

# Board Meeting minutes

## Washington State Arts Commission

Thursday, February 8, 2024 / Governor's Residence, Olympia

### Commissioners Present

Robin Avni, First Vice Chair  
Lou Oma Durand  
Tony Ginn  
Jasmine Mahmoud, PhD, Second Vice Chair  
Tisa Matheson  
Terry Morgan  
Noël Moxley  
Catherine Nueva España  
Justin Raffa  
Charlie Robin, Chair  
Star Rush  
Rosanna Sharpe  
Krishna Thiagarajan  
Judy Tuohy

### ArtsWA Staff Presenters

Bryan Bales, Wellness, Arts & the Military Program Manager  
Todd Clark, Tribal Cultural Affairs Program Coordinator  
Karen Hanan, Executive Director  
Janae Huber, Art in Public Places (AIPP) Collections Manager  
Tamar Krames, Arts in Education (AIE) Program Manager  
Annette Roth, Community Development Manager  
Alexis Sarah, AIE Project Manager  
Deane Shellman, Deputy Director  
Mike Sweney, AIPP Program Manager  
Michael Wallenfels, Communications Manager  
Cheryl Wilcox, Tribal Cultural Affairs Program Manager

### Commissioners Absent

Senator Matt Boehnke  
Claudia Castro Luna  
Dr. Kelvin Frank  
Reinaldo Gil Zambrano  
Representative Jacquelin Maycumber  
Joan McBride  
Senator Lisa Wellman  
Representative Sharon Wylie

### Guests & Speakers

Manny Cawaling, Inspire WA  
David Foster, WESTAF Lobbyist  
Jessi Wasson, Inspire WA

For a full transcript of the meeting, please view the recording at: [Board meeting recording](#)

Governor Inslee spoke about the value of the arts and thanked ArtsWA board and staff for their work to bring the arts to all people in Washington, making the arts accessible to all.

## Call to order / Land acknowledgement / Roll call

Robin, ArtsWA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Durand gave the land acknowledgement. Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was verified. Public comment rules were shared.

A MOTION to approve the agenda was made by Sharpe, seconded by Avni, and passed unanimously.

Robin read the rules for public comment.

Robin reviewed his report (*packet p. 1*). He expressed appreciation for the dedicated work of commissioners to meet with legislators to advocate for ArtsWA budget requests. When commissioners bring their constituents to the table, to share their voices in support of the arts in their districts, the result is powerful.

### Executive Director's report

Hanan reviewed her report (*packet pp. 2-6*) and the budget report (handout). The legislative budgets will be shared next week, and the agency is hopeful that the budget requests included in the Governor's budget will be reflected in the senate and house budgets.

The Department of commerce authored a Creative Economy Strategic plan. Hanan serves on the committee and ArtsWA and the Creative Districts program are included in the plan. She is in conversation with Commerce around messaging to the Legislature for adequate funding to meet the goals of the plan.

Huber, Collections Manager, has been leading a national effort on a pilot project to care for artworks affected by disasters. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) provided funding for the project to move into a full phase for the entire state of Washington. The project is also working with partners around the nation.

The Federal budget requires approval when deadlines for continuing resolutions expire. Karen was in Washington DC a week ago. The NEA anticipates receiving the same level of funding as last year.

Hanan said the Australia Trade Mission was impactful. The trip began in Sydney then visited Tasmania and Melbourne. Hanan met with many arts leaders and arts organizations, as well as aboriginal artists and arts leaders. We are currently working with someone who is writing an application to the National Science Foundation to include the arts at half a dozen sites nuclear fusion sites around the country. ArtsWA will explore developing a program similar to one in Tasmania that provides loans for people to buy original art works. Many good ideas were born from the experience, with the hope that some will come from fruition. Hanan hopes that this experience has opened the door for the arts to be included on all future trade missions. Hanan said the rest of the world is comfortable with sufficiently funding arts in their work.

Mahmoud asked about federal advocacy. Hanan explained we take our cue from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). She promised to send federal level advocacy opportunities to commissioners as they arise.

