

**New York State Council on the Arts  
Council Meeting Minutes**

**June 7, 2023 1:30PM-3:30PM**

**Held at the NYSCA Office: 411 Fifth Avenue, Suite 700, New York, NY 10016**

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**Present:** Monica Angle, Lisa Baker, Larry Cook, Carolee Fink, Joan Hornig, Janet Kagan, Eric Latzky, James Lemons, Laudelina Martinez, Elsie McCabe Thompson, Katherine Nicholls, Adriana Trigiani

**Quorum present:** Yes

**Others in attendance:**

Mara Manus, Executive Director, NYSCA

Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs, NYSCA

Abby Adler, Manager of the Executive Office, NYSCA

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*Before the meeting was formally called to order by the Chair, Abby Adler (NYSCA Manager of the Executive Office) conducted a roll call of the nine present Council members. The meeting of the NYSCA Council was called to order at 1:30PM by Chair Katherine Nicholls.*

**Chair's Welcome**

Katherine Nicholls (Chair): Good afternoon and welcome to the New York State Council on the Arts' June 7, 2023 meeting. I am Katherine Nicholls, the Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts. As we have a quorum of present, I hereby call this meeting to order.

To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded. A recording and minutes of the meeting will be made available on the NYSCA website. Thank you to our Council Members for joining us today - welcome all. It is a pleasure to welcome you again to NYSCA's new offices at 411 Fifth Avenue.

This has been an incredibly active and rewarding season for NYSCA. On May 2, 2023 Governor Hochul and the State Legislature announced the FY2024 budget and \$110 million for NYSCA – however, we will bring, \$127 to the field, which includes \$90 million in grantmaking to organization and artists, \$20 million capital, and a reappropriated \$17 million in Capital. We are immensely grateful for their continuing support and championing of our sector, which affirms the pivotal role the arts play in our economic prosperity and collective health. As we all know, this is a critical year for the arts, which are a powerful engine for our recovery.

Following the budget announcement, the NYSCA staff worked expeditiously to launch the FY2024 opportunity guidelines on May 16, which include Support for Organizations, Support for Artists, Support for Targeted Opportunities (formerly known as Special Opportunities), and

Regrants and Services (formerly known as Partnerships). The application portal launched on Thursday, June 1 and will close Thursday, July 13 at 4PM.

Outreach to the NYSCA field through informational webinars and office hours is well underway. All webinars, which included live Q&A sessions, are posted on NYSCA website - so anyone can see for themselves the incredible participation. We hosted 7 live webinars and shared 2 pre-recorded technical webinars, which have enabled NYSCA to reach 1,700 individuals and organizations across the state. Mara will share more about these virtual opportunities in a few moments.

On behalf of NYSCA Council, we congratulate the NYSCA staff under the leadership of Executive Director Mara Manus, Deputy Director of Programs Megan White, former General Counsel and Deputy Director of Operations Abigail Young, and Director of Communications Ann Marie Sekeres, for delivering another round of innovative and effective funding that will drive our sector and state's recovery and revitalization.

Additionally, on May 15, we officially launched our new mission and values. This marks the conclusion of a multi-year strategic planning initiative to evaluate the evolving needs of New York's arts and culture sector and reimagine a mission to guide the agency's future. As a reminder, our new mission is: To foster and advance the full breadth of New York State's arts, culture, and creativity for all.

Our new values statements are:

NYSCA Values:

- The vast diversity of New York State communities.
- Equitable engagement with the arts for people of all ages and inclusive of all backgrounds.
- Access to the full breadth of arts and culture.
- The vital role that arts and culture play in the health of the economy and people.
- The constant evolution of artmaking and creative practice.
- Creativity as a community asset.

I am immensely grateful to the over 800 stakeholders across the state, including staff and Council in this room, for their thoughtful and constructive input. We look forward to ushering in this next era of NYSCA, together.

