

**ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 28, 2025
City Hall, Conference Room #6**

Attendees: Chairman Mary Lee Ryba, Vice-Chair Abby Light, Commissioner Summer Ward, Commissioner Sally Shortridge, Commissioner Kate Walker, Commissioner Chuck Ethridge, Commissioner Lindsey Sichelstiel, Commissioner Tracey Benson, Commissioner Nora Crabtree, Troy Tymesen, and Councilmember Amy Evans

Guest: Jennifer Passaro, Katie Ebner, Scott Hoskins, Tony Berns.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Ryba called the meeting to order. She introduced Ignite cda Chairman Scott Hoskins, Ignite cda Executive Director Tony Berns, Finance Director Katie Ebner, Poet Laureate Jennifer Passaro, and new Arts Commission Commissioner Tracey Benson.

Commissioner Benson shared that she is native to Coeur d’Alene, and teaches at the Coeur d’Alene Charter Academy involved in theater and literature. She thanked the Commissioners for voting for her to be part of the Arts Commission. Chair Ryba stated that she is a great addition to the Commission.

Ms. Passaro read a poem entitled “Singularity” by Marie Howe. She thanked the Commission for bringing poetry into the community and for helping her navigate this opportunity. Ms. Passaro also shared her calendar of activities for the year which includes workshops that are open to the public, a poem reading at the Governor’s Address on February 4 at the CDA Resort, pop-up poetry booth during Art Walk in March, poem reading at the City Council meeting on April 15, launch of a senior program in June, programming with women inmates in July, among others. Ms. Mateski will send the calendar of events to the Commissioners. Chair Ryba thanked Ms. Passaro and stated that she is involved in many community efforts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Light, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the November 26, 2024 minutes. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

COMMISSIONER/ STAFF COMMENTS: Councilmember Evans shared that Councilmember Miller nominated former Arts Commission Chair Jennifer Drake and she was chosen by Soroptimist CDA as one of the “Women of Distinction” winners. This prestigious award has been celebrating outstanding women in the community for the past 42 years. Ms. Drake is recognized for her significant contributions to arts and culture. The awarding ceremony will take place on February 22, 2025, 11:00am at the Jacklin Arts Cultural Center in Post Falls.

PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC ART FUND: Finance Director Katie Ebner provided an update on the financial status of Public Art Fund as well as some corrections that needed to be made from previous years. She explained that the Public Art Funds are generated through City Ordinance 3571 which mandates that 1.3% of the total cost of above-ground public works construction projects be transferred to the art fund. Additionally, it receives donations, grants, and Ignite contributions to art into a specific urban renewal district account. Chair Ryba inquired if the Commission is allowed to accept donations like sponsorships of events with Ms. Ebner explaining that the City is not a 501(c)(3) organization but donations to the City are tax exempt. Mr. Tymesen confirmed and stated that the donor can designate that it will be for the Art Fund. Ms. Ebner presented the three different types of funds and their allowable uses: the Public Art Fund is a separate account in the City's financial system which handles revenues and expenses related to general public art throughout the city; Ignite Public Art Fund is funding set aside from Ignite's Urban Renewal revenue in order to fund public art in the associated Urban Renewal District; and Art Maintenance Funds for repairs of existing art. To ensure that the transfers into the art funds are up to date, Ms. Ebner reviewed three city construction projects that were nearly completed as of September 2024. These projects include work by the Wastewater department, the ongoing Police Department expansion, and a remodel by the Streets Department. The 1.33% transfer from these projects amounted to \$96,333, which was added to the Public Art Fund income for FY2024. These funds have been transferred to the Public Art Fund as of the updated September 2024 financials. Mr. Tymesen explained that Ms. Ebner is referring to Fund 074. He recalled that it was former Councilmember Nancy Sue Wallace who brought to Council to have a dedicated funding source to promote public art. Ms. Ebner continued that the Public Art Maintenance Fund per Ordinance 3571 states that the Arts Commission shall plan for, and set aside, no less than 15% of the value of a public art piece for future maintenance. She explained that when an art is purchased, a matching amount goes into the Maintenance Fund. In her review of prior year activities, the last transfer was done in 2019, but there have been recent art purchases. Therefore, a catch-up transfer of \$46,782.00 was recorded in the updated September financials. Ms. Ebner stressed that this means there is funding coming in from construction projects but also going out to comply with the ordinance. Mr. Tymesen stated that this is something to consider since it is difficult to know future maintenance costs or potential damage, especially for big art pieces such as the dragon sculpture. Councilmember Evans asked if the Maintenance Fund is just dedicated to art with Mr. Tymesen responding in the affirmative. Commissioner Ethridge inquired if the funds that were transferred were generated over a one-year period with Ms. Ebner responding that the catch-up transfer for maintenance fund included the sum of art purchases that hadn't received a transfer. She added that the maintenance fee applies only to items purchased through the Art Fund, not through Ignite. Ms. Ebner pointed out that the challenge with the general Art Fund is its inconsistent cycle. While the City had three large construction projects recently, there are none currently planned. Although there's talk of a potential fire station renovation as a qualifying project, these kinds of projects take years to materialize, hence grants and donations may come into play. Ms. Ebner pointed out that another adjustment was needed to be made because the Green Energy Dragon was initially accounted for in the general Art Fund, however, it was later determined that it belonged in the Lake District (076), so the transfer is now coming in for Ignite. She explained that the \$71,298.28 in December balance in Public Art Fund (074) would be considered one-time money at this point, and with some ongoing projects and scholarships. The December balance in Ignite Art Funds (076) is \$152,412.23 for the Lake District and \$277,604.45 for the River District. Mr. Burns stated that the River District will continue to send in money with

