

Minutes of the Wisconsin Arts Board Quarterly Meeting

March 11, 2025

The La Crosse Center and virtual
La Crosse, WI

Board Members Present

Brian Kelsey
Lynn Richie
Jayne Herring
Dinorah Márquez Abadiano
Marcela “Xela” Garcia
Karen Ann Hoffman
John W. Johnson
Susan Lipp
William Mitchell
John Potter
Tyler Marchant
Jennifer Schwarzkopf
LaShawndra Vernon
Matthew Wallock

Staff Present

George Tzougros
Karen Goeschko
Dale Johnson
Kaitlyn Berle
Vivian Timchenko

Board Members Excused

Mari Schneider

Guests

Anne Katz
Jonathon Lipp

Welcome and Introductions

Kelsey

Kelsey called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. Board Members and Staff introduced themselves and the geographic area that they represent.

Approval of Agenda

Kelsey

Mitchell requested an amendment to add the Accessibility Ad Hoc committee report to the agenda. Richie made a motion to approve the agenda as amended; Hoffman seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of December 6, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

Herring

Schwarzkopf made a motion to approve the December 6th Quarterly Board Meeting minutes; Lipp seconded. Motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Committee Report

Potter

Potter reported that all is tracking well for the current budget year. He turned the detailed discussion over to Tzougros, who observed that the future is a bit murky at the federal funding level but there is reason to be optimistic. He noted several specific items in this budget: that the travel budget looks tight because of how DOA allocated the dollars, and that we will work with DOA staff to ensure that allocation changes are handled differently; that NAASA dues were paid twice out of this budget, affecting this line item; and that funds are available to send the Poetry Out Loud Coordinator to the national conference this year to accompany the state champion.

Governor's Budget Proposal: The proposal has four items relating to the arts. The two most important to the WAB are bringing the per-capita support from \$0.18 to \$0.68 and to ensuring the state's NEA match amount (without having to go back to ask for more each year). The Governor's other two arts related budget items involve the Rural Creative Economy Initiative and funding the Wisconsin Film Office which includes financial incentives to be used in attracting the film industry to WI. Tzougros will communicate the schedule for the Joint Committee on Finance's budget hearings to the board.

External Relations

Garcia

Garcia reported the successful completion of the letter to legislators and the one-page communication outlining what the WAB has supported overall and specifically in a legislator's district. Staff will send that material to legislators this month. Board members will follow up with their own legislators.

Timchenko reported the creation of an Instagram account for the WAB and updates to the WAB website. Youth Arts month is a current focus.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Accessibility

Mitchell

Mitchell reminded the board that the committee was encouraged to review the scope of other state arts agencies' Access Committees. At the committee's meeting it was recommended that they follow the NEA's definition of Accessibility, which includes ensuring the accessibility of people with disabilities, older people, and veterans.

Mitchell also reported that grantees aren't providing all of the information that WAB would like to see in the accessibility section of the grant applications/final reports, so the committee will look into how to best enhance that reporting.

50th Anniversary Grant Program

Goeschko

Goeschko reported that 19 of the 22 counties that WAB prioritized in this program have submitted FY25 application already. Three counties – Pepin, Jackson, and Trempealeau – will come in with applications prior to the May board meeting. She observed that almost all of the 19 are more confident in applying this year, developing their project proposals and budgets, and inviting others from their county to join them in the State Level Resources Zoom sessions which will occur later this year. They are clearly learning about additional granting opportunities and other resources at the state level, which was one of the Program's goals.

Regranting Program

Goeschko

Two groups typically involved as regranting organizations were not part of the request this year. Northern Lakes Center has decided to permanently leave the program. The Community Foundation of North Central WI is sitting out this year. The additional dollars that these changes free up will be distributed among those of the continuing Regranting Partners that indicated before this board meeting that they could accept and match more for this year. The WAB committed to bringing funding levels back to where they had been for each of the continuing Regranting Partners prior to the program receiving a major cut in 2011, before opening the program to additional applicants/new partners.

Hoffman moved to approve grants to all organizations except the St. Croix Valley Foundation and the Milwaukee Arts Board; Johnson seconded. Motion carried.

Potter left the room. Schwarzkopf moved to approve the St. Croix Valley Foundation; Richie seconded. Motion carried. Potter returned.

Garcia, Vernon and Marquez left the room. Hoffman moved to approve the Milwaukee Arts Board; Marchant seconded. Motion carried. Garcia, Vernon and Marquez returned.

Arts Challenge Initiative

Goeschko

These grants are for capacity building.

Marquez moved to approve grants to all organizations except Walkers Point Center for the Arts, Latino Arts, and Little Eagle Arts Foundation; Hoffman seconded. Motion carried.

Garcia left the room. Schwarzkopf moved to approve a grant to Walkers Point Center for the Arts; Johnson seconded. Motion carried. Garcia returned.

Marquez left the room. Richie moved to approve a grant to Latino Arts; Garcia seconded. Motion carried. Marquez returned.

Hoffman left the room. Herring moved to approve a grant to Little Eagle Arts Foundation; Lipp seconded. Motion carried. Hoffman returned.

Woodland Indian Arts Program

Hoffman

Five organizations applied, a bit less than last year. Hoffman will share the grants' vision throughout the state to encourage other organizations to apply. The panel recommended four grants. Johnson moved to approve the panel's recommendations; Schwarzkopf seconded. Motion carried.

Chairman's report

Kelsey

Kelsey noted that this year's WIGCOT did a good job integrating the arts into tourism topics, even though the theme was Boundless (outdoor). He was glad for the opportunity at WIGCOT to thank the Governor in person for his inclusion of the WAB's budget increase in his budget this year. Following the previous evening's dinner, Kelsey also noted that the executive board members of WAB and Create WI will meet quarterly. He asked each board member to share their impressions of WIGCOT, which elicited the common observation that the arts continue to be more clearly accepted and even enthusiastically acknowledged than in previous years – possibly carrying over from last year's arts focus.

Ann Katz of Create Wisconsin reminded board members that March 25 is Create Wisconsin day at the state capital.

Executive Director's report

Tzougros

Tzougros reminded board members to read the report of staff activity included in the board book. He also promoted the Arts Midwest one-hour online conference about DEI in the workplace on March 19th.

Adjournment

Schwarzkopf moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 4:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Jayne Herring,
Board Secretary

Upcoming 2025 Board Meetings

May 9	Madison (includes Annual Meeting)
September 12 & 13	Kenosha-Racine
December 12	Milwaukee