Virginia Commission for the Arts Commission Board Meeting

 Virginia MOCA

Virginia Beach, Virginia *March 16, 2023*

# Attendees

Commissioners: Dr. Dena Jennings, Robert Goudie, Amanda Pillion, Frazier Millner Armstrong, LaTasha Do’zia, Asa Jackson, Michael Markley, Sushmita Mazumdar, Jan P. Monroe, Laurie Naismith, Barbara Parker, David B. Trinkle, M.D.

Virtual Attendance: N/A

Not in Attendance: Terry Emory Buntrock

Staff: Margaret Hancock, Cathy Welborn, Lorraine Crilley, Karina Klemz

Special Guests: Ed Harvey, Virginians for the Arts President, Abi Gomez, NASAA Board Member, Abigail Gump and Ramona Taylor, Attorney General’s Office and Dr. Angela Warren, CEO of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra

# Call to Order

Chair Dena Jennings called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and provided a welcome and a land acknowledgement.

Commissioner Naismith introduced guest speaker Dr. Angela Warren, newly-appointed CEO of VCA-grantee Virginia Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. Warren spoke to goals for the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, emphasizing the criticality of the arts on early childhood development and impact of diverse representation. She thanked the Commission for its investments in youth arts programming across Virginia.

1. **Agenda**

Chair Jennings announced that virtual meetings were an option for convening in accordance with §§ 2.2-3708.2 and 3708.3 of the Code of Virginia (Virginia Code) and proposed an amended agenda to include virtual Board meetings.

Commissioner Laurie Naismith made a motion to amend the agenda, adding virtual meetings.

Seconded: Amanda Pillion

Roll call vote: Quorum met

Motion passed

1. **Legal Counsel Attendance and Robert’s Rules**

Chair Jennings introduced two representatives from the Attorney General’s Office, Abigail Gump and Ramona Taylor.

Chair Jennings provided an overview of Robert’s Rules regarding procedures for voting and discussion.

#  Big Wins

Director Margaret Hancock shared big wins from the December Board meeting:

* Updated Guidelines for Funding
* Funding for the Loving v. Virginia opera
* Expanded Artist Fellowships to 15, allowing for more artists from different regions and increased expertise in various disciplines

# Approval of Meeting Minutes December 8, 2022

Chair Jennings asked for a motion to approve December 8, 2022 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Trinkle, M.D. made a motion to approve the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes:

Seconded: Commissioner Naismith

Chair Jennings openedthe meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Naismith did not approve of the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes. She asked that the rationale for her objecting vote on the updated mission statement and removal of the cultural equity statement of the Guidelines for Funding be included in the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes.

Legal counsel, upon request by Chair Jennings, stated that meeting minutes are a summary and should accurately capture recorded votes and actions of the Commission Board. Meeting minutes are not required to be a transcript.

Commissioner Markley motioned to include the rationale for objecting votes when recording meeting minutes. Commissioner Trinkle, M.D. agreed and suggested editing the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes.

Chair Jennings stated that an amendment of the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes was needed.

Motion to amend December 8, 2022 meeting minutes to include, “Commissioner Naismith objected to the modification of the mission statement and deletion of the cultural equity statement in the Guidelines for Funding”:

Motion: Commissioner Markley

Seconded: Commissioner Trinkle, M.D.

Motion to approve the December 8, 2022 meeting minutes as amended:

Motion: Commissioner Trinkle, M.D.

Seconded: Commissioner Monroe

Roll call vote:

Monroe, Aye

Jackson, Aye

Mazumdar, Aye

Jennings, Aye

Goudie, Aye

Pillion, Aye

Do’zia, Aye

Parker, Aye

Armstrong, Aye

Markley, Aye

Naismith, Nay

Commissioner Naismith stated that she does not approve of the condensed format for meeting minutes

Motion passed

1. **Board Development | Commissioner Toolkit**

Director Hancock introduced the Commissioner Toolkit which included an Impact Report with sections that serve as speaking points, branded name tags, and VCA stickers. The presentation is in-progress, and upon its completion will include high-level speaking points tailored for Commissioners to exercise as a resource in their regions. VCA staff and the Education Committee will be collaborating to create new training materials for Commissioner onboarding.