two new Districts: Atlas District and the Health Corridor District. The December balance for the Art Maintenance Fund (077) is \$182,337.75. Ms. Ebner opined that this fund is well-supported. It would need an ordinance change to stop the 15% allocation to this fund and free up additional revenue for the General Art Fund. She stressed the need to monitor this fund over the years to ensure its continued financial stability. Commissioner Ethridge inquired if the Maintenance Fund can be used outside of the allowable district with Mr. Tymesen responding that the Maintenance Fund is for all of the City arts.

DISCUSSION ON IGNITE CDA FUNDING FOR ART: Ignite CDA Chair Scott Hoskins stated that City of Coeur d'Alene Urban Renewal District was formed in 1997, following state statutes that allow the creation of urban renewal districts. The Lake District was created shortly after 1997. Ignite board initiated a public art program wherein it set aside a certain percentage of the Lake District tax increment revenue received and then transferred those funds annually to the Arts Commission for their use in securing and supporting public art efforts within the Lake District. Initially, 5% of tax increment financing was allocated for public art, but this has evolved over time. In 2004, Ignite made a decision to reduce the percentage to 3% and then in 2011, it was reduced to 2% since the art funds held by the City were substantial. Currently, there are four districts: Lake, River, Atlas, and Health Corridor, each with a lifespan and they will sunset. In 2021, the board chose to reduce the public art fund to 1% for all four ignite cda districts. Ignite is currently accruing the 1% public art funds in both the Atlas and Health Corridor Districts because it has yet to identify public art opportunities in these two districts. Mr. Berns stated that the Atlas District, in particular, has high growth expectations, which may increase the value of the allocated funds over time. Chair Ryba mentioned about the Gaia sculpture that artist Dale Young offers to the Arts Commission for purchase of \$25,000 from its original price of \$45,000. She further inquired if there will be additional funds from ignite coming in. Mr. Hoskins stated that the River District will sunset in 2027, so funds will continue to come in until then, with the final funds arriving in 2028. The Health Corridor District has \$13,985 available for art funds, but significant funding opportunities are uncertain. The hospital, being a tax-free entity, does not contribute to tax increment financing. Mr. Berns asked the Commission to let them know if they have any idea for public art on this geographic area. Chair Ryba stated that the reason why the Commission invited ignite to present is because numerous requests for funding were received by the Arts Commission last year, hence it was necessary to see where the Commission stand financially. Commissioner Ethridge mentioned that there is an interest among some Council members about funding for performing arts. He asked how this kind of project would fit in any of the districts. Mr. Burns stated that it should only be within the specific district where the funds would come from. Mr. Berns explained that the River District's revenue stream should remain consistent until it sunsets, and the Atlas District is expected to grow significantly over the years. The Lake District, which has closed, generated substantial funds for public art.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Ethridge, seconded by Commissioner Ward, to approve the November and December 2024 Financial Reports. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

RECOMMENDATION OF APPOINTMENT TO THE ARTS COMMISSION: Chair Ryba stated that the Subcommittee on Arts Commission Applicant Review met on January 27 to interview Cynthia Newkirk. She explained that the Subcommittee believes that she would be a

valuable addition to the Arts Commission. Currently, she serves as the Executive Director of the Music Conservatory, where she has shown great dedication and effort. Cynthia has a strong background, having worked for the Ocean Institute and having a career in marketing and technology. She received letters of support from Chris Fillios, President of the Music Conservatory of Coeur d'Alene and former County Commissioner, and Walter Burns, Chair of the Historic Preservation Committee.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Light, seconded by Commissioner Sichelstiel, to recommend to the Council the appointment of Cynthia Newkirk to the Arts Commission. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

Chair Ryba stated that there is one more vacancy in the Commission and asked everyone if they know someone interested to apply to send in their application to Ms. Mateski.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:

Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards: Chair Ryba stated that she would like to see the breakdown of expenses for the Mayor's Awards in the Arts. She shared that there has been some discussion about whether there should be a charge for dinner to cover the cost of the event. Commissioner Light said that there is also an idea to consider making it a donation-based event, where attendees could pay by donation and explain what the fundraising is for, however, it might be challenging to make the event free. Chair Ryba said that another option is to seek sponsorships. She added that there might be a change of venue this year because hosting an event at the Hagadone Events Center has become quite expensive. October 22 is the scheduled date for the awards event this year. An alternative venue will be the resort. Councilmember Evans mentioned that in the past, the event was held at a restaurant, it was not always at the events center. Chair Ryba stated that the Kroc has also offered as venue. but they do not allow cocktails. She added that Commissioner Sichelstiel has offered to be the master of ceremonies this year. She will be added as a member of the Subcommittee.

