

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MUSCATINE ART CENTER
November 21, 2024

Present: Mark Latta, Sara Fitzer-Huston, David Meloy, Kathleen Haltmeyer, Ann McCarthy, and Vince Lawson

Absent: Geri Kent, Aarzo Baharani, and Mark Seaman

Staff: Melanie Alexander

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Latta at 12:00 PM.

Visitors: None present.

Minutes: Minutes of the October 17 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees were reviewed and discussed. Moved/seconded (Lawson/Meloy) to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Bills for Approval: Bills in the amount of \$2,118.86 were presented, reviewed, and discussed. Moved/seconded (Huston/Haltmeyer) to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

Credit Card for Approval: Credit Card bills in the amount of \$136.51 were presented, reviewed, and discussed. Moved/seconded (Lawson/Haltmeyer) to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Range Planning:

Fourteen firms submitted responses to the request for qualifications for selecting an architect. A motion was made by Latta to move forward with the top three firms as identified by Lord Cultural Resources, advisor to the Board of Trustees for the selection process. The three firms are to be invited to respond to the request for proposals. Motion was seconded by Huston. Motion carried.

The Board of Trustees previously voted to enter into an agreement for Lord Cultural Resources to assist with the selection process. In this next phase, Lord Cultural Resources will assist with the RFP, participate in the interview process, score responses based on criteria identified in the RFP, and otherwise advise the Muscatine Art Center team.

De Novo Marketing kicked off the process to develop a new name, branding, and marketing on November 1st. Muscatine Art Center staff has provided additional materials related to programs, attendance, and services offered by the organization. An update is expected in the first part of December.

Melanie Alexander shared that the City is in the process of developing its new Comprehensive Plan which will layout the vision for Muscatine's future. Board members are encouraged to participate by leaving feedback on the plan website or attending a public session.

Finance & Budget:

The Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust has fully funded the grant request. The grant will fund the collections management project while bolstering the staff as part of the employee succession plan as multiple retirements are expected in 2025.

The 2025-2026 Budget process is ongoing.

The Muscatine Art Center's computer server experienced a failure, causing difficulties from November 7th through November 13th. A new server was ordered and installed. All is fully operational now, and no files were lost, including the data within the Collections Database.

Collections: Nothing to report.

Building & Grounds:

The water feature in the Japanese Garden was drained and winterized on November 21, 2024.

Community Engagement

The Art Center was well represented at the Cultural Alliance Luncheon on November 15th, and Geri Kent was among the speakers. The board expressed their appreciation for her comments and support.

Staff has finished decorating the historic house. The "Heartfelt & Handmade" Ornament Competition is on view in the Linkage through December 6th. The first opportunity to purchase ornaments is during the "Heartfelt & Handmade" Family Festival & Market on December 7th.

Muscatine will host the Preserve Iowa Summit over three days: June 5-7, 2025. The Muscatine Art Center will be the venue for the evening reception on Thursday, June 5th. The team from the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office estimates that up to 300 people could attend the reception. Melanie Alexander serves on the planning committee for the summit and intends to submit a proposal for a session on the Japanese Garden.

The Muscatine Art Center will be teaming up with the Muscatine Symphony as one of the activities to celebrate the Muscatine Art Center's 60th anniversary. During the Symphony's April 12th concert, the musicians will perform music inspired by rivers and water. Images from the Mississippi River Collection will be projected while the musicians play. There may be an opportunity for a Board of Trustees reception earlier that evening.

There is a conference in St. Louis that is specifically about the construction of buildings for museums. The conference is presented by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums from March 5th – 7th, 2025. Melanie Alexander expressed an interest in attending.

Personnel:

Responses to the RFQ included a submission from a board member's employer, and the firm acknowledged the conflict of interest in its submission. The board member did not participate in reviewing any submissions and did not attend the November board meeting. The firm did not score sufficiently high to be considered a finalist, eliminating future conflicts as the process moves into the next phase.

Director's Report: In Packet

Unfinished Business:

New Business:

Next Board meeting – December 19 at 12:00 P.M.

Adjourn:

Moved/seconded by (Meloy/McCarthy) to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Huston, Acting Secretary, Muscatine Art Center Board of Trustees