

**New York State Council on the Arts
Council Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2022, 1:00PM- 2:40PM
Held via Video and Teleconference**

Present:

Katherine Nicholls (Chair), Monica Angle, Lawrence Cook II, Scott Eberle, Aaron Flagg, Carolee Fink, Joan Hornig, Eric Latzky, James Lemons, Andrea Louie, Laudelina Martinez, David Alan Miller, Mahnaz Moinian, Adriana Trigiani

Quorum present: Yes

Others in attendance:

Mara Manus, Executive Director, NYSCA
Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs, NYSCA
Abigail Young, Deputy Director of Operations and General Counsel, NYSCA
Abby Adler, Executive Assistant, NYSCA
Katie Steger, Capital Project Director, NYSCA
David Huff, Program Director, NYSCA

Roll call conducted by Abby Adler and quorum was confirmed. Meeting called to order by Chair Katherine Nicholls at approximately 1:05PM.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

KATHERINE NICHOLLS:

Thank you, ABBY. Good afternoon and welcome to the New York State Council on the Arts' March 28, 2022, joint Committee and Council meeting. I am Katherine Nicholls, the Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts.

Thank you to our Council Members for joining us today. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded. As authorized by Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature on September 2, 2021, this meeting will be conducted by teleconference and video participation. A recording and transcript of the meeting will be made available on the NYSCA website.

Since our last Council meeting in November, New York's arts and culture venues continued upon their journeys of re-opening. For much of the fall we were able to fully appreciate the arts and culture live and in person, and what a joy it was. We also experienced some setbacks between December and February when the Omicron variant saw case numbers once again on the rise, with many organizations forced to delay or cancel programming. Some organizations had to shut down for several weeks in order to manage significant staffing shortages. But once again, New Yorkers were prepared and followed recommendations set forth by the Governor

and the Department of Health, so these measures were temporary, and we are moving into spring with an increase in reopenings and a return to in-person programming. We remain vigilant, hopeful and grateful to be able to experience the arts in person.

At today's meeting, we will review and vote on Fiscal Year 2022 Panelist Roster recommendations and the Round Four Capital Project Grant Recommendations – our final funding opportunity for FY2022. Council will also review the FY2023 Ongoing Multi-Year Grants. The meeting materials were sent to Council on Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

The application portal for the Round 4 Capital opportunity opened November 22, 2021 and closed on January 14, 2022 at 4PM. Between February 15 and March 1, 2022 the Capital staff conducted 4 peer review panels over 7 days, welcoming 22 panelists. Several members of our Council were fortunate to observe a number of panel sessions and on behalf of the NYSCA Council we wish to acknowledge and thank our peer review panelists for their time, their professionalism, and their commitment to this most important part of our grant making process.

This year NYSCA launched new guidelines and program categories, and our peer review panelists came to these sessions prepared with thoughtful comments, insights, and their shared experiences to review and make recommendations that come before council today. Thank you also to NYSCA's Deputy Director of Programs Megan White, Director of Operations and GC, Abigail Young, our Program and Operations teams for their leadership in conducting our panels. Your stewardship of this process is what gives us confidence in our role as Council in reviewing your recommendations today.

A reminder that the FY2022 opportunities have been constructed to achieve the following:

- Significantly streamline the application process to reduce burden for applying, especially for new applicants and smaller organizations.
- Provide immediate support for live performance – an area of our sector that has had its doors shuttered since March 2020 with a significant unemployed workforce
- Expand eligibility and access to funding for underrepresented communities, smaller organizations, and a broader range of artistic practices
- Provide flexible funding to be responsive to the fluidity of our times

NYSCA is currently awaiting the release of the enacted Fiscal Year 2023 state Budget in early April. Per the Executive Budget released in January, we are immensely grateful to Governor Hochul for her preservation of the NYSCA budget at level funding to FY2022, demonstrating her unyielding support for the arts during these times and her understanding of the immense impact our field has on the health and vitality of our state. We look forward to receiving and communicating the final budget in the coming days.

Spring has brought much to be grateful for in New York. Yet it is not lost on NYSCA staff, Council and all New Yorkers that across our globe conflict is raging in multiple regions. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we watched in horror as the Donetsk Regional

Drama Theater in Mariupol was destroyed by Russian bombs. It had been a safe haven for civilians many of whom perished in the attack. Italy's Culture minister Dario Franceschini responded to this tragedy with a message of hope and resilience in support of the Ukrainian people. He said "the Italian cabinet has approved the proposal for Italy to rebuild this theater". Theaters of all countries belong to the whole of humanity".

If I could I ask all of us to contemplate that powerful message that the arts unite us. We think of those around the world who are suffering and denied their freedoms. Peace can never come soon enough.

