

September 13, 2021 – Minutes of the BRC on Arts & Nonprofits

Russ called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm

Members in attendance: Russ Grazier, Barbara Massar, Jason Goodrich, Courtney Perkins, Renee Giffroy, Nihco Gallo, Kathy Somssich, Beth Falconer, Tina Sawtelle.

Also attending: Stephanie Seacord

Jason made the motion, and Beth seconded, to approve the 8/23/21 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Russ has spoken to both the City Manager and the Mayor regarding the use of the funds remaining in the Art-Speak account up to \$51,700 to fund a 4-month pilot program to strategically market Arts and Culture in Portsmouth in conjunction with the Chamber Collaborative and that future funding be secured. Both the City Manager and the Mayor are in favor of the proposal. The City Manager will report this proposal to City Council. Access to the funds should be on a step-by-step basis with accounting of how the funds will be used.

Jason and the members of the Marketing subgroup, Beth, Larry and Monte Bohanan, will be meeting in a few days in order to move this project forward.

Beth suggested a survey go out to the members of this committee in Google Forms to collect data regarding the various characteristics and priorities of our organizations.

Russ added that the survey should focus on where the organizations are currently in regard to COVID safety protocols and where the marketing activity should be concentrated.

Thought should also be given to how narrow or wide our targeted geographical area is. Beyond the immediate pilot program, a sustainable effort to ensure long-term marketing is needed. Our individual organizations will be asked to recommend strategies that would work toward this effort. This committee should be kept informed about the strategies and the budget.

The timing of the survey and the marketing pilot program was briefly discussed. Ben VanCamp is interested in moving quickly and a push to commit to market a Spring offering was suggested.

Russ suggested a multi-pronged marketing effort aimed at people who are concerned about coming back to our venues and who possibly don't understand the issues facing the financial situation of our organizations.

In the next 30 days, Russ wishes to submit together with Barbara an additional proposal to the City Council for ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to be used beyond the 4-month marketing pilot program.

Robin reported on the progress of the AFTA Survey initiative. The \$6000 cost to participate has already been paid from the Economic Development Fund. She has already put together a \$15,000 budget, including funding for administrative support. Four people have volunteered to co-chair this initiative or participate in the survey and Robin will set up an informational meeting for them. It is critical to get many arts organizations and nonprofits to participate. Orientation and training will begin in December. The survey starts on January 1st and data is submitted quarterly. The surveys are conducted on paper

and done on the spot to reflect the date and time of the encounter. AFTA trains each organization to train their board members and volunteers to present the survey to audience members. An easier survey form has been promised to simplify the accumulation of data.

Valerie Rochon will attend the next meeting on September 20th to report on the progress of Portsmouth400.

Russ adjourned the meeting at 12:34 PM.

Submitted by Kathy Somssich