Director Hancock stated that the Impact Report served as a catalyst in strengthening a partnership with VFTA. VFTA paid for design fees, while the VCA generated the content, paid for printing costs, and continues to execute distribution.

Ed Harvey (VFTA) stated that the Impact Report is a critical tool for advocacy and was delighted to be a part of its genesis.

Director Hancock stated that the VCA is researching web-based portals with VITA. A web-based portal would serve as a collaboration tool and centralized location for Commissioners to access VCA materials, such as maps and Board materials.

# Executive Update

1. License Plate Redesign

Director Hancock debuted the Virginia for the Arts license plate redesign. The redesign process was shaped by survey results collected from Commissioners and VCA staff. The color palette was pulled from the VCA logo and Virginia state flag. Director Hancock reported that while additional redesigns were generated, DMV had strict regulations regarding format parameters and visibility. The redesign is currently being processed at DMV for approval.

Chair Jennings called for a 2-4-8 Brainstorming session with the prompt:

“How can we ensure Virginians register for the specialty license plate?”

* Commissioner Armstrong | Promotion from our own constituents, Commissioners and their respective social media channels. Asking art organizations to send this news to their Boards, include in their newsletters and create benefit campaigns. Asking museums and arts centers to display the new license plate on-site.
* Commissioner Do’zia | Poster display at DMV. Public awareness on the benefits of purchasing a license plate for Virginia arts organizations and VCA grant funding.
* Commissioner Pillion | Banner on the VCA website.
* Chair Jennings | Organizations could create a ‘fleet’. Creating incentives for organizations to purchase license plates for a whole fleet.
* Commissioner Jackson | Film/TV commercial opportunities. Running ads on social media and geo-fencing at major institutions. Reaching out to Creative Communities Partnership grantees to create newsletter content and send mailers to residents in their towns/cities.
* Commissioner Mazumdar | Poster display at DMV. License plate reveal events. QR code to VCA or DMV websites with additional information. Mailed baskets celebrating the new redesign.
1. External Relations

Director Hancock stated that a re-examination and strong curation of VCA external relations directly correlates to how grant funding is perceived – such as what it means to be a grantee of the VCA and the impact of arts funding – and provided an overview of current external relations.

1. Poetry Out Loud

Commissioner Armstrong shared her experience at the POL state finals which were held at VPM Production Studios on March 10.

1. Network Activation

Director Hancock shared the various methods used to activate the VCA network. High-visibility events included the Impact Celebration at VMFA and several Meet and Greets across various regions of the Commonwealth. New types of engagement were activated for individual artists under the Artist Engagement grant categories.

1. Advisory Panels

Director Hancock provided an overview of upcoming Advisory Panel process and utilization of new regions for stronger Advisory Panel groupings. According to code, Advisory Panels will no longer be public meetings as Advisory Panels are not a public body. Going forward, Advisory Panelists will no longer be open to FOIA as Advisory Panels will be conducted as non-public meetings.

1. Operations

Director Hancock provided an overview of current operations to include staffing, FY22 carryover funds approved by the Youngkin Administration, a new ADA-compliant website, audits from NEA and Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, and unused grant funds.

Commissioner Markley made a motion to retain grant panels as public meetings:

Seconded: Commissioner Naismith

Discussion:

Commissioner Jackson urged the Commission to wait on this vote. As the Commission Board and VCA staff were under the assumption that Advisory Panels were being conducted as public meetings but only now learned that they were not conducted properly, he asked that the Commission Board give time to think over how Advisory Panel meetings could be structured moving forward.

Chair Jennings suggested to have time to design the Advisory Panel meetings in line with the AG’s office’s protocol, while also protecting Advisory Panelists.

Commissioner Goudie stated that as Commissioners and applicants are often the only public attendees present, Advisory Panels could be closed and the VCA could invite applicants being reviewed and designated Commissioners to these closed meetings. In this scenario, the VCA would not be subject to open meeting requirements.

Chair Jennings recommended to make Commissioner Goudie’s option a friendly amendment, which Commissioner Markley declined.

Commissioner Markley made a motion to retain Advisory Panels as public meetings.

Commissioner Trinkle, M.D. asked legal counsel if the VCA could remove the terms “public” or “closed” and make the Advisory Panels a regular meeting.

Legal counsel stated that the Commission Board can remove the terms ‘public’ and ‘closed, and instead, call these meetings a working group/session.

Chair Jennings called for a vote on Commissioner Markley’s motion.

Roll call vote:

Monroe, Nay

Jackson, Abstained

Mazumdar, Abstained

Tinkle, Nay

Jennings, Nay

Goudie, Nay

Pillion, Nay

Do’zia, Abstained

Parker, Nay

Armstrong, Abstained

Markley, Aye

Naismith Aye

Motion not passed

Commissioner Goudie asked if VCA staff have any concerns about public meetings.

Director Hancock stated that based on feedback, Advisory Panelists feel the need to often censor themselves during Panel discussion. She stated that Panelists are selected by the VCA and are not appointees. Making Advisory Panels public is a large investment of staff time in order to provide full transcripts or meeting minutes. She stated that the aim of the VCA is to invest, not audit.

Commissioner Goudie made a motion to conduct Advisory Panels as working meetings, with specific invitations to applicants from the region and designated Commissioners.

Motion: Commissioner Goudie

Seconded: Commissioner Trinkle, M.D.

Commissioner Jackson asked to amend Commissioner Goudie’s motion to not limit invitations to Advisory Panel meetings to only Commissioners designated to that region’s review. Commissioner Goudie accepted Commissioner Jackson’s amendment.

Chair Jennings asked for a vote on the motion to conduct Advisory Panels as working meetings, with specific invitations to applicants from the region and Commissioners, but not limited to Commissioners designated to that region’s review.

Roll call vote:

Monroe, Aye

Jackson, Aye

Mazumdar, Aye

Trinkle, Aye

Jennings, Aye

Goudie, Aye

Pillion, Aye

Do’zia, Aye

Parker, Aye

Armstrong, Aye

Markley, Abstained

Naismith, Nay

Commissioner Naismith preferred that Advisory Panels operate as public meetings

Motion passed

Commissioner Trinkle, M.D. pardoned himself and left the March Board meeting

# Commission Votes | FY23 Grant Allocations

1. FY24 Guidelines for Funding

Director Hancock recommended that any unallocated grant funds be allocated to GOS grantees who received less than $2,500 as part of their final grant award payment. This would bring GOS grantees closer to the minimum amount approved for FY24. Commissioner Markley suggested allocation to Priority 1 and Priority 2 grantees in this category.

Chair Jennings made a motion to utilize unallocated funding by raising grant awards for GOS Priority 1 and 2 grantees who received less than $2,500 and any remaining funds to be distributed to Priority 3 grantee.

Seconded: Commissioner Goudie

All those in attendance approved, Motion Passed

# Policy Manual Update

# Chair Jennings thanked staff, legal counsel from the AG’s office, as well as members of the Budget and Policy and Executive Committee for reviewing the Policy Manual. Director Hancock provided insight on revisions that include consistent language with VCA grants and Guidelines for Funding, correct nomenclature, references to correct policies, codes and language in parallel with the General Assembly. Chair Jennings added that the new Policy Manual would clearly define the terms ‘Commission’ and ‘Agency’ in their respective contexts.

# Virtual Meetings

# Chair Jennings opened the discussion for a vote this meeting on a virtual meeting policy so that a virtual meeting focused on the Policy Manual can be held before June.

# Legal counsel provided definitions and proper procedures of virtual meetings.

# Motion to move forward with virtual Board meetings per the code:

# Commissioner Goudie

# Seconded: Commissioner Jackson

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# All those in attendance approved, motion passed

# Director Hancock noted that the next Commission Board meeting will be in June in Richmond.

# Public Comment | Meeting Adjournment

Chair Jennings thanked Commissioners and guests in attendance.

Abigail Gomez provided NASAA updates. She noted the $4 million NEA budget increase recommended by the Biden Administration. She provided dates and times for upcoming NASAA webinars.

Ed Harvey stated that although legislative branches have not finalized a budget, he believes that VCA funding should remain consistent. He thanked the VCA staff for the progress the agency has made.

Motion to adjourn the March 16, 2023 Board meeting:

Commissioner Parker

Seconded: Commissioner Armstrong

All approved, Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned by Chair Jennings at 2:18 p.m.