

Kentucky Arts Council Quarterly Board Meeting

June 19, 2020

Conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Board Attendance: Mary Michael Corbett, Nathan Mick, Janell Samuels, Everett McCorvey, LuAnn Mattingly, Janice Turpen, Dior Cotten, Jeanie Dorton, Elizabeth Griffith, Andee Rudloff, Lindsey Jaeger, Angela Rice

Staff Attendance: Chris Cathers, Emily Moses, Sandie Lawrence, Dave Blevins, Eric Shelton, Jessica Taylor, Holly Likes, Samuel Lockridge, Tamara Coffey, Mark Brown, Tamara Coffey

Guests: TAH Secretary Michael Berry, Kentucky artist Justin Roberts

Meeting called to order: 10:04 a.m.

Board Chair Mary Michael Corbett began the meeting and said it was a packed schedule and asked for anyone who had called in by phone and was not visible on screen to introduce themselves. Kentucky artist Justin Roberts said he was on the call and was excited to be with us.

Corbett said the Kentucky Arts Council issued a statement on racial equality and inclusion and we wanted to talk about establishing a diversity and inclusion committee. She turned it over to KAC Executive Director Chris Cathers for his report.

Cathers said he wanted to go over basic etiquette of participating in a Zoom meeting since this was the first time the board has conducted a meeting in this fashion. He said if you are not talking you will be muted, you can unmute yourself or a staff member will unmute you. He said board members could also use the chat function to type questions or raise their hands to speak and make comments. He said as we go through to feel free to ask to pause for clarification.

Cathers said he wanted to start the meeting with a land acknowledgement that was similar to the one offered for the first time at the Creative Industry Summit in 2019. He said the arts council staff feel it is important to be inclusive. He said he also wanted to acknowledge the date of the meeting which falls on Juneteenth. He said the day was important because for many it marks the day that enslaved people were freed.

Corbett thanked Cathers and introduced Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Secretary Mike Berry. She welcomed him to the meeting.

Berry thanked Corbett and said hello to the arts council board. He said he wished we could be in person but this was the new normal. He said it is a struggle but we will all improve as we go. He said he wanted to thank Chris, the staff and the board for the work that has been done. He said KAC was the first to have to react to pandemic conditions when The Kentucky Crafted Market was canceled. He said it was great to see KAC take the opportunity and turn it into a virtual event and he hoped it was successful. He said the arts council has been a leader in doing virtual work. He said KAC led the grant process for awarding CARES Act funds through the NEA. He said he has received emails and notes that said the funds were appreciated. He said he is cautiously optimistic and the future of the Cabinet. He said we are slowly reopening our attractions, like parks and the history museum. He said The Kentucky Center and other performing arts groups are still trying to determine how they will move forward. He said as

communities and the Commonwealth go through this period, he believes the arts play an incredible role in how we will come together and heal from the pandemic.

Corbett asked Berry what would happen with the state fair. He said the state fair would look and feel different this year. He said the world championship horse show would have no spectators. He said there would be livestock judging but it would be handled the same way, without spectators. He said almost all activities will be outside at the fair. He said we are still waiting on word about what the Derby and fall sports will actually look like. He said horse shows were occurring at the Kentucky Horse Park, but without spectators.

Corbett thanked Berry and asked board members if they had questions. Cathers said he wanted to thank Secretary Berry for how he has handled things during this time and said he has been a strong supporter of the arts council and the staff.

Corbett asked if there were any revisions to the minutes. Lindsay said her abstentions were not up to date and said International Society of Scratch Board Artists and Boone County Arts Association needed to be added.

Motion to approve minutes, Jeanie Dorton, Seconded by Luann Mattingly, approved by all.

Corbett asked Cathers to introduce guest speaker Justin Roberts, who makes furniture and sculpture with willow branches. Roberts talked about discovering his true art calling through a folk and traditional arts apprenticeship with master willow furniture maker George Beard. He discussed the many opportunities he has been afforded due to work from the Kentucky Arts Council. Roberts discussed how he obtains his materials and how he has a goal of starting his own willow farm.

Corbett thanked Roberts and turned the meeting over to Cathers for his report.

Cathers said his report would cover 6 months since the March meeting was canceled. He announced two staff updates, Jessica Taylor, grants manager, and Eric Shelton, information technology manager. He said they both have done a tremendous job, especially since they have essentially learned the majority of their jobs from home.

