

## New York State Council on the Arts

### Council Meeting Minutes

November 7, 2024 1:00PM-2:40 PM

Held at the NYSCA Office: 411 Fifth Avenue, Suite 700, New York, NY 10016

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#### **Council Member Present:**

Monica Angle, Larry Cook, Carolee Fink, Aaron Flagg, Amy Hau, Brian Higgins, Janet Langsam, Eric Latzky, James Lemons, Mino Lora, Laudelina Martinez, David Alan Miller, Peter Pockriss, Mónica Ramírez-Montagut, Catherine Schwoeffermann, Adriana Trigiani, Patrick Willingham.

**In-person quorum present:** Yes

#### **NYSCA Staff in attendance:**

Erika Mallin, Executive Director, NYSCA  
Megan White, Deputy Director of Programs, NYSCA  
Noah Brick, General Counsel, NYSCA  
Abby Adler, Chief of Staff, NYSCA  
Ann Marie Sekeres, Communications Director, NYSCA

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*Council Member Eric Latzky was designated by Executive Chamber to oversee the procedural elements of the meeting.*

*Before the meeting was formally called to order, NYSCA Chief of Staff Abby Adler conducted a roll call of present Council members. The meeting of the NYSCA Council was called to order at approximately 1:00 PM by Council Member Eric Latzky.*

#### **Executive Director Welcome**

Erika Mallin (Executive Director): Welcome to our Council Members and the NYSCA Staff.

Today, Council will review and vote on funding for New York State's support for the following FY2025 opportunities: Support for Organizations, Support for Artists, Targeted Opportunities, and Re grants and Services. We are considering approximately \$62 million in grant making which will be distributed across all 10 regions. Council will also review and ratify the FY2025 panelist rosters.

The application portal for the opportunities we are reviewing today opened June 5, 2024, and closed July 17, 2024, at 4PM. Between September and October, NYSCA staff conducted 60 peer review panels and welcomed 216 panelists from all 10 regions of the state. Thank you to all Council Members who were able to attend one or more panel sessions.

We applaud the incredible cohort of FY2025 peer review panelists for their time, insights, and commitment to this most important part of our grant making process. Our panelists are experts in their field, and we would not be here today without them.

I want to recognize the NYSCA staff led by Deputy Director of Programs Megan White, and Deputy Director of Operations Karen Welch and Chief of Staff Abby Adler. Your leadership has ensured a seamless panel process.

To our Programs and Operations teams, thank you all for everything you do to manage NYSCA's grant making and your thoughtful guidance for our applicants in navigating the application process.

Now moving on to recent NYSCA staffing and Council Updates. On June 6, Governor Hochul appointed new members to our Council who are all with us today: Brian Higgins, Amy Hau, Janet Langsam, Mino (Mee-No) Lora, Peter Pockriss, Monica Ramirez-Montagut (Mont-a- gooT), and Patrick Willingham.

Welcome to all of our new Council Members! We are immensely grateful for your service to the New York State arts and culture sector and look forward to working with you and drawing on your expertise in your capacity as Council Members.

Additionally, I'm so pleased to introduce NYSCA's new General Counsel, NOAH BRICK. Prior to NYSCA, Noah represented arts organizations and served as Counsel to the New York City Council's Finance committee. Welcome, Noah!

I would also like to acknowledge famous Program Director Leanne Tintori, who, after 17 years of service will be retiring this month. Throughout her tenure, Leanne has overseen artistic discipline areas such as Presenting, Dance, and State and Local Partnerships. Her leadership of the Statewide Community Regrant Partner program has fostered a thriving network of arts organizations and artists – strengthening New York's arts and culture sector for decades to come. Please join me in thanking Leanne for her phenomenal work to advance NYSCA - we wish her well in her next chapter!

Our FY2025 Capital Project Opportunity is well underway. This year, NYSCA is offering \$80 million across 3 opportunities: Small and Midsize projects (with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$2 million), Large Projects (with grants ranging from \$2 million to \$10 million), and a new category – the first of its kind - for Mid-Stage/Advanced Design documents. We also eliminated no-match requirements for grants up to \$99,000, expanding opportunities for smaller and mid-size organizations.

The application launched in September and the kick-off webinar welcomed over 400 attendees. Our Capital Projects teams is holding weekly virtual office hours leading up to the deadline of January 14, 2025. Those awards will be reviewed at the March Council Meeting, and we anticipate announcing all capital awards in April 2025.

At this time, I will turn the meeting over to ANN MARIE SEKERES (SEE-CRISS), Director of Communications for updates.

### **Communications Update**

Ann Marie Sekeres (Director of Communications): Building on the great strides we made in our last Communications and Outreach report, I am happy to present the past year's efforts and accomplishments to increase NYSCA's audience and reach new applicants!