ArtCurrents: Chair Ryba designated Commissioner Sichelstiel as Chair, as she effectively served in the role last year and in previous years. Commissioner Sichelstiel stated that the Art Currents start in early spring and they have committee meetings every two to three months. She asked anyone interested in joining this subcommittee and Commissioner Walker expressed interest in joining. Chair Ryba shared that Mayor McEvers is very supportive of student involvement, hence, she would ask Commissioner Smith if she would be interested in joining this subcommittee.

Visual & Performing Arts: Commissioner Ward stated that NIC has a jazz festival coming up in February. Commissioner Ethridge shared that it's a busy time for theater. The musical "Rent" is opening at the Lake City Playhouse this weekend and will run for two or three weekends. Additionally, the Kroc Center will host Aspire's "Amelie," based on the French film. Commissioner Ethridge stated that there are about 1,500 auditioners for their summer season and CDA Summer Theater's first collaboration with North Idaho College is also underway, with auditions for the musical "Clue" happening soon. This initiative was put together with President Swayne and the theater department at North Idaho College. Chair Ryba proposed splitting into two subcommittees: one for the performing arts and another for visual arts.

Commissioner Light shared that there is an art exhibition at NIC right now by Kate Lund and then Art Walk is on February 14th. Chair Ryba mentioned that she is also looking into adding a Music Subcommittee considering the addition of Cynthia Newkirk in the Commission.

Marketing & Technology: Commissioner Sichelstiel shared that the subcommittee created an Instagram page “cdacityarts” and there are posts about the Green Energy Dragon. She asked everyone to follow and send ideas. Chair Ryba shared the Otocast app activity reports. She asked the Commissioners to review the report and she will also work on adding the new sculptures to the app.

Emerge Art Scholarships: Chair Ryba shared a copy of Emerge Art Scholarship October-December 2024 report.

Mural Projects: Chair Ryba said that the subcommittee will be holding a meeting to discuss potential mural projects in the City. Commissioner Sichelstiel shared her idea of having a graffiti alley art similar to Boise. She added that it will be a collaboration project with the owners of buildings in Sherman and Lakeside. Mr. Tymesen said that those are private property so there should be an Agreement signed with the owners.

New Member Training/ Policies: Chair Ryba stated that she met with new Commissioner Tacey Benson and discussed the different subcommittees to help her decide which subcommittees she would like to join.

Wastewater Treatment Facility Art Project: Chair Ryba mentioned that the Green Energy Dragon sculpture has been installed and operational. The dedication event, headed by Commissioner Momerak, is scheduled for April 24 at 7:30 p.m. as the biogas flare is more visible in the evening.

Children’s Library Entrance Art Project: Chair Ryba stated that this can be removed in the list of subcommittees since it’s already finished. Mr. Tymesen shared that the dedication sign recognizing the donor is installed in front of the artwork.

Poet Laureate: Commissioner Shortridge noted that they met with Ms. Passaro last week to discuss her calendar of events for the year. She asked everyone to support her.

Guidelines Development: Chair Ryba mentioned that most Commissioners are interested in participating in this process. Mr. Tymesen said that there is an ordinance that the Commissioners can refer to and pointed out that it speaks of original art. Chair Ryba emphasized the need to establish clear criteria for funding requests to ensure applicants understand the guidelines and that requests align with the Commission’s mission. Councilmember Evans highlighted that the Commission received numerous requests but was unable to act due to the ordinance, necessitating a discussion to avoid disappointing citizens or informing them upfront. Commissioner Ethridge suggested having criteria or clear rules based on the ordinance. Mr. Tymesen added that these guidelines could remain at the Commission level rather than being formalized into an ordinance. Chair Ryba concluded that the subcommittee will draft the guidelines and present them to the Commission for review.

Chair Ryba shared that she is in discussions with some Commissioners about organizing a Music and Art Festival in October. She highlighted that this festival could bring economic, cultural, and community development benefits, connecting to Coeur d'Alene's creative ecosystem. The effort would focus on marketing various events from October 1-31, with a subcommittee working with different entities and seeking sponsorships. The festival would feature events like the Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards, a Jump to Funk fashion show, an Aspire Theater musical, major speakers at the Innovation Den, art shows by Emerge, performances at Lake City Playhouse, and more. The Music Conservatory and the Poet Laureate could also participate, along with the Art and Cultural Alliance, possibly culminating with the North Idaho Humanities dinner. Chair Ryba stated the goal is to make this an annual event with outside funding. Mr. Tymesen noted that while there are many events in October and partnering with other organizations is key to success, there may be challenges. Chair Ryba clarified that the initiative aims to collaborate with all performing and visual art events in October, promoting and rebranding them as the Music and Arts Festival to raise awareness for non-profits. Commissioner Walker agreed it's a good idea. Chair Ryba said this item will be further discussed at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Light, seconded by Commissioner Sichelstiel, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

The meeting ended at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jo Anne Mateski
Executive Assistant