



Thursday, September 7, 2023 • 5 pm
Sandler Center for the Performing Arts/Cultural Affairs Conference Room

The Business Meeting of the Arts and Humanities Commission was held on Thursday, September 7, 2023, at 5:00 pm in Classroom 1 at the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts.

Commissioners Present:

- **OFFICER:** Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair
- **OFFICER:** Olga Torres-Baker, Vice Chair
- **OFFICER:** Hon. Winship C. Tower (Ret.), Secretary
- Michael Cloud-Butler
- Emma “Em” Davis
- Susan C. Grube
- Mia K. Guile
- Mark Johnson
- Ashley McLeod

Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) Staff Present:

- Emily Brookover, Public Art & Placemaking Manager
- Mari R. Coronado, Executive Assistant II
- Beth Hundley, Deputy Director
- Emily S. Labows, Director
- Hillary L. Plate, Public Programs & Partnerships Manager

Absent:

- **OFFICER:** Alicia “Sunny” Phillips Peoples, Treasurer
- Raeesah Islam

Guest:

- Mabinty Scott, Council Aide to Council Member Sabrina Wooten

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair called the meeting to order at **5:00 pm.**

New Commissioners *Ashley McLeod* and *Mark A. Johnson* gave brief self-introductions to the Commission while current members shared art experiences that moved them.

II. MINUTES

Motion I.

A motion was made by *Hon. Winship C. Tower (Ret.)*, Secretary, seconded by *Mark Johnson* for approval of the minutes from the July 13th meeting. There was no discussion. **The motion *unanimously* passed to approve the minutes for the July 13th meeting.**

Members voting **AYE:** Cloud-Butler, Davis, Grube, Guile, Johnson, McLeod, Romero, Torres-Baker, Tower
Members voting **NAY:** Zero
Members **ABSTAINING:** Zero
Members **ABSENT:** Islam, Peoples

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion II.

A motion was made by *Michael Cloud-Butler*, seconded by *Susan C. Grube* for approval of the August Treasurer's Report with the noted correction of the date being changed from July to August. There was no discussion. **The motion *unanimously* passed to approve the August Treasurer's Report.**

Members voting **AYE:** Cloud-Butler, Davis, Grube, Guile, Johnson, McLeod, Romero, Torres-Baker, Tower
Members voting **NAY:** Zero
Members **ABSTAINING:** Zero
Members **ABSENT:** Islam, Peoples

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. FY 24 Project Grant Discussion RE: Virginia Stage Company

VA Stage Company received a FY23 grant to complete ten (10) programs. According to their final report, only five (5) programs were completed. Kandis Hyde (Director of Development), Jordan Setzer (Director of Enrichment) and Tom Quaintance (Producing Artistic Director) from Virginia Stage Company spoke to the Commission in regard to program-scheduling issues during the 2023 fiscal year and provided an explanation of why five (5) performances were not completed.

- Director of Enrichment is a newly developed department to oversee programming.
- Virginia Stage Company is confident that adding seven (7) programs to the schedule is achievable.
- Their education programming is better structured and fully-staffed this fiscal year to oversee twelve (12) programs in comparison to the ten (10) events last fiscal year.

Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair shared that Virginia Stage Company is not alone in terms of having difficulty scheduling with the school system and recognized that they were prepared and ready to perform but weren't able to do so due to scheduling issues with the school.

Hillary L. Plate, Public Programs & Partnerships Manager offered other venues that may be receptive to the programs they offer e.g., libraries and recreational centers that have after-school children that may qualify.

Motion III.

A motion to allow Virginia Stage Company to add four (4) additional programs not accomplished during the FY23 school season to the FY24 school season was made by Ashley McLeod, seconded by Susan C. Grube. There was no discussion. **The motion unanimously passed to approve Virginia Stage Company adding four (4) additional programs to their FY24 schedule.**

Members voting **AYE**: Cloud-Butler, Davis, Grube, Guile, Johnson, McLeod, Romero, Torres-Baker, Tower
Members voting **NAY**: Zero
Members **ABSTAINING**: Zero
Members **ABSENT**: Islam, Peoples

Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair took this time to formally recognize and welcome the Cultural Affairs Department's newest staff member, Emily Brookover, Public Art and Placemaking Manager.

- b. Ad-Hoc Committee for Leadership Organization Development (LOD) Grant Policy Review
Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair shared an Ad-Hoc committee is being created to review the LOD Grant Policy. Emma "Em" Davis initiated the discussion and will chair the committee and recruit members.
- c. FY24 Annual Plan
The FY24 Annual Plan that outlined the functions of each meeting was presented to the Commission for review and adoption.

Motion IV.

