

**Minutes of the Wisconsin Arts Board Annual Meeting  
May 9, 2025**

Meeting Location | Via Zoom and In Person  
Art and Literature Lab  
111 S Livingston St  
Madison, WI

**Board Members Present**

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

**Staff Present**

George Tzougros  
Dale Johnson  
Kaitlyn Berle  
Vivian Timchenko

**Board Members Excused**

Mari Schneider  
Susan Lipp  
Tyler Marchant  
Jennifer Schwarzkopf

**Staff Excused**

Karen Goeschko

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Kelsey**

Kelsey called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. Board Members and Staff introduced themselves and the geographic area that they represent.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Kelsey**

The agenda as published was approved on a motion by Hoffman, seconded by Richie and unanimously approved.

**Report of the Nominating Committee**

**Schwarzkopf (Tzougros)**

On behalf of the absent Schwarzkopf, Tzougros announced that the slate of officers serving on the executive committee have agreed to continue in their roles: Kelsey as Chairperson; Richie as Vice Chairperson; Herring as Secretary; John Potter as At Large (budget committee chair); and Karen Ann Hoffman as At Large.

## **Election of Officers**

**Herring**

Herring called for any nominations from the floor for Chairman. Hearing none, a motion was made by Johnson and seconded by Hoffman for Brian Kelsey to remain as Chair. Motion passed unanimously. Kelsey abstained.

Herring called for any nominations from the floor for Vice Chairman. Hearing none, a motion was made by Kelsey and seconded by Wallock for Lynn Richie to remain as Vice Chair. Motion passed unanimously. Richie abstained.

Herring called for any nominations from the floor for at-large officers. Hearing none, a motion was made by Richie and seconded by Johnson for John Potter (budget chair) and Karen Ann Hoffman to remain as At-Large officers. Motion passed unanimously. Potter and Hoffman abstained.

Kelsey called for any nominations from the floor for Secretary. Hearing none, a motion was made by Richie and seconded by Wallock for Jayne Herring to remain as Secretary. Motion passed unanimously. Herring abstained.

## **Report of the Bylaws Committee**

**Potter**

Committee members identified three areas where practice differs from the approved bylaws. They will determine whether amendments to the bylaws will be required and will provide the necessary 10-days notice before a vote. This would also include a recommendation on whether the Accessibility Committee should remain an Ad Hoc committee or become a standing committee.

## **Appointment of Committees**

**Kelsey**

Kelsey outlined where to find out more information about each of the standing committees and the current board member assignments. He urged board members to consider whether they have an interest in serving on a different committee and to let Kelsey know in the next few weeks. The standing committees are: Budget and Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Nominating Committee and External Relations Committee. Accessibility is an ad hoc committee at this time.

Tzougros reported that the ad hoc Creative Economy Committee, which involved a number of non-board members, is still on the books, but has not been active for several years. Vernon suggested that it should be reactivated. Herring agreed that we should be prepared with a list of interested committee members. Staff will determine whether those who had served previously on the committee would consider being part of the committee's activation if needed.

Johnson reported that the Strategic Planning Committee has paused its work until more is known about the biennial budget and NEA grants.

## **Adjournment of the 2025 Annual Meeting**

**Kelsey**

The annual meeting was adjourned at 9:27am on a motion by Vernon that passed unanimously.

**Minutes of the Wisconsin Arts Board Quarterly Meeting  
May 9, 2025**

Meeting Location | Via Zoom and In Person  
Art and Literature Lab  
111 S Livingston St  
Madison, 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  
LaShawndra Vernon  
Matthew Wallock

**Staff Present**

George Tzougros  
Dale Johnson  
Kaitlyn Berle  
Vivian Timchenko

**Board Members Excused**

Mari Schneider  
Tyler Marchant  
Jennifer Schwarzkopf

**Staff Excused**

Karen Goeschko

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Kelsey**

Kelsey called the meeting to order at 9:29 am. Board Members and Staff introduced themselves and the geographic area that they represent.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Kelsey**

The agenda was amended to move the Accessibility Committee report from Standing Committee reports to Ad Hoc Committee reports on a motion by Richie, seconded by Herring, that passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Herring**

The minutes of the March 11, 2025 meeting were approved on a motion by Hoffman, seconded by Vernon, that passed unanimously.

## Ad Hoc Committee Updates

### Poet Laureate

Johnson

Johnson shared a portion of a poem, *Keys*, written by Wisconsin's Poet Laureate, Brenda Cardenas. The Milwaukee-based poet will remain as Poet Laureate through 2027. Johnson also reported that the statewide Department of Public Instruction's arts project that was begun in celebration of the WAB's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and includes poetry is continuing into its 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

### Accessibility

Mitchell

Mitchell reported that the committee met on May 8 and adopted the NEA's framework for accessibility committees. They discussed the accessibility self assessment tools that the NEA promotes as part of the grant application process.

## Standing Committee Updates

### Budget

Potter

Potter reported that the current fiscal year budget is in good shape, but the next biennial budget remains unknown at this time.

Tzougros reminded the board that the state budget covers the salaries of three employees. NEA grant funds cover the salaries for the other two.

