

# Oregon Cultural Trust Board Meeting Minutes



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March 21, 2020

**Emergency** Teleconference

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**Board Members Present:** Chuck Sams, Chair; Nicki Price, Vice-Chair; Representative Margaret Doherty; Theo Downes-LeGuin; John Goodwin; Bereniece Jones-Centano; Nathalie Johnson; George Kramer; Mark Renard; Chris Van Dyke; Gayle Yamasaki.

**Board Members Absent:** Gustavo Morales.

**Partners Present:** Eliza E. Canty-Jones, Oregon Historical Society; Chrissy Curran, State Historic Preservation Office; Adam Davis, Oregon Humanities; Beth Dehn, Oregon Heritage Commission; Kerry Tymchuk, Oregon Historical Society; Deb Vaughn, Oregon Arts Commission.

**Staff Present:** Brian Rogers, Executive Director; Kat Bell, Grants & Office Coordinator; Raissa Fleming, Trust Assistant; Carrie Kikel, Communications Manager; Aili Schreiner, Trust Manager.

**Others Present:** Brenda Bateman, Assistant Director for Operations, Business Oregon; Nick Batz, Government Affairs Manager, Business Oregon; Paul Cosgrove, lobbyist, Cultural Advocacy Coalition; Chris Cummings, Interim Director, Business Oregon; Nancy Golden, Chair, Cultural Advocacy Coalition; Sue Hildick, Executive Director, Cultural Advocacy Coalition; Leah Horner, Regional Solutions Director, Governor's Office; Jenny Wilfong, Chief Financial Officer, Business Oregon.

## **Welcome and Call to Order**

Chuck Sams called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. He noted that we are living in extraordinary times and gave a brief overview of the impact the health crisis is having in his community. We have a rare opportunity to show the staff of the organizations we serve that we are here to help them navigate these difficult times.

## **Emergency Relief Effort**

Sams said he wants to make sure that the funds donors have given to the Cultural Trust are used to shore up the cultural community.

Brian Rogers gave an overview of the relief effort proposal the staff created. The concept is simple and would be based on the fiscal size and payroll of the organizations applying.

Organizations are telling us that meeting payroll is their greatest challenge. We will entertain other non-payroll expenses as well.

### **Discussion of Relief Grant Program**

Sams called for questions and comments.

Nathalie Johnson thanked Sams and the staff and said it is truly a blessing that we will be able to offer some relief to the cultural community.

Gayle Yamasaki asked about conversations with other funders. Sams said every foundation across the state is trying to develop programs to help.

Rogers said he met with many funders Friday morning and there are two major themes. All are searching for funds to help and there is also discussion of joining efforts to streamline relief to organizations.

Theo Downes-LeGuin asked if the plan is to have applications submitted at one time or will the grants be awarded on a rolling process. Rogers said we will leave the application period open as long as possible.

Yamasaki asked how we will ensure equitable distribution around the state and address all areas of culture. Rogers said we will use our Coalition and Tribal network to make sure all areas receive support. We are working on a plan to help cultural workers as well.

George Kramer asked whether we should establish a monthly figure to expend so that the funds can be distributed over time. Rogers said we plan to pace ourselves to sustain our support as long as possible.

John Goodwin thanked the staff for developing the proposal. He asked if the Governor has approved the plan. Rogers said the Department of Justice is reviewing our statute to determine what would need to happen for us to be able to implement the relief program.

Johnson asked about collecting data on the impact of the funding to demonstrate its impact and to evaluate whether the program needs to be extended.

Rogers said we will collect as much information as possible.

Mark Renard about the status of the Trust's regular grant programs. Rogers said we have already communicated an extension of the grant deadlines so that we can evaluate needs.

Yamasaki asked who the team will be that reviews the applications. Rogers said the program will be non-competitive and we will be as equitable as possible.

Goodwin commented on the needs of large organizations. Rogers said we understand the impact large organizations have on their communities. Funds can go a long way in small communities as well.

Yamasaki asked again about the group that will be reviewing applications. Rogers said we would be happy to consider putting together a review committee.

Niki Price asked if we could utilize Coalitions to communicating the grant opportunity. Rogers said yes we plan to do that. Perhaps we could increase the block grants to Coalitions and Tribes.

Yamasaki said how well we communicate the funding will determine how broadly it reaches. Could we consider having a virtual town hall with Coalition leaders to ensure they have the information to share with their communities? Downes-LeGuin voiced support of that idea. Mark Renard suggested reaching out to cities as well.

Sams said the sooner we can do this the better.

**Action:** Goodwin moved that the Oregon Cultural Trust take up to \$10 million from its corpus and begin to distribute it across the state as equitably as possible to mitigate the impact of the health crisis. Downes-LeGuin seconded. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

Rep Doherty thanked everyone for taking the call this morning. She gave a shout out to the patrons of the cultural community who continue to support their organizations by donating back ticket revenue.

Sue Hildick thanked Rogers for moving so quickly on the program, she said CAC has questions about the details and asked about making the employment piece more flexible. She also asked if the fund could be used to leverage other funds. CAC would like to partner with the Trust in getting the word out. Nancy Golden said it's important to get the funds out as soon as possible and perhaps the Trust could partner with others in getting the funds out.

Rogers thanked Hildick and Golden and said the Trust staff will involve its statewide partners and the CAC in developing the program.

Goodwin asked about next steps. Rogers said we need to hear back from DOJ. We will take their recommendations and work with the Governor and the Legislature to fine tune and implement the program.

Chris Cummings said we hope to hear from DOJ today. They are working on it. Business Oregon has staff that can help move the program forward.

Jenny Wilfong talked about the need to sell stock to make the funds available. There may be a waiting period. She will work with treasury to make the funds available as soon as possible.

Yamasaki encouraged regular updates to the board and asked if the staff would be sharing messaging to help the board communicate the program. Carrie Kikel assured her messaging would be shared as soon as the program is finalized.

Sams thanked Rogers and his team as well as the Governor's Office for their development of this concept. We hope DOJ will give their approval and we can move forward quickly.

He urged everyone to stay healthy and follow state guidelines on social distancing.

Leah Horner thanked everyone on the call for moving so quickly and being so nimble in responding to this crisis.

Yamasaki made a motion to adjourn. Bereniece Jones-Centano seconded.

Sams said this has been one of the most structured and productive calls he has had recently. He thanked everyone and recognized Niki Price for her support.

### **Meeting Adjourns**

Sams adjourned the meeting at 10:53 a.m.