

**MINUTES FOR THE ASHLAND CITIZENS BUDGET COMMITTEE
ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, TOURISM, AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS
SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Thursday, April 6, 2017
Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Stromberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Attendance

Sub-Committee members John Stromberg, Shaun Moran, Garrett Furuichi, Rich Rosenthal, Dennis Slattery, Traci Darrow, and David Runkel were present. Staff member Adam Hanks was present.

Mayor Stromberg asked the subcommittee to discuss how they would like the deliberations regarding allocations to go at the next meeting, on April 13, 2017. Rosenthal proposed that they go through applicant requests one at a time until group comes to consensus. Group agreed to this process.

Rosenthal reminded the group that the minimum allocation amount is \$5000.

3. Appointment of Chair

Moran nominated Runkel. Slattery stated he has concerns that Runkel is directly connected to one of the applicants. Group discussed conflict of interest concerns and inherent challenges. Runkel stated he is happy either to participate as the chair as he did last year or leave, whichever the group determines.

Group mostly that so long as Runkel has been clear about his conflicts and so long as he isn't allocating amounts to the recipients they are comfortable with him acting as chair.

Moran/ Furuichi m/s to appoint Runkel as Chair of the subcommittee. Voice Vote. All Ayes. Motion Passes.

4. Public Forum

None

5. Staff Report

Hanks gave overview of where the funds are allocated, what the grant resolution states, and what funds are required to be restricted to tourism related activities. He gave an overview of the allocation spreadsheet the group will be using between the meetings.

6. Applicant Presentations

1. Rogue Valley Symphony Association.

Jane Kenworthy stated that this is 50th anniversary season of the symphony association. She gave details on their recent growth, including performing an additional concert series, re-launching a discovery program to get young people interested in playing instruments, and helping local band leaders with education targeted at members. She reviewed what activities they intend to use the

grant funding for.

Moran asked how many musicians will likely be participating? Was informed that there are 72 core musician, most of whom are local. The association is planning on giving them a raise due to the expanded program they are playing.

2. *ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum*

Sharon Javna and Erin Scott informed the group that at 61K attendees each year, they are the third largest visitor destination in Ashland and are open all year round. She stated that in 2016, 16% of visitors were tourists, up from 11% in 2015. Javna informed the group how they hope to use funds to increase visitors. She let them know that they have a new executive director named Ann Dowdy. This year they are celebrating their 15th year.

3. *Southern Oregon Bookkeepers Association*

Tracy Baird stated that the intent of this organization is to assist in stabilizing the economy through good bookkeeping practices and fraud prevention. She gave information about their recent growth, the number of Ashland-based participants, and the national attention they have received. She stated that they are hosting a fraud fair for local businesses

Group asked how many attendees are expected at the fraud fair? She stated that last year they had a one-hour speaker and over 45 attendees and a vendor fair with over 120 in attendance. They expect to grow the numbers next year.

4. *The Green Bag Solution / Neighborhood Food Project*

Both Moran and Darrow disclosed that they are connected to the Neighborhood Food Project through their connection to the Ashland Food Bank, which the Food Project supports.

Steve Russo stated that this is a documentary premiering at the Ashland Independent Film Festival this weekend. He gave an overview of the food project history and how the documentary came to be made and how it can be used in other communities. He gave information about how they would use the funds to improve the film and get it out to a wider audience. He gave information about how the film can help both increase support of the Neighborhood Food Project and help other communities start similar programs.

5. *The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy (THRIVE)*

Tom Doolittle and Kevin Talbert gave some history of THRIVE. They gave information about some of their local community partners and programs. Stated that the Rogue Flavor publication is their main program, and it will be distributed this year the week after Easter. Mr. Doolittle stated that this year they are requesting assistance in both economic development and sustainability categories and outlined how they fit into both of those categories.

Slattery stated that the lack of questions being asked by the group isn't a reflection on interest levels, but more on the fact they the group has read the applications and already has a good understanding of many of the projects, events, and organizations in this process.

6. *Ashland Gallery Association*

Elan Gombart and Sarah Burns thanked the city for the history of support. Ms. Gombart gave an overview of how the AGA collaborates with artists and businesses and the ways in which they are growing. She stated that funds requested will help economic viability and tourism. She gave details on some of their events including the First Friday Artwalk, the Gallery Guide, Open Studio Tours, and A Taste of Ashland.

