grant limits.

[No decision was made about partial funding.]

- 6. Conflict of Interest (COI).** Defined as when a board member stands to gain from an applicant being awarded a grant, or has a particular knowledge of the application, or a close relationship with the applicant, or is the applicant

A Conflict of Interest Policy, developed and approved initially in 2004 has been updated (in 2014/15). It is provided to each new Board Member and a signed copy is held on file. Region of Waterloo Arts Fund Conflict of Interest Policy - <https://artsfund.ca/Conflict-of-Interest-Policy.htm>

Recommendation:

If and when, any of the above is true, then the board member/A@L will sit out of the discussion (or be held in the waiting room on Zoom). While an effort will be made to conceal the result, realistically, it may need to be revealed in order to confirm totals. If a board member stands to gain financially from any application, they will not score any applications in that particular category and may need to sit out the full review of the category.

- 7. Good Foundation Projects.** Projects funded by our philanthropic partners, the Good Foundation, allow us to increase support to local artists/arts organizations by as much as \$50,000, so it is vital that we keep track of which applications are eligible, and funded.

[B. Chesney provided some details about the criteria for grants being 'designated' as receiving funds from the Good Foundation. B. Chesney and S. Scott will follow-up with the Good Foundation to their continued support of the Arts Fund. B. Chesney will also determine if the Good Foundation wishes to preview grant allocations prior to the formal announcement via News Release.]

Recommendation:

After reviewing applications to see which are eligible for Good Foundation funds, Bill will give that list to Terri / Stevie / Ian. It will then be added to the rubric spreadsheet as a column. This is simply to identify eligible applications, so that, in the event they are successful, we can easily total the projects. Should that total fall short of the Good Foundation allotment, Bill, Lindsay and Susan will revisit the successful applicant list after the review meeting, for subsequent approval by the board.

- b) Application Timelines and Schedule of Board Meetings for 2021

The board agreed to add an additional supplemental meeting the day after the Application Review meetings, for two (2) hours in case more time is needed to adjudicate grant applications. The meeting schedule will be revised accordingly and calendar invitations will be sent to the board.

Moved by I. Ring

Seconded H. Jowett

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the 2021 Application Timelines and 2021 Schedule of Meetings, as amended, to include an additional supplemental meeting the day following each Application Review meeting.

Carried

Correspondence – Requests for Ratification

Ratification of Grantee Requests (approved via email exchanges)

The Board ratified the following requests which were approved via e-mail in advance of the January 14, 2021 Arts Fund Board meeting. Staff were directed to send written notification of the Board's decision.

Moved by L. Golds

Seconded by C. A. Treitz

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the following requests:

1. Vincent Marcone, aka My Pet Skeleton, The Tornographers (Season 1) (F19-44), Request for Extension
 - Approval of a second project extension until May 15, 2021, at which time a Final Report will be due.
2. Ahmad Meree, I Don't Know (F19-66), Request for Extension
 - Approval of a project extension until Feb 28, 2022, at which time a Final Report will be due.
3. Kathryn Ladano, NUMUS Inc., Creation of Numus Orchestra (F18-11), Request for Extension
 - Approval for a second project extension to May 2021, with a Final Report due by July 31, 2021
4. Angela Onuora, Lights Out (S18-62), Request for Extension
 - Approval for a second project extension to April 30, 2021, at which time a Final Report will be due.
5. Roger Skelly, Sympathetic Strings (S20-36), Request for Extension
 - Approval for a project extension to February 28, 2022, at which time a Final Report will be due.

Carried

Correspondence – Requests for Consideration

6. Carin Lowerison, Green Light Arts, Sudden Death: the John Kordic story (S19-19), Request for Project Change

The Board discussed the request received and directed staff to send written notification of the Board's decision. The approved revised project will be entitled "Familiar Strangeness."

Moved by P. Shannon

Seconded by M. Braun

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the request for project change, as outlined by Carin Lowerison, Green Light Arts (S19-19), in the correspondence dated January 8, 2021, with an extension for the revised project, "Familiar Strangeness", until August 31, 2021, at which time a Final Report will be due.

Carried

7. Bonita Wagler, The Elmira Water Project (F18-16), Request for Extension

The Board discussed the request received and directed staff to send written notification of the Board's decision.

Moved by P. Shannon

Seconded by M. Braun

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the request for project extension until Feb 26, 2021 with a Final Report due by March 12, 2021, as outlined by Bonita Wagler (F18-16), in the correspondence dated January 4, 2021.

8. Rufus John, Freedom Marching Project (F20-48), Request for Project Change/Revised Project Budget

The Board discussed the request received, approved the change in the project and budget due to partial grant approved and directed staff to send written notification of the Board's decision.

Moved by P. Shannon

Seconded by M. Braun

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve the request for project change and revised project budget, as outlined by Rufus John (F20-48), in email correspondence from January 2, 2021.

Carried

Other Business

a) Chair's Report – Verbal Update

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B. Chesney provided his goals for the upcoming year, including recruitment for board members and Artists-at-Large positions, with a focus on diversity and increasing the outreach and the number of applications submitted by local BIPOC artists. He will be actively coordinating the next steps for each of the Committees.

b) Social Media Coordinator Contract Update

S. Scott advised that Grace Scheele would like to continue in her current part-time role with the Arts Fund beyond the March 31, 2021 expiry of her current contract.

Moved by I. Ring

Seconded by C. A. Treitz

That the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund approve a contract for Grace Scheele, as Social Media Coordinator, to be extended for a one-year renewable term beginning April 1, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022, at a total cost of \$8000 for the contract term.

Carried

Out of the Cold Film Viewing Invitation

B. Chesney stated that he recently attended a film preview about the plight of homeless people in Waterloo Region, featuring the late Duff Becker. Tessa Jennison, who received an Arts Fund grant in Spring 2019, coordinated the project and she has offered on-demand screening for board members. Staff will coordinate the email sharing for the invitations.

Next Meeting

- **June 17, 2021, 1:00 p.m. (Spring 2021 Application Review)**

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Carried

Board President, W. Chesney

Corporate Clerk, S. Natolochny