Cathers said KAC held its Creative Industry Summit on Dec. 6 in Mt. Sterling. We kicked off the summit with a Land Acknowledgement ceremony conducted by Helen Danser, chair of the Kentucky Native American Commission. Mitzi Sinnott, a member of the arts council's Performing Artists Directory, led a discussion on race, equity, access, diversity and inclusion. Later in the day, Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova talked about their "Unlearn Fear + Hate" public art initiative, which has gone international; and Marjorie Guyon and Patrick Mitchell shared the story of "I Was Here," a visual storytelling initiative that sheds a light on Lexington's Cheapside district, once one of the largest slave auction spaces in the country. In addition to workshops on race, equity, access, diversity and inclusion, the summit featured sessions on pricing artwork, marketing, arts advocacy, finances, folk and traditional arts and other topics of interest to individual artists, arts organizations and community arts stakeholders. We had 115 in attendance.

Cathers said on Jan. 8, the Governor and the Department of Travel kicked off the Year of Music, in which music and instruments are the focal points of Kentucky Tourism initiatives for the year. Nashville

recording artist JD Shelburne was on hand for the unveiling of the 2020 visitor's guide, which promotes the art of music.

Cathers said Feb. 21 was Arts Day in Kentucky. KAC hosts Arts Day each year during the legislative session to bring awareness to the many roles the arts play in the Commonwealth. Arts leaders, artists, the general public and other supporters of the arts gather to celebrate the arts and the creative industry, and recognize the Kentucky General Assembly for its continued support of the arts. Arts Day creates an avenue for Kentucky artists to meet their legislators. The day features demonstrations by visual artists, including Franklin County painters Fran Redmon and Sharon Matisoff, Fayette County woodcarver LaVon Van Williams, master fiddler John Harrod of Owen County and his apprentice Barbara Rosner of Franklin County. In addition to being a master-apprentice pairing, Harrod and Rosner are members of Kentucky Wild Horse string band, which is listed in the arts council's adjudicated Performing Artists Directory. Thirty-eight legislators attended and posed for photos with their arts groups.

Cathers said Allen County-Scottsville High School junior Skye Kozloski emerged as the champion in the Kentucky Poetry Out Loud state finals, March 3, at Frankfort's Grand Theatre. Runner-up was Grace Caroline Key of Elizabethtown High School. Poetry Out Loud is a poetry recitation contest sponsored by the Kentucky Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. Each student, in the first and second round, was judged on the recitation of two poems. The five top scorers from the first two rounds advanced to the final round where they each recited a third poem. All poems are selected by the students and their teachers from a preapproved anthology of works. Allen County-Scottsville High School has been participating in the state Poetry Out Loud program since 2008. Kozloski is the school's first state champion, and will represent Kentucky in the Poetry Out Loud national finals, April 27-29, in Washington, D.C. In addition to her trip to the national finals, Kozloski will receive \$200, and Allen County-Scottsville High School will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. As runner-up, Key will receive \$100, and Elizabethtown High School will receive a \$200 stipend.

Cathers said The Kentucky Crafted Market was canceled on March 11. To follow social distancing recommendations for limiting the spread of COVID-19, KAC canceled the 2020 event, which affected business opportunities for more than 150 artists. KAC estimates total sales lost between \$301,000 - \$429,000, and average sales lost per artist between \$2,000 and \$4,660. In response, KAC hosted a virtual event via Facebook, giving buyers and exhibitors a chance to view and purchase work by the artists whom they were looking forward to seeing at the live event. KAC promoted the virtual event through e-mails targeted to Kentucky Crafted Market buyers for the past 10 years. Exhibitors posted introductory videos about their methods and used the virtual event as an opportunity to educate and connect with the public. Artists used this virtual forum to ramp up on their own e-commerce platforms and shared their own posts to encourage sales. The pivot to a virtual platform not only offered "buy local" business opportunities for creators and consumers, it also facilitated connections among artisans. Nearly \$5,000 in sales were reported.

Cathers said Kentucky Writers' Day, hosted by the Kentucky Arts Council, is an annual event that has been celebrated in person since 1990. It honors the birthday (April 24) of Kentucky native Robert Penn Warren, the first ever United States Poet Laureate. With the nation under isolation in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic through the entire month of April, KAC quickly shifted gears, realizing that holding the event in 2020 would require it to take a different form. The result was Kentucky's first-ever virtual celebration of Kentucky Writers' Day. The event was a 50-minute prerecorded video featuring readings

by the state's current poet laureate and a quartet of former poets laureate, as well as an introduction by Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who has enjoyed positive moments in the national spotlight because of his daily coronavirus briefings.