Rosenthal asked if they know how many people attend First Friday Artwalks or A Taste of Ashland? Ms. Burns stated that they know between 600 - 900 attend A Taste of Ashland because they sell tickets. First Friday Artwalks are harder to track, as it's a wandering group of attendees. They have attempted to do this through surveys but haven't been very successful. Rosenthal encouraged them and all other groups to find a way to find this out so that they can say for every dollar given to an organization, they return X amount of dollars to the community. That's what all groups should strive for because it's hard to argue with those statistics. He encouraged AGA to do that this year.

7. Rogue Valley Farm to School

Tracy Harding stated that they are requesting support for the Siskiyou Challenge. She stated that the race brings in people from around the country. Other activities that they are asking for funds to support are programs in the Ashland School District. She described some of the programs in the schools.

Stromberg asked why their requests are nearly always the same each year and why she doesn't feel the need to ask for more than what they are likely to receive. Ms. Harding stated that as she's asking for funding for the same programs, there was no reason to inflate the request. Additionally, she recognizes that there are many organizations all looking for funding.

8. Southern Oregon Film Society

Kathy Dombi stated that this is the 16th year of the Film Festival. She gave an overview of the events which were occurring today. She stated that they expect to sell about 20k tickets this year. She stated that 80% of attendees will go to restaurant, 40% to local shop, 12% will stay overnight. She gave an overview of their community support, including the Oregon Trail program. Also, they bring in filmmakers from around the world. This year they co-curated show at the Schneider Museum and are doing a program with ScienceWorks. Beyond the April Film Festival, they also have World Film Week in October.

Stromberg asked what is the vision for the future of the Film Festival? He wondered if they would like to grow or if they feel they are at a size appropriate for this area. Ms. Dombi stated that there is a push to expand but they do recognize there are limits such as venues available and the expense of marketing outside of the region.

Stromberg stated that are the number and size of the venues the real limit to their growth? Ms. Dombi stated no, it's more the expense of expanding their marketing efforts to reach outside the area.

9. Mt. Ashland Association

Hiram Towle stated that Mt. Ashland is in better fiscal state that previous thanks to funding from

the City. Increased skier visits and have lots of big projects underway for the next year. Thanked the group for past support

Michael Stringer gave overview of the ways last year's grant was used.

Moran asked since last year allocation was \$7000, but your request this year is \$20,000, if you don't get full funding what would the funding be used for? Mr. Stringer stated that it would be used for the ski shuttle program because it has such a direct link to Ashland. Moran asked if they have looked into marketing or co-marketing with the Ashland Chamber or the Bed and Breakfast Association to enhance the numbers of people coming to or staying in Ashland? Stringer stated that they have a program called the Lift Lodge program which does that.

10. Ashland New Plays Festival

James Pagliasotti stated that they are in their 26th season and are nearing the halfway point in a five-year funding plan. The new funding has served to expand both quality and quantity of the plays and increased the involvement of volunteers in the community. He gave an overview of how past grants were used and what they were able to leverage through being able to use the City of Ashland name.

11. Southern Oregon Repertory Singers

Phyllis Fernland stated that they have been active for 32 years and are the only semi-professional choral group in the Rogue Valley. She stated that they are hoping to be one of the cultural magnets in the area. She gave an overview of how they have grown in attendance and number of programs they can offer. About 200 high school students and their families get free ticket vouchers and transportation to their concerts. She gave an overview of the other programs they will be doing this year.

Stromberg asked what enables them to bring in such high-level performers to such a small organization far from a larger city? Ms. Fernland stated that their director, Paul French, has a fabulous reputation and lots of very good contacts. Others come because they love performing in the SOU recital hall.

12. Chamber Music Concerts

Larry Cooper stated that while they are an affiliate of the SOU Foundation, they are a completely separate organization with a separate board and only use SOU Foundation for some accounting assistance. Funds for this grant help to provide chamber music otherwise unavailable to the community. He gave an overview of their upcoming season. Will be using any grant funding for education outreach to schools and Mountain Meadows.

Stromberg asked for some additional information regarding their education outreach. Mr. Cooper stated that the purpose of the outreach is to bring the world of chamber music to people who otherwise wouldn't have exposure. Stromberg asked if they have any indication of the outreach program success? Mr. Cooper stated that they frequently get letters from students and teachers who are motivated to learn more about music or go further in their music education.