While our hardworking NYSCA program staff is visiting arts and organizations throughout New York, Erika herself is traveling all over the state and has already been to organizations in 7 out of the 10 NYS regions with many more to come. She has led roundtable discussions with grantees in Saratoga and Buffalo, has met with arts leaders such as NEA Chair Dr. Rosario Jackson and many of our elected officials statewide.

This outreach and energy have attracted media interest, especially in our Capital Project grantmaking. With groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings, NYSCA funds are supporting projects which directly impact tourism, local economies, and job creation. I've listed highlights of these events over the past year including Governor Hochul at groundbreaking of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare expansion and her announcement of our FY25 Capital Project opportunity.

Now for one of my favorite topics, social media ...

- Although we post about our grantees, our travels and our initiatives, the posts with the most engagement surround grant opportunities – both NYSCA solo grantmaking and with our partner organizations. We are continuing to create posts for our SCR grantmaking partners – many of their applications are open right now – and seeing terrific gains.
- Including, surpassing the 10,000-follower mark on Instagram, tremendous improvement on Linked In and comparing Jan-Oct 2024 to the same period last year: 40% new followers and 50% more impressions.
- Overall, our post reach across channels is up 119% from last year. (The number of people who saw our posts on our Facebook, Instagram, and other accounts)
- In print, we've seen some significant overall arts coverage – including The New York Times' recommendation of a great upstate museum road trip (which covered NYSCA grantees the AKG, Corning Museum of Glass, Johnson Museum at Cornell and the Eastman Museum) and the Wall Street Journal's coverage of how our nonprofit theaters – many of whom are our grantees --- nurture and develop future Broadway productions that become Tony nominees.
- Although historically NYSCA has supported the growth of such institutions as Alvin Ailey, these incredible success stories are still happening today -- such as how three filmmakers supported by NYSCA grantee Women Make Movies were nominated this year for Academy Awards, to Shamel Pitts, a 2024 MacArthur Fellowship awardee and a former NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow. NYSCA grantees include Tony winners, Pulitzer winners, and luminaries of every discipline. NYSCA support marks a priceless seal of approval for so many artists and organizations, and still through 2024, a launchpad for our most influential artists and inspiring projects.
- And lastly our own Executive Director was included on City & State's Art and Culture Power 100 and our new Council Members Patrick Willingham, Brian Higgins, and Amy Hau.

We also are working to make our application process as easy as possible and provide the best customer service that we can for our applicants by providing live webinars, video recordings and office hours. The audience for these webinars have been excellent with --- 3,530 webinar engagements -- 1,621 attendees plus 1,909 recording views

535 attendees for individual office hours for Support for Organizations, Artists, Targeted Opportunities where applicants can ask specific questions in a small group setting over Zoom with NYSCA staff.

NYSCA maintains a Help Desk email ([help@arts.ny.gov](mailto:help@arts.ny.gov)) and phone which has received and answered 1100 inquiries over this grant cycle. Our new Prequal Email hotline, also tallied over 1000 responses to applicants.

Lastly, we always like to share with you the appreciation of our grantees of the work we do at NYSCA. These short social media clips are from the Riverfront Art Gallery at the Yonkers Public Library and the second is from Patchogue Arts Council in Long Island.

Thank you for allowing me to present our efforts to serve, assist, and reach our field through these different channels. We are always striving to increase and expand access to our critical funding.

*A copy of the communications update presentation can be viewed, [here](#).*

### **State of the Arts Overview**

Erika Mallin (Executive Director): The state of the arts sector is that of active and ongoing recovery – we see bright spots, but the industry is tenuous. There are major challenges facing the industry: from decreased revenue to changes to audience habits to the high cost of doing business, and for many this will be the last year of Covid funding that will represent a major cliff or gap in funding. But we also see new and exciting changes; new partnerships formed, new programming and voices and innovative ways of reaching audiences. There is so much innovation happening despite these obstacles and that is why as a public funder we want to respond in real time to support organizations and artists as they face challenges, but also take new risks to ultimately to thrive.

This is why today is such an important and critical moment for our state, for the Governor and the Legislature – all who are committed to supporting the arts and culture sector. And we thank our applicants for their vision and bravery to make and produce art that contributes to the health and wealth of our communities and in an industry that gives back billions of dollars to our economy across the state. Just as importantly, when we invest in the arts we are investing in an educated, critical thinking and democratic society; we are investing in progress and innovation and in what can make us better humans and citizens. With the support of the Governor and Legislature, today we have the privilege, and it is with great joy to review and vote on \$62M grants to over 2000 grantees across the state.

### **FY2025 Panelist Rosters Review**

Megan White (Deputy Director of Programs): NYSCA's primary objective is to provide grants to arts and cultural organizations within the state of New York. Grantmaking is our fundamental mission, and the panel process is the key to our grantmaking engine. It represents the pivotal stage where decisions are reached, and essential information is exchanged.

