

VISUAL, PERFORMING ARTS & FILM COMMITTEE

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the **Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee** was called to order on Thursday, **October 27, 2011** at 11:00 AM. Members present: Ellen Newbold, Chair; Sterling Webster, RIC Chair; Saint Basnight; Betsy Brown; Eddy Browning; Joe Bryan; Robert Long (late arrival); John Robbins; Perry White; and Joanne Williams (late arrival). Commission members present: Jeff Crow, NCDCCR Deputy Secretary (on behalf of Linda Carlisle, NCDCCR Secretary) (late arrival); Libba Evans (early departure); Malcolm Fearing (late arrival); Angel Khoury; and Earl Willis. Also present: Glenna Shelton Browning, Plymouth, NC resident; Debbie Gibbs, Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Operations Director; and Dwight Gregory, Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Board Treasurer. Staff members present: Kim Sawyer, Executive Director; Andrea Hanganu, Administrative Assistant; Amy Hinnant, Operations Manager; Johnny Walker, Program Manager; and Tanya Young, Communications Manager.

Welcome

Chairman Ellen Newbold welcomed all in attendance and introduced new committee members Eddy Browning, John Robbins, and Perry White.

Adoption of Agenda

The slightly revised agenda presented at the time of the meeting was adopted by consensus.

* Robert Long joined the meeting at 11:02 AM. *

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Betsy Brown and second by Saint Basnight, the committee minutes of July 22, 2011 were approved by consensus.

Old Business

ER & Company
“Always Patsy Cline”
Johnny Walker

Chairman Newbold reported that at the July 2011 committee meeting RIFP Program Manager Johnny Walker was tasked to go back to Elizabeth R & Company (ER&Co.) regarding their proposal to do *Always Patsy Cline* at RIFP. The committee had agreed to offer space at the current rental rate and split ticket costs rather than pay for the performances. Mr. Walker reported that ER&Co. responded with an email dated August 11, 2011 (read out loud) stating they would be discussing the committee’s offer at its next board meeting. Discussion was held, with the following being noted:

- Have not heard back from ER&Co. to date; board meeting date is unknown (Walker).
- ER&Co. plans to do an event on Hatteras Island (Webster).
- Details of the two performances at the Forum (White and Young).

* Joanne Williams joined the meeting at 11:06 AM. *

Robert Long initiated discussion regarding the need to continue conversation with ER&Co. about future shows and a partnership for them to use RIFP facilities, with the following being noted:

- Verification that RIFP has stable contracts in place for those with agreements (Sawyer).
- Verification the RIFP rental policy will be in place for the Wedding Association event in January 2012 (Sawyer).
- Question of need for a potential interim consultant, etc. to assist the RIC Executive Director (Robbins).

New Business

2011-2012
Performing Arts
Proposals
Johnny Walker

Chairman Newbold reported that the last time the committee examined its budget Johnny Walker was tasked to spend approximately \$260K for programming. Mr. Walker then reviewed the proposed *Performance Series Show List—2011/2012* (distributed and filed as an attachment in the official Report Book), noting the following:

- Opera is from UNC Greensboro and not the City of Greensboro.
- History of and present use of the appropriation.
- *Camerata Singers* should not be *Singers*: is a 16-piece string ensemble.
- East Carolina University (ECU) performing *Our Town* and *Children’s Shows* is budgeted out of line with others at \$51,262.00; previously reduced from \$60K to \$51K.
- 440th Military Band invited again for July 4, 2012; TBD if they can come in 2012.
- Proposed bookings through July 19, 2012: 6 weeks of children’s shows; 7-8 weeks of evening performances; \$3K-\$4K remaining; 49 total shows.

Discussion was held regarding the 2011/2012 Performance Series proposal, with the following included:

- Issue of \$51K ECU production of *Our Town* being overpriced (Basnight); agreement (Bryan).

- Question of prior business with ECU (Webster).
- Potential alternatives to ECU.
- Potential of additional Pavilion performances (Khoury).

* NCDCCR Deputy Secretary Jeff Crow joined the meeting at 11:33 AM. *

- Would be a different discussion separate from Performance Series proposal (Long).
- Setting a precedent if give ECU \$51K; RIC is not in a financial position to do that (Bryan).

Motion

Robert Long made a motion that the committee approves the 2011/2012 Performing Arts proposal with the exception of East Carolina University; and asks Johnny Walker to go back and try to reformat that one slot. Joe Bryan amended the motion as follows: *the committee approves the 2011/2012 Performing Arts proposal with the exception of East Carolina University; and Johnny Walker has the authority to enter into an agreement not to exceed \$35K with East Carolina or another university.* Perry White seconded the motion. Discussion followed with RIC Chairman Sterling Webster questioning whether these appropriation funds can be used for A&T State, which is in July or the next fiscal year. Chairman Newbold verified this was permissible. The motion carried by consensus.

Amended Motion

Vote

Performing Arts Budget
Amy Hinnant

Amy Hinnant then reviewed the *State of North Carolina General Ledger System Authorized Monthly Budget Report for the Period Ending September 30, 2011* (distributed and filed as an attachment in the official Report Book). The review and discussion included the following:

- Little activity on Fund 2586 (RIC Performing Arts Fund); expenses paid were from last year's carryover.
 - \$72,671.69 spent of \$101K carryover for A&T State and UNC Pembroke, including some advertising costs.
- \$398,241.00 Performing Arts appropriation is transferred to RIC in monthly allotments.
- Transfer from General Fund: RIC received \$99,558.00; \$127,502.61 current available balance.
- \$28K+ carryover balance from last year not appropriated for UNC Pembroke or A&T.
- Out of that budget 80% of two salaries plus benefits were paid; \$263K and items just reviewed (Newbold).
- \$75K in advertising/marketing is budgeted, as well as theatre items/repairs at a little over \$3K (Newbold).
- Former appropriation amount was \$500K (Newbold).
 - Funds formerly ran through NCSA to RIC; NCSA twice took a percentage to make their budget shortfall (Sawyer).
- \$261K 2011/12 Performing Arts proposal total; includes performances, sound, and piano tuning.