13. Lomakatsi Restoration Project

Marko Bey stated that they group may have noticed the helicopter work they assisted with as a partner in the AFR project. They are asking for funding this year for the Youth Training and Employment Program and are expecting 20 young people and two tribal governments to participate this year. Belinda Brown gave an overview of what the students gain through this program. Sheila Carter stated that part of the funding request is also their education programs in the Ashland Schools. This program has been going on for over 20 years and is an important part of their interactions with the community.

Moran asked how this request relates to the economic development category? Ms. Carter stated that the training they do with the youth is career development and they are paid \$11/hour for their work. They also do interviews and other job training for the youth participants.

Rosenthal asked how many years have they done the youth training for the watershed? Ms. Carter stated that this will be the fifth year. Rosenthal asked how do you measure success? Ms. Carter stated that it's measured both in on the ground work completed, enthusiasm of students, and evaluations provided by participants and their parents. Rosenthal asked if they knew what participants from five years ago are doing now? Mr. Bey stated that they are keeping track of those students and some are returning to mentor this year's participants.

14. Friends of the Schneider Museum of Art

Scott Malbaurn stated that the Museum is a contributor to the art community and this year their request is focused on the economic development of community. Last year had 14k visitors, 63% come from out of town, with 41% coming from 50+ miles away. These visitors come year-round. This year they are look for funds to expend their marketing efforts to increase the visitor numbers.

Stromberg asked how they plan to expand attendance? Mr. Malbaurn stated that they would like to expanded marketing efforts, including two billboards on I-5. Additionally, they are hoping to help locals understand the museum is here for local community through things like the Sneak Preview, Rogue Valley Messenger, etc.

Moran thanked him for being clear on how many people are visiting and how previous grant funding helped the Museum. Moran also asked what the Museum would do without full funding and how would they measure success without the full amount requested? Mr. Malbaurn stated that they are very familiar with grant funding limits and would seek other grant opportunities.

Darrow asked how much of their funding comes from SOU? Mr. Malbaurn stated that about 15% of total budget comes from SOU. Darrow asked how they determine billboard locations? Mr. Malbaurn stated that mostly it was about what billboard spaces are available in locations likely to reach people who are unaware of the museum.

15. Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon

Sharon Wilson thanked the group for their previous support. She stated that this is the 30th anniversary concert season. She gave information on their planned performances. She stated that they offer full scholarships to 35-40% of their performers.

16. Rogue World Music

Val Rogers stated that Rogue World Music is a young organization, whose mission is to bring community and cultural awareness through world music. She gave an overview of the participants in their programs. She stated that what sets them apart is their focus on world music traditions. They hope this year to work in partnership with two other multicultural organizations; Unity Drum and Dance and Ballet Folklorico. The \$5000 request would help leverage and additional \$15,000 for a series of seven events in the fall of 2017. She gave details of those proposed events.

Moran asked if they applied for grant funding last year? Ms. Rogers stated that they did not as she is new to the organization.

Rosenthal thanked her for the clarity regarding of how they can leverage the grant funds and how they will objectively measure success.

17. Southern Oregon Film and Media (SOFaM)

Ginny Auer thanked the group for previous support. She gave overview of how funds used in the past. She stated that SOFaM supports and promotes the production, education and economic impact of film and media in Southern Oregon. She stated that the community of filmmakers is growing and gave examples of how that community is supporting each other as well as increasing the economy of Southern Oregon.

Rosenthal asked if they are finding any confusion or challenges with their name being so similar to Southern Oregon Film Society? Ms. Auer stated that's probably more of a question for them, but she thinks they are typically known more by the Ashland Independent Film Festival.

Stromberg asked what are the distinctive characteristic of filming in Oregon? Ms. Auer stated that, unlike many filming locations, Oregon plays for Oregon. People see Oregon on film and come here specifically for what they see on the screen.

Moran asked if there is one thing Ashland could do to help SOFaM better monetize the organization what would it be? Ms. Auer stated that beyond hiring an Executive Director, funds should go for marketing. Most of what they have done have been free opportunities, but getting awareness of we have to offer. They have seen an increase in people coming to them and leaving surprised by what they find here in regard to local talent and skills. Another thing the City could do is consider incentives for filmmakers to film here could be a really exciting opportunity.

18. Dancing People Company

Jessica Klinke stated that they are the only non-profit in the area providing dance performance and educational opportunities. Hoping to hold a dance festival in 2018 and are requesting support for the free community events planned for the festival. She gave an overview of the three free events.