At today's meeting, Council will review and vote on the FY2024 panelist roster recommendations. Council will also review the FY2024 multi-year grants. The materials for today's meeting were sent to Council on June 1, 2023.

A reminder that in-person attendance is material to conduct the business of this Council and ensure the timely distribution of vital funding across our state. Our next meeting is scheduled

for November 8, 2023, from 11AM-4PM. Many thanks to those of you who have already RSVP'd and confirmed this date. Please note that we may schedule an additional meeting for October depending on the amount of FY2024 applications we receive.

A reminder that we will begin our FY2024 peer review panels in late August. Council members are highly encouraged to join at least one of our virtual panel meetings to experience this vital part of our process. Attending panels provides you with important context for when we come together, particularly at our upcoming November meeting, to vote on recommendations. We look forward to sharing that schedule with Council and receiving your RSVPs when it is finalized.

I am pleased to turn this meeting over to Mara Manus, Executive Director of NYSCA, who will share some agency updates.

### **Executive Director Welcome**

Mara Manus (Executive Director): Thank you, so much, Katherine! So great to see you all today.

Regarding NYSCA staff – in May I was pleased to announce that Abby Adler's title has changed to Manager of the Executive Office.

Abigail Young, NYSCA's General Counsel and Deputy Director of Operations, left state service on May 19, 2023. On behalf of the NYSCA staff, Council, and field, we are so grateful for Abigail's unwavering commitment to NYSCA's mission and steadfast leadership since 2018.

Please join me in a round of applause of gratitude to Abigail and congratulations to Abby.

As Katherine noted – our virtual support offerings for FY2024 are well underway. For context, prior to 2020, NYSCA staff traveled across the state for in-person information sessions. Due to COVID travel restrictions in 2020 and the activation of our connecting and convening strategic priority, we pivoted to virtual webinars and office hours on zoom. This allowed staff to still interact directly with our field but on a much larger stage, resulting in us reaching 6,200 individuals for our FY23 virtual opportunities and 5,000 in FY22.

During our webinars, NYSCA staff provide an overview of each opportunity – reviewing eligibility, narrative questions, helpful tips, and more. Attendees then have the opportunity to submit questions that are answered by staff in real time.

I'd like to acknowledge our webinar hosts this year: Deputy Director of Programs Megan White; and Program Directors David Huff, Christine Leahy, Arian Blanco, Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi, and Leanne Tintori; and Abby Adler, Gabi Nail, Ann Marie Sekeres, and Will McDermott, for managing and providing technical support.

Next up are our virtual office hours with staff, which kick off tomorrow at 10AM and run through the first week of July – registration links and schedule are posted on the website During

these sessions, applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions in a group setting with Program staff. We look forward to updating Council on our outreach efforts and impact!

I'd now like to welcome NYSCA Communications Director, Ann Marie Sekeres, to share communications update.

### **Communications Update**

Ann Marie Sekeres (Communications Director): Thank you so much. I am pleased to present to you all the communications launch of NYSCA's new Mission and Values. First, we started with an eblast to over 12,000 members of the field. I'm also happy to share that we've had an increase of 1700 subscribers to our eblasts since 2022.

The Mission and Values eblast was opened by almost 7,000 recipients, giving it an open rate of 56%. Our NYSCA average open rate is 46%, and the industry average open rate is 31%. So this eblast was read widely.

We also posted an animation on our social media channels: Facebook (10k followers), Instagram (7k followers) and LinkedIn (2k followers). We can show you that animation on our Instagram right now!

Our website was also updated to reflect the new mission and values. I checked yesterday and our website has received 29,000 Users in the past month.

We also wanted to share our new mission as part of our FY24 guidelines. I had been taking a look at the mid-century modern design that was part of early NYSCA reports and materials, am happy to share the FY24 guideline covers that put the mission front and (off) center.

And now, for another communications update, I'd like to turn it over to Katherine who will update you on this week's Governor's announcement.