Hanan and Shellman attended the NASAA Assembly designed for peer networking, education, and discussion for executive and deputy directors. For many state arts agencies, their work is threatened by funding and staffing shortages and the war over diversity equity and inclusion work. State arts agencies are experiencing high turnover in staff positions, including Executive Director positions. The political landscape in many states, and budget cuts, are making work around the arts difficult throughout the nation. At the assembly, Hanan was one of the longest seated directors. Shellman said she learned many best practices from other state arts agencies.

Work is progressing on the Billy Frank Jr. statue replacement project. ArtsWA is working with the Frank family, the Nisqually tribal leadership and membership, and the artist, as well as federal and state legislators and others working toward project completion. Statuary Hall staff are thrilled that this statue will be the first native American statue of a contemporary figure that people know, and the first statue made by a Chinese American artist to be represented in the Hall.

Shellman reviewed the budget report details indicating the budget is on track with expected benchmarks met for this period of the fiscal year. Shellman reviewed the status and progress for each of the agency's programs. The report was for information only; no action was required.

Wallenfels provided the strategic plan dashboard update. Managerial staff are working with consultants to rework the strategic plan and identify measurable metrics. After this work, the strategic plan dashboard will be updated. The goal is to refine the process to better reflect meaningful measurement metrics on goal accomplishment.

Robin asked about the public facing impact of the Constituent Relations Management (CRM.) database. Roth explained that ArtsWA will continue to use the current Submittable platform for grant applications until the new state platform is Annette – plan functional. Rush commented that the CRM will generate much needed business data for the agency which will help bring funding and other discussions advocacy into the modern age.

Hanan compared agency organization charts from 2014 when she began as Executive Director and the current chart as of February 2024. Staff size has grown from 14 to 37. Many programs have been added during her leadership including Wellness, Arts & the Military and the Tribal Cultural Affairs program, and existing programs have expanded. Hanan said it is the hard work of the staff at ArtsWA that ensures Washington State constituents have access to the arts. Hanan introduced staff hired within the last year.

## Approve Consent Agenda

A MOTION to accept the consent agenda of minutes for the September 7 and October 30, 2023 board meetings was made by Ginn and seconded by Moxley. Changes to the designation of board officers were requested for the September 7, 2023 minutes. There were no other changes. The motion passed unanimously.

## Billy Frank Jr. Statue Replacement Project

Wallenfels reviewed the report (packet pp. 16-17). This project began with legislation from Rep. Lekanoff (HB 1639) to replace the Marcus Whitman statue. The Legislature appointed a committee, which selected artist Haiying Wu with the approval of the Frank family. The maquette, a scale model or rough draft of an unfinished sculpture, has been approved by the committee and awaits approval by a joint session of Congress. Installation in D.C. and Olympia is planned for 2025.

Wallenfels reviewed various communications work for this project including a page on the agency's website, developing brochures and videos, and publicizing the maquette to various groups to ensure the project is well known. The public engagement campaign is contacting the Fisheries Commission, Thurston schools, state archies, and many other groups to educate about

this project. Wallenfels works closely with Debbie Preston, Director of Communications and Media Services at Nisqually Tribe.

Maquette is made of clay then cast at a smaller scale. A fiberglass model will probably follow. When an artist enlarges a piece, often a full size model will be cast to look for any flaws or areas needing additional attention. Final statues will be cast in bronze. A foundry has yet to be selected.

## Wellness, Arts & the Military

Bales reviewed the Self-Directed Art Practice (SAP) Grants (*packet pp. 18-21*). This program awards individual grants to military connected people throughout the state.

A MOTION to ratify the Executive Director's decision to approve the panel's recommendation for FY24 Self-directed Art Practice Grants as provided in the packet was made by Mahmoud and seconded by Tuohy. There was one conflict of interest: Hardesty. The motion passed with one recusal.

## Creative Districts

Roth reviewed several panel recommendations (*packet pp. 22-25*).

A MOTION to ratify certification of Ellensburg as a creative district was made by Ginn and seconded by Moxley. The motion passed unanimously with no conflicts of interest.

A MOTION to approve funding for the recertification of Edmonds as a creative district was made by Avni and seconded by Morgan. The motion passed unanimously with no conflicts of interest.