Furuichi asked how many participants would participate? Ms. Klinke stated that they expect 60 registered participants, not including the artists and dance companies performing and providing the education opportunities. Furuichi asked what types of venues they would likely use for these

events. Ms. Klinke stated that they are working on a partnership with SOU and for the free events the armory and the bandshell in Lithia Park.

Stromberg asked when an organization decides to participate, are they paying to participate or are you paying them? Ms. Klinke stated that they would pay artists and teachers but participants pay to attend and take classes. They would also like to incorporate other studios and businesses in the festival.

19. Modern Roots Foundation

Dee Fretwell stated that it is their mission to connect low income children with music. She stated that they are focusing on the over 1,000 children who are at or under poverty levels who are in need of tangible access to music and music education. They currently have 30 students in Ashland receiving weekly lessons, which equates to 400 hours per year. They also hold an annual spring break strings camp. The lessons occur year-round and the students carry these lessons throughout their lifetime. She stated that their request this year is higher than in previous years due to the desire to accommodate the children currently on their waitlist.

Stromberg asked what is the age range of the children they serve. Ms. Fretwell stated that it's 8 to 18 years of age.

20. Ashland Bed and Breakfast Network

Runkel reiterated his conflict of interest.

Ellen Campbell and Lisa Beach thanked the group for their time and effort in this process and for previous funding. Gave overview of use of previous funds and how they want to continue to expand their marketing efforts for not just the bed and breakfasts, but for all activities in and around Ashland. Read an excerpt of a letter of support from the OSF Marketing Manager for the Network's marketing strategy.

Furuichi asked if they are coordinating with the Visitors and Conventions Bureau (VCB)? Ms. Campbell stated that ABBN is a member of the VCB and members of the ABBN are also on the board of the VCB. They were asked this question several years ago and decided that as a part of their work they would have representation on the VCB. Furuichi stated that he would like to see funding for tourism groups to go through the VCB. Ms. Campbell stated that she doesn't think that this occurs, but doesn't know for sure. Most of the bed and breakfasts are members of the Chamber.

Furuichi stated that it would be nice if it was a coordinated effort and if all shared resources. Moran agreed that he wished there was more synergy between the Chamber, VCB and the ABBN to promote tourism and assets like our bed and breakfasts.

Stromberg asked if their marketing was targeted specifically at the types of people who stay in only in bed and breakfasts? Ms. Campbell stated, no, they promote everything that a tourist might want to do in Ashland; events, theater, wineries, etc. The more people who come, the more people will stay in all lodging, including the bed and breakfasts. Gave information about some of their programs and contests.

Ms. Campbell informed the group that there was an error on her application. The Economic Development request should be \$6,000 and the Tourism request should be \$24,000. She apologized for the mix-up.

21. Ashland Culture of Peace Commission

David Wick stated that the proposal is a major step toward making Ashland an official City of Peace. The funds would go for a strategic plan, monument, and a peace festival. He described their plans and the various groups they are working with in the planning process. Mr. Wick gave information regarding the Culture of Peace originators and their previous work and volunteer experience. He stated that this could be another tourism draw for Ashland.

Moran asked what metrics would be used to determine success? Mr. Wick stated that this request is the big bold step forward and is a request for the strategic planning and research for building to the 2018 world peace monument installation. The measurement would be the plans and the meeting time with Council and the Chamber. Ultimately, having the events would be significant but they don't have a baseline at the moment.

Moran asked what kind of modeling or projections were used to get to the 90k request? Mr. Wick stated that they estimated 15k per month for the baseline organizing strategic planning for now until June of 2018 in preparation for their event in September of 2018.

Rosenthal asked if the Culture of Peace is engaged in any kind of political activity? Mr. Wick stated that they are a non-political organization, working for the community as a whole.

22. Rogue Valley Peace Choir

Julie Rayfield informed the group that their mission is to create and enhance a culture of peace. They sing to advocate for a healthy planet and social justice. They are a 90 member, mostly senior, non-audition choir. She stated that they sing for free at all their events. She gave an overview of their recent performances and performance locations. She stated that this request is for help to produce a bi-state choir event and make it an annual event. Additionally, they are requesting funds for equipment to continue performing.

