

**ARTS COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 26, 2024  
City Hall, Conference Room #6**

**Attendees:** Chairman Mary Lee Ryba, Vice Chairman Jennifer Drake, Commissioner Abby Light, Commissioner John Bruning, Commissioner Charlotte Doutriaux, Commissioner Alesa Momerak, Commissioner Chuck Ethridge, Commissioner Katie Linder, Commissioner Summer Ward, Commissioner Sally Shortridge, Alternate Student Representative Henry DePew, City Administrator Troy Tymesen, Council Liaison Amy Evans, and City Accountant Stephanie Padilla.

**Guests:** Public Library Director Michael Priest, Cheryl Metcalf, Jake Garringer, and Jillian Droll.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Ryba called the meeting to order.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION:** There were none.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION:** Motion by Commissioner Bruning, seconded by Commissioner Ethridge, to approve the November 28, 2023 minutes. **Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT:** Accountant Stephanie Padilla noted that the Commission is mainly making interest right now and the small expenses is just the electricity for the feathers. **MOTION:** Motion by Commissioner Light, seconded by Commissioner Doutriaux, to approve the February 2024 Financial Reports. **Motion carried.**

**COMMISSIONER/ STAFF COMMENTS:** Chairman Ryba introduced Jillian Droll, a senior student from Coeur d'Alene High School who would like to collaborate with the Arts Commissioners on her senior project. Ms. Droll will conduct an email interview regarding how art education influences the community and students. Commissioner Linder and Commissioner Ethridge said that they are willing to help.

**DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF A POET LAUREATE:** Chairman Ryba discussed the possibility of establishing a Poet Laureate for the City of Coeur d'Alene. She shared information on the Poet Laureate program in Moscow, ID and introduced Mr. Jake Garringer to share his idea of establishing a poet laureate. Mr. Garringer, who works at the Governor's office, said that he preferred the idea as a private citizen and that based on his research, he found out that other communities around the country have a poet laureate. He explained that it will be an opportunity for the city to tap into the community's creative arts and this will allow artists to participate in government functions, business, community affairs, civic events, and educational institutions. He added that the creation of a laureate honorific will be an opportunity for collaboration between the Arts Commission and the Public Library. Chairman Ryba added that Mr. Roger Dunsmore is a poet in the city that posts poems all around the city and does presentations on a regular basis. She

mentioned that if the Commission can identify an academic poet laureate, it can apply for a grant at the Academy of American Poets Laureates Fellowship and could possibly receive a stipend of \$50,000 a year. Library Director Michael Priest said that there will be public event opportunities in the library, and they would be happy to host. Chairman Ryba said that there might not be a stipend that can be offered for this position in the first year, hence she is not asking the Commission for funding, but she wanted to get a sense if this is a welcome endeavor before they can call for poets to apply. Council Liaison Amy Evans asked how the expansion of poet laureate in the performing arts and in education will fit in the ordinances. City Administrator Troy Tymesen replied that if there is money involved, there should be a real basis to show what the individual or group is going to do and should be for the public good. He added that if the Commission will apply for a grant, there is a need to take it to council and submission of a staff report.

**MOTION:** Motion by Commissioner Light, seconded by Commissioner Linder, to establish a Poet Laureate in Coeur d’Alene. **Motion carried.**

Chairman Ryba said that the Poet Laureate Committee will be composed of Commissioner Light, Commissioner Shortridge, Commissioner Linder, Commissioner Ward, Director Priest, Council Liaison Evans, and Mr. Garringer.

**APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT WITH EMERGE CDA TO PROVIDE YOUTH ART CLASSES:** Mr. Tymesen presented a Memorandum of Understanding with Emerge, an Idaho non-profit company in Coeur d’Alene, that will provide a \$25,000 scholarship program per year to assist young artists to attend classes for the development of their artistic talents. He said that the scholarship will be awarded to young artists from 7 to 18 years old, including those with disabilities, and provided to no more than three students per class. He added that the requirement includes the conduct of at least two art shows per year that will be open to the public for free and will feature works created by the students who received the scholarship. Furthermore, Mr. Tymesen thanked Vice Chairman Drake and Council Liaison Evans for their assistance. He said that he will take up the matter in the council meeting on Tuesday, April 2.