A MOTION to approve capital funding grants as outlined in the packet was made by Tuohy and seconded by Avni. The motion passed unanimously with no conflicts of interest.

## Arts in Education

Krames explained that one previously approved grant in the AIE project grants FY 2024 group was declined (*packet p. 26*). Newly available funds were awarded to two organizations previously declined funding. Percentage of requested amounts were decided based on original panelist scores and demarcations in the ranking order. New awards were approved by the Executive Director in October 2023.

A MOTION for the Board to ratify additionally funded Arts in Education (AIE) Sustaining Project Grants approved by the Executive Director was made by Rush, seconded by Moxley. The motion passed.

## Tribal Cultural Affairs Update and Program Plan

Wilcox discussed the Tribal Cultural Affairs grants for FY 2024 and the overall program plan (*packet pp. 27-33*). She thanked the board for supporting the program. Her work has been to meet the tribal network and ensure them that this opportunity is real. Her outreach and relationship building focuses on developing trust that a state program for tribes is real, and assure them there is support for tribal art, culture bearers, and ancestral art. ArtsWA's intention

is to support tribal communities as they self-identify their needs. Wilcox appreciated Hanan's receptivity to tribal cultural needs to ensure the grant program truly supports the tribes in a manner that welcomes them to participate.

The full funding is already allocated into 29 equal portions, one for each tribe. Every tribe that applies will receive funding. The application will explain the goals of the program without requiring the additional details typically requested such as federal tribal proof.

Robin asked what commissioners can do to assist in communicating with tribes within their communities. Wilcox explained that attending at tribal events is very much appreciated, without expectations or demands, but because you care, are interested, and not asking for anything.

Robin asked whether there was a sensitivity training on how to approach tribes and relate with them. Thiagarajan said the difference between various tribes and their ownership of their culture is a huge learning curve. He did not truly appreciate the cultural landscape until a member of the tribes was brought onto the board. They avoided harm by learning directly from a tribal member instead of continuing based on what they thought would be helpful or respectful. Hanan said that Wilcox is providing tribal sensitivity support to the agency and its programs, which has been educational and helpful.

One of Wilcox's personal goals is to be open to the fact that all the tribes in Washington cannot be lumped together. It is important to custom build a relationship with each tribe based on their preferences for communication and information sharing.

Rush requested that ongoing cultural competency training be built into the agendas of all upcoming board meetings.

## Art in Public Places

Sweney reviewed AIPP acquisitions in the past year and provided a collection care update (*packet pp. 34-35*). The AIPP program will turn 50 in May with plans to celebrate and share the news with constituents. AIPP has focused its strategic plan goals to advance and support art and artists across Washington and to strengthen partner engagement and appreciation of the State Art Collection. The Collections team has grown to seven staff and are making progress in caring for the Collection throughout the state.

## Creative Start-Wolf Trap Arts Integration Partnership Update

Sarah provided an overview of the partnership between ArtsWA and the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning through the Arts (*packet pp. 36-37*). Senator Wellman was a champion of early learning initiatives at ArtsWA and continues to be a strong supporter. Sarah explored feasibility of a partnership with Wolf Trap. Hanan and Sarah went to Vienna, VA in the heat of summer to visit the home of Wolf Trap and in the fall 2023, the partnership was formed.

Wolf Trap Institute lends the power of the performing arts to enliven education and bring it to the early learner. ArtsWA is tasked with replicating the Wolf Trap Institute model in Washington state. The program trains teaching artists to bring the process to Washington students. Other than the home foundation, ArtsWA is the only state arts agency in the affiliate, and we are the only affiliate serving an entire state.

## Advocacy

Thiagarajan, Advocacy Committee Chair, welcomed David Foster, Foster Government Relations; and Manny Cawaling and Jessi Wasson, Inspire WA. They discussed the 2024 Legislative process and Arts, Heritage and Science Day. Inspire WA outlined its Cultural Futures tour throughout the state this spring/summer. To learn more, go to <https://inspirewashington.org/events/cultural-futures>.

## Public Comment

No members of the public were present to make comment.

## Adjourn

Robin adjourned the meeting at 2:26 p.m.