A motion to adopt the FY24 Annual Plan was made by Hon. Winship C. Tower (Ret.), Secretary, seconded by Olga Torres-Baker, Vice Chair. There was no discussion. **The motion unanimously passed to adopt the FY24 Annual Plan.**

Members voting **AYE**: Cloud-Butler, Davis, Grube, Guile, Johnson, McLeod, Romero, Torres-Baker, Tower
Members voting **NAY**: Zero
Members **ABSTAINING**: Zero
Members **ABSENT**: Islam, Peoples

- d. FY24 Liaisons and FY24 Committees
Two sign-up sheets circulated. One for organization liaisons and the other for interested members to join committees. The updated lists will be shared at the next meeting.

Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair shared the following FY24 Committee Chairs:

- Advertising & Marketing Committee: Sunny P. Peoples
- Advocacy Committee: Sue G. Grube
- Champion for the Arts Committee: Em Davis
- Cultural Equity Committee: Olga Torres-Baker

e. October National Arts & Humanities Commission Month

Emily S. Labows, Director shared that an invitation will be sent out for October 3rd to join the National Arts & Humanities Month Celebration. A Meet & Greet reception is scheduled for 4:30 pm at Whitehurst-Buffington House followed by a Proclamation Reading at City Council chambers at 6:00 pm.

f. City Council Retreat

Emily S. Labows, Director shared during the City Council retreat on August 22-23, Arts and Culture was selected as one of their top priorities thanks to Council Members Ross-Hammond, Schulman, Berlucchi and Rouse. City Council will develop their plan and will soon be accepting public comments.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Advertising and Marketing Committee

Committee Chair Peoples was absent. The marketing report in the agenda packet highlighted information about the Champion for the Arts reception in August.

b. Advocacy Committee

Committee Chair Susan C. Grube reported that a thank you letter to City Council for the extra \$70,000 funding was included in the Annual Report submitted in August. Thank you notes from the Arts Groups will also be gathered to send to City Council.

c. Champion for the Arts Committee

Committee Chair Emma "Em" Davis reported the 2023 event for Rose Daria had the largest number of attendees to date. Floral arrangements were gifted by *Emma "Em" Davis* and *Juanita Felton*. The champagne toast was sponsored by *Susan C. Grube, Dr. Cynthia Romero and Emma "Em" Davis*.

d. Cultural Equity Committee

Committee Chair Olga Torres-Baker reported that the Committee will be hosting an in-person community conversation on Thursday, September 21 at 6:00 pm. The location is to be confirmed.

The Cultural Equity Committee is working to develop a Cultural Equity statement that will be revised regularly.

e. Public Art Committee

Committee Chair Mia Guiles shared photos from the Utility Box Project. All the utility box wraps are installed and are found in the following areas:

- Northampton Boulevard between Burton Station Road and Diamond Springs Road

- Rosemont Road between Dahlia Drive and Lynnhaven Parkway
- Lynnhaven Parkway between Ski Lodge Road and Primrose Lane
- Baker Road between Hampshire Lane and Newtown Road
- Newtown Road between Diamond Springs Road and Deford Road

Thanks was given to Salem Visual and Performing Arts Academy teacher, Erin Richburg. The students involved were from Salem High School, 4th/5th Graders from Williams Elementary, K-5th Graders from Rosemont Elementary and K-5th graders from Bayside Elementary.

VI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- a. Torres-Baker: Met with one of the organizations she is liaison to - Kate Powell/Tidewater Arts Outreach to touch base and discuss their programs.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following presented event updates and announcements:

- Mabinty Scott (Legislative Aide to Council Member Sabrina Wooten)- Commission doing a fantastic job.
- Linda Dye / Heather Shannon- (Zeiders American Dream Theater)- Announced new Outreach director Heather Shannon and handed out new program brochures
- Tom Quaintance (Virginia Stage Company) – Thanks to the Commission for support of their work.
- Kate Pittman (ViBe Creative District)- Thanks for Commission support of the Mural Festival; recognized two VB Police officers who had neighborhood children help with their mural.
- Ana Castellanos (Guest)- Would like to see more Hispanic culture and programs.
- Hillary Plate (Cultural Affairs Dept.) – Thanks to VBGigs partners for Fiddler on the Roof at the ViBe.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

- a. Everyone is invited to the Meet & Greet for the National Arts & Humanities Month Celebration on October 3rd at 4:30 pm at the Whitehurst-Buffington House, followed by the 6 pm Proclamation Reading at the City Hall.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, *Dr. Cynthia Romero* closed the meeting by reading the Mission Statement of the Arts & Humanities Commission:

To make Virginia Beach a great city, the Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission is dedicated to integrating the arts and humanities, in their full ethnic and cultural diversity, into the fabric of everyday life. Toward this end, the Commission serves as an advisory and funding entity, stimulating and supporting excellence and accessibility in the arts and humanities for all citizens.

The meeting was adjourned at **5:48 pm.**



Called to order by
Dr. Cynthia Romero, Chair
Arts & Humanities Commission



Minutes prepared by
Mari R. Coronado, Executive Assistant II
Cultural Affairs Department

VIX. ATTACHMENT

September 7, 2023 Meeting Agenda Packet