*A copy of the communications update presentation can be viewed, [here](#).*

Katherine Nicholls (Chair): Thank you, Ann Marie! Yesterday, we went to the magnificent Storm King Art Center in Orange County, NY, as Governor Kathy Hochul announced the \$90.5 million in Large Capital Project Grants. Quite a few of the 19 award recipients were there in person including:

- Ruth Adams, Art Omi
- Sade Lythcott and Barrie Koegel, National Black Theatre Company
- Davis McCallum and Kendra Ekelund, Hudson Valley Shakespeare
- John Stern, Storm King Art Center
- Rebecca Calos, Empire State Youth Orchestra
- James Lemons, Lake Placid Center for the Arts
- Sarah Stern and Susan Appel of the Vineyard

The announcement was made at a groundbreaking for Storm King's first capital project ever – a campus wide improvement project with a visitor center and conservation, fabrication and maintenance facility. In addition to NYSCA's \$7.5 million to Storm King, Empire State Development awarded more than \$3 million and NYSERDA contributed \$600,000 to the project, bringing New York State's total support to more than \$11 million.

The Governor spoke directly about her belief in the transformative power in the arts and her work in getting projects like these supported in the NYS budget. It was a fantastic day.

### **FY2024 Panelist Roster Recommendation**

Megan White (Deputy Director of Programs): For our next order of business, we will move to the FY2024 Panelist Roster recommendations.

In order to adequately evaluate grant proposals, NYSCA relies on the breadth of expertise from a diverse group of individuals to review applications, share their expertise with one another through panel discussions, and provide guidance as we make funding recommendations. Each panel is composed of 5-7 individuals and their collective, complimentary skillsets foster a rigorous and thoughtful review of every application we receive.

Each year, NYSCA solicits nominations from NYSCA staff, Council members, current panelists, current grantees, and the general public. This year, we launched a more robust call for nominations – sharing information more broadly on social media through targeted boosted posts – resulting in a tremendous number of nominations.

Today, we bring forward panelist recommendations for Council's review and vote. Advisory panelists are selected from these nominees. As a reminder, all panel members serve single year terms, and may be reappointed for a term of up to three years. All FY2024 panels will be held virtually.

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.

Are there any questions or comments from Council at this time? Thank you, and I will turn this meeting back to Chair Katherine Nicholls.

*A copy of the FY24 panelist roster recommendations can be viewed, [here](#).*

### **FY2024 Multi-Year Grant Recommendations**

Megan White (Deputy Director of Programs): 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 FY2024 multi-year awards are being recommended at the same level of funding as granted in FY2023. 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 Native American nations 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 June 1, 2023.

Are there any questions or comments from Council at this time? Thank you, and I will turn this meeting back to Chair Katherine Nicholls.

*At this time, Manager of the Executive Office Abby Adler confirmed the in-person attendance of Council Members Carolee Fink and Janet Kagan and confirmed quorum.*

*A motion is made and seconded to enter into Executive Session per Section 105(1)(f) of the Open Meetings Law to discuss: "...the... financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation." The meeting continues in Executive Session for Council members and invited guests until 3:20PM.*

Katherine Nicholls (Chair): 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 approve the FY2024 Panelist Rosters. The motion is unanimously approved by all present Council Members.*

## **ADJOURN**

Katherine Nicholls (Chair): Thank you NYSCA staff, leadership, and Council for your ongoing service and commitment to our state!

Last year, NYSCA granted almost \$100 million in funding to over 1,600 organizations and artists across all 62 counties. While we are in the midst of FY2024 application process, work funded through our FY2023 process is well underway across the state. There is so much to see, experience, and explore – and we look forward to immersing ourselves in everything that the NYSCA field has to offer.

On behalf of Council, we are deeply grateful to the Artists and arts and culture organizations who continue to produce the work that inspires us. We look forward to receiving your applications on July 13 at 4PM!

*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 3:30PM*

***End of Council Meeting Minutes.***

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