23. Lotus Rising Project

Mario Fregoso state that the Lotus Rising Project is taking over the Rogue Valley Pride Event from SOPride. He stated that they are envisioning an event that's more than just the parade. He gave an overview of some of their event from last year. Additionally, they would like to expand marketing further into the state of Oregon and by using a media consultant. He stated that in the last three months, participation in their group has tripled, so they see a good opportunity to expand the event.

Stromberg asked what demographics are the focus of the organization? Mr. Fregoso stated that currently mostly focused on youth but now expanding in to adult services.

Darrow asked for clarity between the statements that they are experiencing growth in interest yet

don't have enough volunteers to handle all the tasks. Mr. Fregoso stated that last year there was a lack of volunteers because they only took over the Pride Events three months before they occurred and needed more time to engage volunteers.

24. Geos Institute

Tonya Graham stated that last month City Council approved the Climate and Energy Action Plan, which sets forth very aggressive targets. They are hopeful that the City will hire a full time employee to implement the plan but they also recognize that the plan is too broad for the City to do it by itself. The Plan requires assistance from the community to implement plan. Hoping to use funds for a community engagement plan with specific focus on the business community. She gave details of what they would like to do in that engagement plan.

Stromberg stated he is interested in how they plan to coordinate with the City or proposed commission? Ms. Graham stated that this depends on how the commission is put together. If it's useful, they would be happy to have a staff member on the commission. The goal is to be complimentary to the City's efforts.

Rosenthal asked, if grant funds are given, how would the City be involved in Geos' messaging? How would Geos stay "in sync" with the City's or Council's messaging? Ms. Graham stated that they are expecting to be actively engaged in some fashion with the commission. Their goal is to make sure Geos' work is complimentary and doesn't either duplicate or conflict with the City's work.

Slattery stated that it seems like this would be the work of the commission or a staff person. He worried that this would be in a parallel track to the CEAP and wondered if Geos would work on a volunteer basis or only with funding? Ms. Graham stated that they have been doing volunteer work and plan to continue doing so but as the commission figures out what it's high-priorities are, Geos could bring capacity and resources to the commission's work. Whomever does this work will have an enormous task list in front of them and the City's internal goal is very aggressive and will probably take up most of their time and resources. So Geos can bring time and resources for the other goal efforts.

25. Jefferson State Choral Coalition

Markita Shaw thanked group for their efforts. She stated the coalition is a community group of 50-80 singers. They are going from being a class through the continuing education program at SOU to a non-profit organization. The Choral Coalition celebrates life in America by singing popular American music. They are currently working to stabilize independence and expand the scope of their audience. She gave details of the planned performances for which they are requesting funding. The main event is a concert on July 4th, which won't compete with other regular activities that day but will enhance the day's interest. The second event is a gospel concert in the fall.

Moran asked if they don't receive funding, would the Coalition still hold the 4th of July performance? Ms. Shaw stated that they are working on sponsorships, which may allow them to still hold it, likely with less marketing or more volunteer assistance required.

26. Post Growth Institute

Donnie Maclurcan stated that they provide support, training, and consultancy for non-profit agencies in the Rogue Valley. He gave details of their history, including assistance to 58 Ashland-based organizations. They are seeking funding for their project called, "Not For Profit Way." This is a training program to help people start, scale and sustain their projects. They currently have a long waiting list of people seeking assistance and training. He gave information on some of their proposed training.

Rosenthal asked if they charge for the training sessions? Mr. Maclurcan stated that they do but they also offer many scholarships and assistance. Rosenthal asked if the scholarships are for individuals or organizations? Mr. Maclurcan stated that they are mostly for organizations, but they do occasionally have "social entrepreneur" individuals. He noted that this training has also lead to job creation in the past and gave some examples. Rosenthal asked if the classes take place in Ashland. Mr. Maclurcan stated that they do.

27. Brava! Opera Theater

Lorrie Hall stated that they were founded in 2010, and are one of only three opera organizations in Oregon. She gave an overview of recent concerts, competitions, and classes. She stated that they are requesting support for their upcoming season. She gave an overview of the previous season. In the upcoming season they will be performing, "Carousel." She thanked the group for their consideration.

Moran asked why the group doesn't charge for their events? Ms. Hall stated that they charge for everything, with the exception of 150 free youth tickets.

Stromberg asked if it was accurate that they gave away 30k in prizes? Ms. Hall stated that this was over the course of seven years of competitions.

6. Adjournment

Runkel gave overview of the next steps in the process.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet
Administrative Analyst