Cathers shared that KAC was allotted \$454,100 as a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This funding, which is part of \$75 million the federal legislation allotted to the National Endowment for the Arts, goes toward stabilizing Kentucky's nonprofit arts organizations and preserving the jobs those groups support. Funding will be disbursed to the 93 nonprofit arts organizations who received a Kentucky Arts Partnership (KAP) grant in fiscal year 2020 using the same funding formula used to determine the fiscal year 2020 KAP awards. Those organizations span 31 Kentucky counties. As stated in the legislation, the \$75 million is intended to assist nonprofit arts organizations "to prevent, prepare for and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally."

Finally, Cathers said for the last eight weeks, KAC conducted various grant panels via video and conference calls. He thanked the staff and board panel chairs for their assistance in conducting successful panels.

Corbett thanked Cathers and turned it over to KAC staff Mark Brown to discuss the Native Reflections Exhibit. Brown shared the staff was interested in building meaningful connections with Native Americans in Kentucky. One of the results of work to build that relationship, in coordination with and guidance from the Kentucky Heritage Council and the Kentucky Native American Heritage Commission, was the creation of a new exhibit called Native Reflections. Brown said the Native Reflections exhibit featured work of Native Americans of Kentucky and also Native Inspired works. The exhibit was supposed to debut at The Market but instead was turned into an online exhibit until it could begin traveling. It is set to debut in April in Mt. Sterling. Brown said the exhibit leaves a strong impression.

Tamara Coffey then shared with the board more information about panels for the Performing Artists Directory (PAD), Kentucky Arts Partnership and the Fellowship Programs. 11 new artists and groups were admitted to the PAD. The Fellowship and Emerging Artists awards were given in choreography and musical composition. Musical comp awarded 1 fellowship and 1 emerging artist award each. The Choreography panel awarded one fellowship. KAP received 96 eligible applications, divided into 6 tiers and each tier has a panel. Tiers 1-3 were chaired by Lindsey Jaeger, Corbett chaired Tier 4, Dorton chaired Tier 5, and Janice Turpen chaired Tier 6 small. Finally, Kentucky Writers' Day was held virtually and began by inviting Kentucky writers to submit videos reading their own work which were posted on the KAC website throughout April, National Poetry Month. KAC also did a podcast with former poets laureate. We also released a podcast interview with Kentucky writer Maurice Manning. For Writers' Day, KAC posted an hour-long video presentation, available on Facebook and YouTube. The celebration included a recitation by the current Poetry Out Loud champion Skye Kozloski, reading by Jeff Worley, Richard Taylor, Sena Jeter Naslund and George Ella Lyon. The video began with a greeting from Gov. Andy Beshear.

Corbett thanked Coffey and asked Emily Moses to report. Moses shared about the Kentucky Creative Industry Summit in December 2019 in Mt. Sterling at the Clay Community Center. The theme was Race, Equity, Access, Diversity and Inclusion, and the arts council presented a podcast about the theme leading up to the Summit. Moses said there were sessions on a range of topics throughout the day. The introductory keynote workshop was conducted by Mitzi Sinnott, a member of the Performing Artists Directory and a national presenter on race, diversity, equity and inclusion. The day began with a deep

dive into the topic of race, equity and inclusion with a diverse audience. Mitzi's participation was supported by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. She has a unique and disarming style to conduct deep and meaningful conversations on the difficult topic of race. Her style is inclusive of all people and her workshops facilitate deep connections with peers. Mitzi conducted a workshop for KAC staff about two weeks before the Summit that prepared us for the day and for future work. Moses said the full agenda was available in the Zoom chat for download. Other topics featured during sessions were Arts Advocacy conducted by Jennifer Reis a previous AI Smith Fellowship recipient and former art professor at Morehead State University; an overview of Artists Thrive with Heather Pontonio from the Tremaine Foundation; Foodways and Music Traditions with Kentucky Community Scholars; Social Media; Pricing Your Art and Craft; and presentations of the Unlearn Fear and Hate and I Was Here community art projects. The final plenary was presented by Elaine Grogan Luttrull of Minerva Financial Arts, a friend to arts council, sponsored by Tremaine Foundation, about knowing and communicating your value to foster equity and advocacy. Moses then gave an overview of the Artrepreneur project, sponsored by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. She said the partnership formed after the closure of The Market. The Tremaine Foundation is paying for Kentucky Crafted artists to set up virtual shops on a platform called Artrepreneur, an ecommerce site for fine art and craft. A subscription for each artist is \$108 a year and is covered by the foundation. KAC has about 56 artists in the process of setting up their sites with a deadline of July 1 to go live. The offer was made to all Kentucky Crafted artists. Finally, Moses said KAC had received word last month, made public last week, that KAC will receive \$759,335 from the NEA for the FY21 (federal FY20) state partnership award. This is a little more than a \$45,000 increase over last year's initial award, excluding CARES Act funding of \$713,525. Everett McCorvey asked if individuals can purchase on Artrepreneur and Moses said yes.