Each year, NYSCA solicits nominations from NYSCA staff, Council members, current panelists, current grantees, and the general public. This year, we launched a more robust call for nominations – sharing information more broadly on social media through targeted boosted posts – resulting in over 300 new nominations.

Today, we bring forward 457 panelist nominations for Council's review and vote. This includes 193 new panelists and 264 returning panelists. All panel members serve single year terms and may be reappointed up to three years. Once they have served three consecutive terms, panelists must rotate off for one calendar year before returning to service.

Each panel is composed of 5-7 individuals and their collective, complimentary skillsets foster a rigorous and thoughtful review of every application we receive.

Panelists sign confidentiality and affiliation statements in accordance with NYS Ethics Laws prior to reviewing applications. At the top of each meeting they are reminded that they are not present to reach consensus, to judge grant writing, or decide who gets funded; but rather to make sure their scores and commentary align with their critical opinion of the application; along with assurances that while the totality of panelists for each

discipline are available on our website, we never share the subset of individuals deliberating in a meeting nor do we attribute commentary to any specific individual when relaying comments.

To aid with their duties, panelists are provided with a training video, panelist handbook, and regular guidance from staff about how to review and rate applications. In addition to reviewing and rating, Panelists also provide critical commentary for each application that is shared with all applicants by request; giving them the unique opportunity to understand how their peers react to the work they are doing in their studios, organizations, and communities across the state.

*A copy of the FY2025 panelist roster recommendations can be viewed, [here](#).*

### **Executive Session**

*A motion is made and seconded to enter into Executive Session per Section 105(1)(f) of the Open Meetings Law to discuss: "...the ... financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation." The meeting continues in Executive Session for Council members and staff until 2:30PM.*

### **Return to Public Session**

Eric Latzky (Council Member): Welcome back to the public portion of the Council meeting for the New York State Council on the Arts. I am Council Member Eric Latzky. Thank you all for joining us. To remind all in attendance; this is a public meeting that is being recorded.

*At the request Council Member Latzky, a motion is made and seconded to ratify the FY2025 Panelist Rosters. The motion is unanimously approved by all present Council Members.*

*At the request of Council Member Latzky, a motion is made and seconded to approve the FY2025 Support for Organizations, Support for Artists, Targeted Opportunities, and Regrants and Services grant recommendations.*

*Chief of Staff Abby Adler notes the following conflicts for the record:*

- American Symphony Orchestra League (AKA League of American Orchestras): David Alan Miller & Aaron Flagg
- ArtsWestchester: Janet Langsam, Peter Pockriss
- Asian American Arts Alliance: Amy Hau
- Bethany Arts Community: Peter Pockriss
- Bronx Council on the Arts: Janet Langsam
- Buffalo Arts and Technology Center: Monica Angle
- Buffalo Fine Arts Academy: Monica Angle
- Burchfield Penney Art Center: Monica Angle
- CNY Arts: Janet Langsam
- Historic Hudson Valley: Peter Pockriss
- HueCulture: Amy Hau
- Huntington Arts Council: Janet Langsam
- Lake Placid Association of Music Drama and Art: James Lemons
- New York Foundation for the Arts: Janet Langsam
- New York Shakespeare Festival: Patrick Willingham
- Parrish Art Museum: Monica Ramirez-Montagut
- Roxbury Arts Group: Janet Langsam

- The Governors Island Corporation: Carolee Fink

*No additional conflicts are noted by the Council. The motion to approve the FY2025 Support for Organizations, Support for Artists, Targeted Opportunities, and Re grants and Services grant recommendations is unanimously approved by Council Members.*

### **Adjourn**

Erika Mallin (Executive Director): Thank you, Council Members, for your ongoing service and commitment to our state! And a huge thank you to our staff and leadership here with us. And a special thank you to Council Member Eric Latzky for overseeing the procedural elements of this meeting!

Today, Council has approved over \$62 million in vital public funding that will support artists, organizations, and communities across New York State, our 10 regions, and our 62 counties. We thank Governor Hochul and our State Legislators who continue to advocate for the arts and culture sector and who made this funding possible. Our work together ensures that all New Yorkers and visitors will continue to experience and benefit from our dynamic and world-renowned creative community.

Our next meeting will be held the last week of March 2025. The date will be forthcoming shortly. At this meeting which we will review and vote on the FY2025 Capital Project grant recommendations and the Appeals Panel Recommendations. In-person attendance is mandatory to achieve quorum, so please inform us as soon as possible of any conflicts you may have so that we may plan appropriately.

*At the request Council Member Eric Latzky, a motion for the Council to adjourn the meeting is made and seconded. The motion carries unanimously by the Council members. Meeting adjourns at 2:40PM.*

***End of Council Meeting Minutes.***

***All grants approved at this meeting are available on the NYSCA [website](#).***