

CREATIVE PORTLAND

P.O. Box 4675 | Portland, ME | 04112 | 207-370-4784

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

3:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

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AGENDA

1. Welcome and President's Comments

2. Consent Agenda

- A. See attached meeting minutes from April 5, 2023
- B. Already approved March Financials
ACTION: Vote to accept Consent Agenda

3. Draft - FY24 Work Plan

- A. See attached Draft Work Plan

4. Executive Director Update

- A. Monday Morning Drop By - May 1st (tribute to Kevin Fahrman - Valentine Bandit)
- B. First Friday Art Walk on May 5, 2023
- C. Creative Portland App Update: marketing campaign and download update
- D. Summary of Arts Advocacy Day - Capitol Hill April 18 and 19
- E. Public Art project organized by CP underway at East Bayside's The Armature condos and plaza.
- F. Summer Stage Series (July - October 2023)
- G. AR Experience Applications funded by NEA Grant
- H. Theater Community Discussion 4/24 Recap
- I. "Resilience" Juried Art Exhibition - May 4th artist reception and FFAW May 5th Opening

5. Board Business

- A. CP as quasi-municipal org.
- B. Buddy system for app engagement and community sponsorship.
- C. Program Captains
- D. Board Openings and Opportunities Chart
 - i. Vacancies for lawyer and fundraisers.
- E. Consider EXCOM slate for 2023/24.

6. Board Thoughts & Share Circle

FY 23 Board Meeting Remaining Dates - Need to discuss a mid-June date while the Executive Director is on vacation.

CREATIVE PORTLAND^{ME}

Board of Directors Meeting

Minutes

Wednesday, April 5, 2023; 3:30-5:00pm via ZOOM

Attendees: Kate Anker, Kirstie Archambault, Tae Chong, Anne McGuire, Daniel Minter, Maile Buker, Eliza Ginn, Lindsay Hancock, Matt Schwach, Herb Ivy, Clare E. Hannan, Councilor Andrew Zarro

Staff: Dinah Minot, Mary Davis, Bobbie Pirruccello \

Absent: Zoe Sahloul, David Brenerman, Gib Foltz, Samantha Taube

- **Welcome and President's Comments**

- Meeting began at 3:32pm
- Ms Anket thanked Dinah & Bobbie for all their hard work and acknowledged Ms Minot's upcoming arts advocacy trip to Washington DC. Her role as a District Captain from Maine is a real gift for Portland, for Maine and for the nation.

- **Consent Agenda (February Minutes & March Financials)**

ACTION: Vote to accept Consent Agenda

FIRST: Ms. Hannan

SECOND: Ms. Buker

VOTE: Passed unanimously

- **FY24 Work Plan and Budget (attached for reference)**

- Ms Anker expresses concern about the rumor that vacant positions at the City could be cut if they are not absolutely necessary in the eyes of the city manager. She mentions a proposed letter that she and the executive committee write to present to Danielle West. She reads the [draft of the letter](#) and asks for comments.
- Mary Davis explains that vacancy positions are being evaluated and are vulnerable to cuts, due to the over 10 million that the City Manager must cut overall. She explained that there are currently two program assistant vacancies at the HEDD, and both are at risk. However, she still has over 200K in the budget for Creative Portland proposed for FY24, including two staff salaries and benefits, a 25K TIF increase allocation, and a heat pump upgrade.
- Ms Anker adds that work plan implementation is only possible with at least a staff of two. For now, since the December vacancy, we have been paying a part-time contractor to fulfill the tasks, but soon we will run out of money.
- Mr. Minter asks: if you have to keep hiring contractors where will that money come from and also if you can't hire contractors what types of things will have to be dropped?
- Ms Minot explains that we do hire contractors for grant-generated projects. But we need an assistant to help apply for grants and to manage the tasks to get us in a position to receive grants awards.
- Ms Davis explains there's 253 vacancies in the city of Portland and so the Creative Portland assistant position is not the only one; Creative Portland's not being singled out. Just within our department there are potentially two positions that may not be included in the FY24 budget, and there's other departments who have many more vacancies than we do that are facing the same kind of questions. No doubt that when you start looking at positions or even vacant

- positions, you have to look at the programming that comes along with that and so there's a recognition that if you don't fill a position that may mean that programming can't happen. I just want to make it clear that this is not one isolated situation. It's not focused on Creative Portland, it's a citywide issue looking to fill a \$10 million budget.
- **Ms Anker:** Thank you for that clarification. We really want to advocate for our vacancy. This position is vital to us continuing the important work that we're doing.
 - **Ms Buker:** Mary, the city council is making a decision regarding which vacancies? Is there a filter or set of criteria? Is there any guidance in terms of what stays in what gets cut?
 - **Ma Davis:** At this point that guidance is not provided. Currently they are looking at each department budget to see where there's room and flexibility.
 - **Ms Buker:** Currently Bobbie is filling that role as a contractor and taking away existing budget that can be applied towards programming. We can cut programs but at what point are we not able to accomplish the mission of Creative Portland? This would have a huge negative impact in terms of our ability to raise money and operate.
 - **Mr Schwach:** I am just so impressed with what Dinah and Bobbie continue to do on social media in terms of promoting. This position is a revenue generator, a tangible benefit when we get down to nuts and bolts. We're here to advocate for what we're doing and stress the importance of the position to the community and economy.
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 - **Mr Chong:** There is return on investment and we should explain that we can raise X number of dollars with this position in the letter. You can't cut a department by a third and expect it to function properly. You need to educate the council that yes, it's smart to look at vacancies, but they're not all the same and you have to look at vacancies in terms of what's critical and view the workload that it's gonna put on the other staff. If this position is cut it's gonna cost the city this much money.
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 - **Ms Anker:** Thanks Tae. The numbers are important to figure. If you cut staff in half, you are cutting 50% of the org and what will be the output?
 - Acknowledges Councilor Zarro has joined. (time?)
She asks for his input on this and if he could kind of shine a little bit of light.
 - **Mr Zarro:** I'm on the finance committee. We do have a little bit more time to have these conversations because everything's been pushed by a week. The budget deficit is a little bit more than \$10M at this point because some things have moved around but we are still pretty early on in the process. I don't have any information that is indicative of one thing or the other. I wish I had more to share.
 - Mr Zarro adds that the decision is made at the managers recommendation, informed by the Council.
 - **Ms Davis:** She puts on the record that when she created the housing and economic development department budget that was submitted she included