Following four public meetings by the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance focused on the **Biennial Budget**, there is acknowledgement by both parties that the arts are greatly underfunded by the public sector.

**NEA status.** WAB staff submitted its \$1,083,000 application, to be matched with state dollars. Also under consideration is \$75,000 for arts and health and \$25,000 for the America 250 celebration. It is not clear when we will hear about the status of these grants.

### External Relations

Garcia

(Garcia and Marquez departed the meeting at 10:18am.)

Tzougros reported that much of the External Relations committee work is being accomplished by WAB's new Public Relations and Logistics Coordinator, Vivienne Timchenko. She oversaw the sending of the one-pager reports on WAB grants based on legislative district with a letter under Kelsey's signature.

The committee met with the Indiana Arts Commission staff to discuss the ways that they visualize/communicate the agency's data effectively as information and advocacy tools.

Timchenko has launched WAB's new Creative Copy semi-monthly newsletter. The current topic is arts education and it can be accessed through the WAB website.

WAB has an Instagram site.

(Break 10:30-10:37)

## **FY 26 Creative Communities Panel Recommendations**

### **Local Arts**

**Herring/Goeschko (Berle)**

Of the 30 applicants in phase 2 of the application process, 25 were recommended for funding by the panel of 5. One board member, Vernon, reported conflicts of interest with three organizations recommended for funding: Radio Milwaukee, Girls Rock, and Milwaukee Film. A motion was made Hoffman and seconded by Richie to award funding to the remaining 22 organizations pending funding levels in the FY26 state budget. Motion passed.

Vernon left the room. Johnson moved to approve grants to Radio Milwaukee, Girls Rock and Milwaukee Film. Lipp seconded. Motion passed. Vernon returned.

### **Arts Education**

**Richie/Berle**

A total of 19 applications were considered in Phase 2 with 16 recommended for funding by the 5-person panel. Richie reported that she hopes there will be more applications in the future.

Conflicts were identified. Vernon moved approval of grants to all those recommended by the panel, except Milwaukee Public Schools, Pecatonica Educational Charitable Foundation, Walkers Point Center for the Arts, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, ArtWorks, and Artists Working in Education. Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

Johnson left the room. Hoffman moved approval of a grant to Pecatonica Educational Charitable Foundation. Lipp seconded. Motion passed.

Vernon joined Johnson in leaving the room. Mitchell moved approval of a grant to Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation. Lipp seconded. Motion passed. Johnson returned.

Richie moved approval of a grant to Walkers Point Center for the Arts, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, ArtWorks, and Artists Working in Education. Hoffman seconded. Motion passed. Vernon returned.

### **Folk Arts**

**Kelsey/Berle**

Five applicants were considered and recommended for awards in phase 2 of the Folk Arts program. A motion was made by Vernon and Seconded by Richie to approve funding, if available, to UW-Oshkosh Department of Chicana/o and Latinx Studies, Bembe Drum & Dance, and the UW-Green Bay Humanities Dept.-Viking house. Motion passed.

A motion was made to award a grant to the Oshkosh Public Museum by Johnson and seconded by Vernon. Hoffman left the room. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Hoffman and seconded by Richie in favor of the grant to the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition. Vernon left the room. Motion passed.

### **Folk Art Apprenticeship Program**

**Kelsey/Berle**

Of the 16 applicants, the panel recommended 12 for funding. Herring noted that a wider variety of Folk Arts were represented in the applications this year than in many recent years. As there were no board member conflicts of interest, Herring moved to approve grants to the 12 recommended applicants. Vernon seconded. Motion passed.

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grant Recommendations**

**Berle**

(This item was moved forward because we finished early for the scheduled tour)

Berle reported that the final 3 of the 22 counties that WAB prioritized in this program have submitted FY25 applications. These were Pepin, Jackson, and Trempealeau. Johnson moved to approve funding for the 3 proposed projects. Lipp seconded. Motion passed.

## **Community Reports**

**All**

Board members began their reports on arts-related happenings/developments in their area before an 11:30 break in preparation for the tour and presentation by today's location host: Art & Literature Laboratory.

The tour was conducted by Co-Founders Rita Mae Reese and Jolynne Roorda. With 5 staff and many dedicated volunteers, 250 events are held each year in the building. Their brand tag is "Your Ideas Belong Here".

Lunch followed the tour.

The meeting agenda was restarted at 12:32 with continued reports from board member' communities.

## **Board Chair report**

**Kelsey**

Kelsey urged board members to communicate with and educate their legislators regarding the importance of public funding for the arts, and adopt the Relaxed, Reasonable, and Rational approach.

## **Executive Director report**

**Tzougros**

Tzougros reported that Arts Midwest just brought on a new board member: Emily Tau, who oversees community engagement within the Milwaukee County Executive's office. She has a background in theater.

He was also asked to participate in a panel discussion for NASAA about Arts and Tourism. He reminded all that many states do not enjoy the same positive relationships between arts and tourism that we do in Wisconsin.

The board's next meeting will be in September in the Racine-Kenosha area.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 pm when Vernon moved adjournment and the motion unanimously passed.