I am now pleased to welcome NYSCA's Executive Director, Mara Manus, who will share important status updates with us. Mara, thank you as always. Your stewardship of NYSCA together with the dedication of our entire staff has led the agency to achieve record results and the highest level of service to our field this year. We thank you and welcome you.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WELCOME

MARA MANUS: Thank you, Katherine. It is wonderful to be here with you all today. Here we are at the finish line at the end of this extraordinary funding year. I would like to take the time to thank our incredible staff, under the leadership of Abigail Young and Megan White – this year marks the most significant shift in our grantmaking, and we would not be here without their unparalleled dedication to your field.

On February 16, 2022, I delivered testimony at the joint Senate and Finance budget hearings. There was lots of positive engagement and support for our field during the QA portion. We look forward to the impending release of the enacted 2023 budget.

A quick update about our FY22 Grantmaking: excluding Capital, to-date NYSCA has awarded over 3,200 grants, totaling \$82 million. 93% of our FY22 grants has been paid as of today.

Our Restart NY: Live Performance Grants continue across all 10 regions of our state, more than 600 events have occurred, and approximately 40 events are forthcoming, and they include: Production of *The Lucky Star* at the Director's Company in Manhattan from April 26-June 12, and Patchogue Village Center for the Performing Arts in Long Island production of *I Am King: The Michael Jackson Experience* on April 9, 2022.

With consideration to the release of the enacted budget in early April, NYSCA is planning to launch our next set of guidelines this spring that continue to build upon the grantmaking opportunities we developed for FY2022. We will also continue to expand our robust outreach initiatives, including live webinars for each opportunity and virtual office hours for the field, which reached approximately 5,700 viewers and participants last year. We look forward to sharing those guidelines with you soon.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) release an annual impact report each March, tracking the annual economic impact of arts and cultural production from 35 industries, both commercial and nonprofit. The topline NY data hasn't changed too much:

- Cultural production in 2020 accounts for \$126 billion and 7.3% of the New York Economy, compared to \$123 billion and 7% in the 2018/2019 report
- Cultural production in 2020 contributed 435,693 jobs, down from 504,393 in the 2018/2019 report

The salient points for the arts field are that between 2019 and 2020:

- the U.S. arts economy shrank at nearly twice the rate of the economy as a whole: arts and cultural production fell by 6.4 percent compared with a 3.4 decline in the overall economy”
- the value added by performing arts presenters (including festivals) fell by nearly 73 percent
- Performing arts presenters and performing arts companies joined oil drilling/exploration and air transportation as the steepest-declining areas of the U.S. economy

I would like to acknowledge Sana Colter, who recently completed her service as NYSCA and New York State's first ever AmeriCorps VISTA Member with a focus on Research Projects. Sana has worked in many capacities at NYSCA – starting as an intern in 2018 and a temp in 2019. As our VISTA, Sana has been a vital resource for the agency, and I am thrilled to share that she will continue her time with us as the Executive and Communications office temp.

I am also thrilled to introduce NYSCA's new Capital Project Director, Katie Steger. Katie will oversee the current Capital Projects and the development and implementation of an FY23 round pending the enacted budget. Katie brings with her 15 years of experience in program development and management, grantmaking, and research spanning multiple disciplines.

Katie has also worked at NYSCA in varying capacities since 2018 – first overseeing the FY18 and FY19 Capital Projects and then as the Interim Director of the Music and Folk Arts Programs. We are thrilled to have her join us in this formal capacity, and we know she will continue to be an excellent member of the NYSCA team.

Next, Lia Capotorto, NYSCA's Interim Communications Manager, will be with our agency through June 3, after which she will pursue her Masters in Theatre Practice at the University College Dublin. Lia first joined NYSCA in October 2020 and has played an instrumental role in the overhaul and expansion of our communications portfolio and strategy. Lia have given us so much over the last 18 months and it has been a pleasure to work with her. We wish her immense success.

And finally, we recognize, with profound gratitude, Tracy Hamilton, who will retire from NYSCA effective April 15. Tracy, who has diligently served as our Director of Compliance, first joined New York State service in 1989 and has been a member of the NYSCA team since 1994.

Throughout her 33 years of service, Tracy has been a phenomenal colleague and has played an essential role in the strengthening of NYSCA's mission and reach. Please join me in a round of applause to celebrating Tracy and her exciting next chapter – we can't wait to see what will take flight for her.

We are thrilled that the arts are reopening in so many ways – and summer has so much in store for us as artists and audience members. We will continue to share exciting events with Council, and as you know, NYSCA maintains an events calendar on our website that you can use to find events in your areas. One such opportunity to get back out and appreciate all the state has to offer is the upcoming Trailblaze Festival. This summer festival will celebrate the completion of the Empire State Trail – a momentous occasion for New York State. The festival was delayed due to COVID, but it is back and we're so fortunate to have Council Member David Alan Miller with us today who can speak more to the festival.

Council Member David Alan Miller provides information regarding the Trailblaze festival, which can also be found, [here](#).