**MOTION:** Motion by Vice Chairman Drake, seconded by Commissioner Ward, to approve the contract with Emerge to provide youth art classes. **Motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF ARTIST FOR THE AWTF BIOGAS FLAME PROJECT:** Commissioner Momerak shared that the city received a total of 46 artists submissions which was narrowed down to four finalists who were offered to submit details and a maquette of their proposed art piece. She said that the Selection Committee met on March 21, 2024 to review the public votes and noted that after a thorough review, the committee chose artist Melissa Cole of Spokane, WA and her art proposal entitled “Green Energy Dragon.” She explained that Ms. Cole has a background in Biology so the mosaic that she is proposing will run the length of the dragon and has the symbols of biogas, which will be good for educational purposes when students come for tours. She added that Ms. Cole will also include students from the Boys Club and Girls Club to do the mosaic. Commissioner Momerak said that Ms. Cole will be invited to the next meeting of the Commission so she can further explain the concept of her design.

Commissioner Bruning recommended to name the dragon “Sid,” after former Wastewater Superintendent Sid Fredrickson in recognition of his longtime service and for being instrumental in getting the advanced wastewater treatment plant up to federal standards. He further suggested that there will be a plaque added for educational purposes.

**MOTION:** Motion by Commissioner Drake, seconded by Commissioner Ethridge, to approve the Selection Committee’s selection of the Green Energy Dragon by Melissa Cole for the AWTF Biogas Flame Project. **Motion carried.**

**UPDATE ON THE CHILDREN’S LIBRARY ENTRANCE ART PROJECT:** Library Director Michael Priest shared that the library received 77 applications from artists. He said that the Selection Committee composed of donor Paul Fleschner, architect Kevin Cole, library trustee Melissa Carper-Bell, and student representative to the library board Ayla Ferns narrowed the field down to five finalists who were asked to submit their CV and past works. He noted that among the finalists, they have selected Pete Goldlust of Eugene, OR. Mr. Priest said that the budget for the project is \$18,000 and they are now working with legal to draw up a contract for the \$1000 honorarium for submission of maquette.

**ELECTION OF ARTS COMMISSION CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN:** For the position of Vice Chairman, Commissioner Light nominated Jennifer Drake while Commissioner Ward nominated Abby Light. The members casted their votes and Abby Light was elected as Vice Chairman. For the position of Chairman, Commissioner Shortridge nominated Mary Lee Ryba while Commissioner Ward nominated Jennifer Drake. The members casted their votes and Mary Lee Ryba was re-elected as Chairman.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES:**

ArtCurrents: Chairman Ryba said that they will have their first meeting in May.

Performing Arts: Commissioner Ethdrige shared that this summer, they will be producing three big shows at North Idaho College: Fiddler on the Roof, musical version of The Secret Garden, and Little Shop of Horrors.

Jack Bannon Memorial Scholarship: Commissioner Light said that the Arts and Culture Alliance manages the funds and now that they have opened it up to over 16 years old, they have received a lot of applications for the \$1000 - \$2000 funding for any kind of creative, educational, or artistic pursuit. She added that the application process closes on April 15. She also mentioned several line-up activities such as: the Art Walk on April 12; the Coeur d’Alene gallery is open for the season; there will be concerts from July 11 and every Thursday through the month of August at the Riverstone Amphitheater; and Shakespeare in the Park will debut in Coeur d’Alene this year from June 20-22 at Riverstone Amphitheatre.

Winter Lights Festival: Commissioner Drake said that the event was largely successful with increase in downtown traffic and increase in business. She said that they received positive feedback and people loved the free outdoor activity. She added that she will provide more updates in the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** Motion by Commissioner Momerak, seconded by Commissioner Linder, to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting ended at 5:04pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jo Anne Mateski  
Executive Assistant