\$206,496 for Creative Portland. We continued that into this year and we also added money for the Heat pump work that needs to be done in the Creative Portland office.

- Ms Anker asks how each department decision is made.
- Ms Davis explains that she works in the budget as a department head, and then they work with the finance Director and the city manager. and ultimately the city manager makes a recommendation on the budget to the City Council.
- Ms Davis says there's no advocacy at her level to the City Council. The Creative Portland executive Director and the administrative position are city employees, She advocates and submits a proposed budget to the City Manager who makes the decision. She supports the decision that her boss makes.
- Mr. Chong adds we need to ask board members and community partners (Greg Jordan etc) to go before the finance committee. We need a representative from the artist relief fund, from Metro and other partnerships to navigate and explain to the finance committee why the \$42,000 investment is so critical.
- More discussion follows about the roadblocks and problems with work plan delivery and raising funds. Can not be done with one person while also keeping programs alive. What are the expectations of the Office of CP with one staff?
- **Mr Chong:** Important advocacy right now is to focus on the finance committee. I mean it's absolutely critical that we explain to the finance committee that we must keep the position in the city manager's recommended budget before it goes to the council.
- **Mr Minter:** I believe this is really critical because Portland has not stopped growing you know and the work that Creative Portland's doing is even more important, more demanding work. Imagine the difficulties in trying to bring this position back and will become more demanding and you know how difficult it would be to bring this position back.
- **Ms Davis:** I just want to clarify to make sure that we all understand that the position has not been eliminated from the budget at this point. We've been told for the vacancies we need to wait until the city manager recommendations are submitted in June. The budget process will be completed before vacancies are filled.
- **Mr Zarro:** June 1 would be the final review committee but I will get that confirmed and let you know well in advance. Right now that is the tentative date.
- **Ms Minot:** The other thing I want to discuss is the TIF request and I don't have it here but back in 2021, the CP Board put forward a TIF request, an increase of \$55,000 to help cover app upkeep, additional staff and programming.
- **Mr Chong:** Questions the Council's appetite for a TIF increase. But that would go in front of Councilor Ali, chair of HEDC committee.
- **Ms Minot:** Is it possible to educate the Council about Creative Portland's resources and value before they consider a TIF? The executive committee previously asked how we could expedite a workshop on Creative Portland?

- **Mr Zarro:** Over at the City Council we love workshops. I think it might be a good idea for folks who are newer on the council to learn more about Creative Portland because it is that unique organization. I think a workshop is a good idea because at the end of it we learned more about what they do and now we understand, and have more context when it comes to things like funding or allocation and scope of work so I'm happy to make that request right away.
- More discussions about strategies for spreading awareness about the return on the City's investment.
- Ms Anker thanks Councilor Zarro for expediting the request and asks for the Executive Director report. The Board gives a unanimous thumbsup to send the letter to the city manager and the finance committee.
- **Executive Director Update**
 - Officially, the Creative Portland App launched on April 1st. At that time, there were 796 downloads (since Sept 22). We want at least 100 downloads a month, and then double that in the summer months.
 - Townsquare Media has been hired to kick off a 3-month campaign through June. Most of the campaign expenses will be reimbursed by a Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) Grant (10K)
 - Ms Minot shares five radio spots, after explaining that the campaign combines social media and broadcast: digital, radio, youtube, instagram, tikTok, and apple store search.
 - The board smiles and approves.
 - **Ms Ginn:** Instagram ads are incredibly influential to 30-50 demographics.
 - Ms Minot explains that we need to make sure the app is useful. Is it user friendly? Are we getting a lot of complaints? She asks Bobbie to weigh in.
 - Ms Pirruccello explains that there are more content self-uploads and we are getting some complaints, but for the most part, we are working with the developers to work out the kinks.
 - Theater Community MeetUp will be on 4/24 at CP to discuss theater issues and the search for affordable venue spaces in Portland. Over a dozen theater orgs are attending.
 - CP Gallery is gearing up for the Resilience Art Exhibition on May 4, followed by FFAW public opening on May 5.
 - Ms Hannan described the rewarding process in her first-time role as a juror for the exhibition. She is looking forward to seeing the 17 selections on display in our gallery.
- **Board Shares:**
 - Board discussed events and initiatives they have been attending like Art in Bloom at PMA, Cahe, the play at Portland Stage, and so forth.

Motion to Adjourn

FIRST: Ms Archambault

SECOND: Mr. Chong

Meeting adjourned: 5:10pm

DRAFT - FY24 Work Plan

- Marketing Wheel (newsletter, app, social media)
- First Friday Art Walk
- Summer Stage Series 2024
- Creative Bus Shelter - Bus Wrap Initiative
- AR Experiences Grant implementation
- Fiscal Sponsorship Program
- CP Gallery
- Creative Portland app- 50K
- Creative Bus Shelter Initiative
- Theatre Row Initiative / Earmark Funding Pursuit
- Fundraising/Advancement
- Board Development, Governance
- Arts Advocacy Group