FY2022 PANELIST ROSTER RECOMMENDATIONS

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Our first agenda item is to review and vote on additional FY2022 panelist roster recommendations. I would like to thank Council Members who submitted panelist nominations – we appreciate this, and we always encourage your input. Megan White, NYSCA's Deputy Director of Programs, will now discuss the Round 4 panel process and the panelist roster recommendations for Capital Project panels.

MEGAN WHITE: Thank you, Katherine. NYSCA strongly believes in maintaining the public voice in our grantmaking process, and as such, peer-review panels are a cornerstone of NYSCA's mission and grantmaking. As reviewed at previous Council meetings, the executive leadership and program staff streamlined our panel process to address our current fiscal reality as well as the safety challenges presented by COVID-19.

Today you are being asked to ratify one roster for Capital Projects. All panel members serve single year terms, and may be reappointed for a term of up to three years. To clarify, as a point of procedure, today, the Council is reviewing and ratifying the specific roster of panelists that have reviewed the Capital grants this winter and provided the scores in your packet. We will be presenting the roster of panelists for the FY23 funding opportunities later this year.

As a reminder, advisory panelists are required to act with impartiality with respect to the evaluation and rating of applications and to protect panel deliberations from any potential conflict of interest or the appearance of such a conflict. Prior to serving, panelists are required to acknowledge any affiliations with organizations making applications to the Council and must comply with New York State Ethics Laws.

Please take a moment to review these nominations. The vote will be held towards the end of today's meeting.

A copy of the panelist roster recommendations can be viewed, [here](#).

FY2023 ONGOING MULTI-YEAR GRANTS

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Our next agenda item is to review the FY2023 Ongoing Multi Year Grants. Megan White will present the ongoing multi-year grants

MEGAN WHITE: Multi-year support is awarded when the panel, staff, and Council agree that a similar level of service or activity will be sustained by the applicant organization over successive years. Multi-year grants represent the Council's agreement to offer successive years of support without requiring a full application and review of the grantee in the succeeding years.

All FY2023 multi-year awards are being recommended at the same level of funding as granted in FY2022. Annually, multi-year grantees are required to:

- Electronically sign off on the upcoming contract period in Grants Gateway;
- Notify Council staff of programming, activities, and any major institutional changes;
- Submit all interim and final reports as required by their grant contract;
- Renew and maintain prequalification in Grants Gateway. Units of local government and Indian Tribes are exempt from the prequalification requirement. NYSCA funding is subject to the State's annual budget process. Consequently, there is no assurance that grant amounts will remain the same over the multi-year term.

Please note that these grants have already been reviewed and recommended for funding by Council in their first year of application, therefore these grants are presented to Council for review, not approval. Council received the full list of Multi-Year recommendations for review on March 22, 2022.

A motion is made and seconded to enter Executive Session. The meeting continues in Executive Session for Council members and invited guests until 2:35PM.

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Welcome back to the public portion of the Council meeting for the New York State Council on the Arts. I am Katherine Nicholls, Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts. Thank you all for joining us. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded.

At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion is made and seconded to bring the FY2022 Panelist Roster recommendations, and the FY2022 NYSCA Round 4 Capital Project grant recommendations to a vote.

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: I would now like to ask Megan White if there are any recusals to report. Those with a conflict will be deemed recused on their vote for the applicable application.

MEGAN WHITE: Thank you Katherine. I have the following conflicts to report for the record:

1. Burchfield Penney Art Center: Monica Angle
2. The Julliard School: Aaron Flagg
3. Rensselaer County Historical Society, Inc.: Laudelina Martinez
4. Lake Placid Association of Music, Drama and Art: James Lemons
5. The Carnegie Hall Corporation: Mahnaz Moinian

Following the reading of the recusals, the motion carries unanimously by the Council members.

ADJOURN

KATHERINE NICHOLLS: Today, NYSCA has taken another important step forward in aiding the recovery of our not-for-profit arts and culture sector. These grants will no doubt make an incredible difference to the recipients as they reopen in communities all across New York State.

I would like to thank the NYSCA staff, Council, and panelists - today in doing our civic duty we have approved the final \$20 million in the vital FY2022 funding in support for New York's arts and culture sector.

We are deeply grateful to the artists and to arts and culture organizations who produce and share their craft in New York. We look forward to experiencing the work of our grantees in the weeks and months to come. Through you, we gain insight, hope, inspiration, perspective, and compassion.

I wish everyone good health and enjoyment for the arts. This concludes our Council meeting for today, and I will now ask for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting.

At the request of Chair Katherine Nicholls, a motion for the Council to adjourn the meeting is made and seconded. The motion carries unanimously by the Council members.

Meeting adjourns at 2:40PM.

End of Council Meeting Minutes.

All Capital Project grants approved at this meeting are available on the NYSCA [website](#).