Corbett then moved to a discussion about KAC panels that had recently occurred and said she was impressed by the Kentucky Arts Partnership applications and panels in the panel she chaired. She said KAC staff did a great job setting up the virtual panels. Jeanie Dorton said she chaired two KAP panels and was impressed by the diversity issues discussed in the panels and the knowledgeability by panelists on the topic of diversity. She said panelists were excellent. Andee Rudloff said panelists were spot on and diversity among the panelists helps with good conversations. She said her panel was at the beginning of COVID and coming together as arts advocates was very powerful at the time. LuAnn Mattingly said the panelists were wonderful and said the arts council did a great job choosing them. She chaired PAD. She said panelists talked a lot about the value of website marketing. She suggested KAC host a training about marketing on websites. Cathers said KAC provides orientations that include presentations from veteran artists who present on marketing topics. Mattingly asked if other artists need assistance. Cathers said that was one of the things the Artrepreneur project was helping to address and that Kentucky artists did need assistance in this area. Moses said KAC is in the process of planning online workshops for the upcoming year and some of these topics would be addressed.

Corbett turned the discussion to the arts council's equity statement on diversity and inclusion and said she thought the KAC Board should establish a diversity, equity and inclusion committee. She said there were good examples of diversity across the state but that it was important for the arts council to re-emphasize the importance of diversity to grant applicants, especially non-profit organizations with boards. She said there is a Louisville organization that says it has difficulty getting board members of color and KAC needs to begin talking with them seriously about what our expectations are. She said we also should provide training. She said she wanted to establish a committee to make recommendations

to the board. She asked Everett to make comments and mentioned his op/ed in the paper. She said it was important for the arts to take a stand and determine if we're going deep enough on these issues.

McCorvey said certainly in light of what's going on so many organizations are looking into their organizations about how they can affect change. He said it was important for the arts council to do the same. For us to be in the position we are, we could set some criteria for others to follow. He said statements are nice but follow up is important and he wants to see the arts council put itself in that position. He said he would like to see us put specificity behind our statement and there should be a board level statement with actions. He said KAC should track its steps and actions and set deadlines to determine how far forward we are moving. He said he is excited about the opportunity and the change in our country. Corbett asked for volunteers interested in serving on the committee and asked if there were other comments. Cathers said in the materials sent to the board were the arts council statement and the diversity statement. He said he was also pleased the Cabinet was supportive in the release of the arts council's statement. He said the staff felt strongly about putting out the statement. He said the staff felt not making a statement was a statement in itself. He thanked the board for being supportive of the staff.

Corbett said the next board meeting would be Sept. 25, hopefully in person in Danville. She said Nathan Mick was working to find things for the board to do on the visit. Mick said he hoped to coordinate a great event.

Corbett asked if board members were interested in again shifting the December board meeting to November. The board concluded they would like to meet in November. McCorvey mentioned that universities are ending their fall semesters after the Thanksgiving holidays.

Corbett called for a vote to approve grants. Nathan Mick abstained from voting on Tier 6 KAP. Janice Turpen made a motion to approve the grants, Everett McCorvey seconded the vote. All approved by raising hands.

Cathers closed by saying the staff was meeting weekly via Zoom and that we were additionally having a Black Lives Matter staff working group. Cathers asked Moses to share information about what the staff was doing in that group. She said staff could share materials from the meetings they are having with the board. She said the staff would like to coordinate a board story circle. She mentioned that the arts council was participating in collecting story circle conversations to be contributed to the Kentucky Folklife Program. Corbett asked if Cathers knew if the staff would be back in the office anytime soon. He said staff has been directed to continue to telecommute for the time being.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.