* Libba Evans left the meeting at 11:45 AM. *

Marketing Performing Arts
Tanya Young

RIFP Communications Manager Tanya Young provided an overview of marketing for this year for the Performing Arts Series as follows:

- Press releases: 1-2 for each performance; 101 releases January 1-September 30, 2011; 80% for Series.
- Monthly in-house e-Blast.
- Radio: MAX Radio; East Carolina Radio; WUNC Public Radio partnership exchange.
- Website: Series listed as a featured event (links to press release/photo); future facility rental tab.

* Malcolm Fearing joined the meeting at 11:47 AM. *

- Social media: Facebook and Twitter; Facebook page lists all events.
- Ads: One Boat Guide (web); Roanoke Island Restaurant Guide (feature spot); Outer Banks Voice banner ad (web newspaper); *The Coast*; *The Sentinel* newspaper (free press release; online banner ad); planning a banner ad with Outer Banks Visitors Bureau.
- Charter TV: information and photo for each performance.
- Websites: events on several non-profit websites and some paid sites.
- Rack card.
- Poster will potentially be printed again.

Discussion followed regarding marketing for the Performing Arts, with the following being noted:

- Events are posted on about 30 websites (Young).
- Agreement to look into banner ads for the online Free Press on Hatteras Island with Irene Nolan (Young).
- Upon questioning by Joe Bryan, request that exit surveys be examined for inclusion in performance

- programs (Webster); suggestion to including a frank for mailing (White).
- Suggestion to use electronic form surveys, such as Survey Monkey (Crow).
- Question of marketing being done inland in Columbia, Plymouth, and Edenton (Newbold).
 - Agreement to ensure Edenton gets the Performance Series rack card (Young).
- Verification that staff can provide marketing in Hertford (Young).
- Question of marketing being done at Elizabeth City and Edenton Arts Councils; Elizabeth City theatre (White).
- Verification marketing can be done in the Museum of the Albemarle (Young).
- Agreement to talk to Lee Nettles regarding three old panels at Aycock Brown Visitor Center (Sawyer).
- Request to cover Whalebone Visitor Center, Pea Island, and Columbia theatre (White).
 - Verification that Columbia Visitor Center already receives e-Blasts and promotes RIFP (Young).
- Tracking website visitors and those going paperless; members welcomed to distribute information (Sawyer).
- Need to get more beach visitors and downtown Manteo visitors to RIFP; request for suggestions in identifying barriers (Webster).
- Suggestions: advertise in rental packages or on a board at the Hilton; filter email blasts through OBX Tourism Board lists; install simple banners across the two island entrances (Robbins).
 - Issues regarding use of banners (Webster, Newbold, and Young).
 - Request that potential banners be examined as an advertising opportunity (Webster).

Staff Updates

Kim Sawyer

Kim Sawyer presented the following staff update:

- For the first time a ticket will be charged for the Performance Series to reach the budget shortfall.
 - Children's shows: \$5.00 children/adults; other shows: \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 ages 6-12, free ages 5 and younger.
 - Recommend ages 3 and under be free (Hinnant).
- Johnny Walker is retiring as of Monday, October 31, 2011; position tweaked to also do facility rentals.

Commission Recommendations

Chairman Newbold noted one item for information to report to the Commission tomorrow regarding the 2011-2012 Performance Series proposal, with the caveat regarding ECU's \$51K proposal.

Announcements

Kim Sawyer announced that for the past two years this committee has been asked by the Visitors Bureau to pay for half of the NC Symphony performance. Discussion the previous day noted the lack of funds to assist paying for a performance this year. Discussion was held, with the following noted:

- Performing Arts funds paid for the Symphony the past two years; RIC portion was \$14K per year (Sawyer).
- Funds would be available if ECU performance falls through (Brown).
- Friends could look into a potential fundraiser to fund a Symphony performance (Khoury).
- Visitors Bureau feels obligated to broader county; potential new facility on old Windmill Point property (Webster).

Robert Long questioned when this committee should meet and have a comprehensive discussion about its job, considering current staffing and economic changes. Mr. Long noted the need to plan to meet, since the regular committee meeting time is insufficient. Discussion was held as follows:

- Recommend a focus group of this committee and anyone else willing to address commercial issues and how to maximize the facility (Webster).
- Suggestion to set a date and not delay; group can meet and then present in January 2012 (Robbins).
 - Agreement that she and Chairman Newbold will talk and determine a date (Sawyer).
 - First ten days of December 2011 allows time for another meeting (Webster).
 - Agreement to invite Johnny Walker to the meeting; thanks to Mr. Walker for his prior work (Newbold).

The next meeting of the Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee is Friday, January 27, 2012 at 11:00 AM pending approval of the 2012 RIC schedule at the October 28, 2011 RIC meeting.

Adjournment

With no further business, and on motion by Joe Bryan and second by Joanne Williams, the meeting was adjourned at 12:23 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Andrea Hanganu, Administrative Assistant

Upon a vote by the Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee, approved by:

Ellen Newbold, Chair, Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee