

**Bend Cultural Tourism Fund
Commission Meeting
April 14, 2016, 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Library Administration Building
507 NW Wall Street, Bend OR 97701
Minutes (Approved at June 10, 2016 meeting)**

In attendance: Brian Wagner; Kevin Barclay; Noelle Fredland; Marsha Stout; Julie Gregory; Cassandra Schindler; Aaron Switzer; Rene' Mitchell; John Flannery; Matt Schiffman; Rod Porsche; Shannon Planchon; Jaime Aguirre

Absent: Amy Mentuck

Guests: Ray Solley, Tower Theatre; Jodie Barram, Tower Theatre Foundation/Visit Bend; Allison Hamm Tower Theatre

Meeting called to order: 1:00 pm

I. Welcome/Introductions

Brian Wagner opened the meeting.

II. Approval of minutes from January 8, 2016 meeting

The Commission members approved the minutes with spelling correction noted.

Update on action from prior meeting:

Evaluation language has not been updated yet because the FY15 language is still current. New evaluation language will be created by July so that new grantees will know the requirements.

Interim financial reporting: In the next grant agreement the BCTF will address an interim accounting period.

Letters of information to board members representative organizations: Planchon noted that she had not done the letters yet. She requested the information for the contacts at the appointing organizations so that letters could go out.

Wagner asked if the Visit Bend had approved the revisions as required the Policies of the Bend Cultural Tourism Commission. Planchon noted that she had forwarded the new information to Doug LaPlaca and he indicated that the board had approved the revisions.

III. Budget Report

Scott Greenstone was unable to attend this meeting; the budget documents provided by Greenstone went through February 29, 2016.

Planchon provided the brief budget update: 2016 tourism is above last year providing increased funds in TRT; BCTF is well ahead of the budgeted revenue and surplus. Greenstone recommended that the Commission currently consider a total award amount of \$150,000 for the 2016 grant cycle. However, the total award amount may be higher.

IV. Update on City of Bend grantmaking

LaPlaca is out of town; Barram asked to make a brief presentation as a Visit Bend board member; she attended the City Council budget meeting. Visit Bend is inclined to support the City reduction \$388,000 from the Visit Bend budget. There is some concern that there may be some legal action from outside parties, so Visit Bend wants to partner with the city and wants to avoid any legal action. The City Council and the Budget Committee voted to continue the conversation and to get some more legal review before making a decision.

Visit Bend and the City will stay in a holding pattern regarding the budget, and keep the conversation going with the City and Visit Board meeting. There will be a meeting next Tuesday [4/19/16] to discuss this further.

Planchon noted that last year we made grant awards in May, and had to forecast with less information. This year we aren't making grant awards until June so funds available to grant will be more accurate. In the meantime the direction is to stay with the budget plan of \$150,000.

Wagner asked if the BCT Funds were separate from the \$388,000 funds being discussed. Barram said the board checked the ballot language to see if it specifically called out the cultural tourism funding, but it did not – only the fire department and public safety. So Cultural Tourism dollars are part of the Visit Bend overall budget, therefore any action would come back to the Visit Bend board. Wagner asked if there would be a cut to the grant awards for this round. Barram said that she thought not – that she would advocate for the grant amount budgeted this year not be reduced. Wagner reminded Barram that our next meeting is June 10, and is for the grant application review and award.

Schiffman asked about the ability to carry funds forward into the next fiscal year. Barram will ask Visit Bend about a board commitment to keep the dollars in the budget line.

V. Report on Meet Up:

The marketing committee: Cassondra Schindler, Renee' Mitchell and Noelle Fredland have been serving as the marketing subcommittee. In trying to promote the work of the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund it was decided to have an informational meet up, March 10, 2016. This was pretty short notice, but we wanted to promote the grant application deadline. Visit Bend hosted us in the lobby and we had over 20 people show up. Prior grantees were invited to make brief presentations – sharing their story of success with the support of the fund. Ray Solley and Erin Felder made a great presentation on A Cappella; Todd Looby talked about BendFilm; Linda Orcoletto talked about the soon to open "Winter Comes: Oregon's Nordic Ski History"; and Dawn Boone from A6 spoke about the success of the Edward Curtis exhibit and community collaborations.

Schindler noted that we should get in front of this in the future – to get in front of the stories, showing the impact. Trying to build up the interest in the fund earlier – providing information and inspiration. Our next one will be planned farther out, and we are thinking about a taproom or something open and informal.

Additionally, the BCTF Commission should look at ways to document the projects, these should be created to start getting out the story to people that can't attend one time events. We need to create our own channel to post on the Visit Bend site. Planchon needs to check the budget for the production of more stories. Need to identify a location for the hosting of the documentation. In times of challenge, we need to be able to tell the stories quickly. Need stories that are more dynamic – more than statistics. The presentations were impressive.

Fredland will be unavailable for a few months, but will step back in after the June meeting.

Planchon introduced the Visit Bend statistics, and confirmed that the Commissioners were aware of the resource. She reiterated that the fund was an economic impact activity, and the room night numbers were the numbers we are trying to increase.

VI. Information: FY16 Grant Applications received

List attached – ten applications were received, with requests totaling \$258,816. Last year we received 17 applications, funded nine. Seven of the 10 on this list were funded last year. There was some discussion on why we don't allow more than one application from an organization. Collaborations are allowed and encouraged, however the Commission could consider allowing organizations to apply for more than one application. The Commission should review its policies after two years of funding to see if we are meeting the intent of the program. The Commission should have an annual review of policies, beginning at the fall meeting.

For review in the fall:

- Multiple applications from one organization
- Multiple application deadlines
- Grant amount request

VII. Grant Review Planning

The Executive Committee (two of the four members) met to discuss the revisions that might improve the grant review process in June. First, a larger room has been booked so that panelists can update scores and comments.

ACTION: Schindler moved, and Stout seconded that the Commission will not have any public testimony during the panel meeting. Discussion: the prior panel review and the follow up testimony did not impact the decisions, and the process was pretty difficult. **Motion passed.**

Information only: Conflict of interest policy is reviewed and the Commission is reminded that we have reviewed the policy and decided that it is appropriate. However, the Commissioners have been too restrictive in their interpretation of conflict. Appearance of conflict is worth stating, but not abstaining from the vote. Some sponsorship could be a conflict because of the marketing value.

If a Commissioner declares a conflict of interest, the Commissioner may not represent the organization at the table. There will need to be another representative from the organization.

ACTION: Outside panelists. Because there are only 10 applications, the Commission has tabled this discussion as not worth the cost to the impact.

The Commission is still not comfortable making award recommendations until the applications have been reviewed. This year, each grant award will have to be made separately. Three options:

- 1) Making it blind. This wouldn't be effective because the summaries would make it clear who the organization is.
- 2) Having a subset of the commission review, and then the other part make the award.
- 3) The Commission can make a decision now to fund the top performing organizations at 100% until the funds are expended. There is some discussion about asking for more than the Commission might think reasonable. The opportunity to score the organization on the request is in the capacity section on how realistic the request is. The flexibility is important, if we had funded only 100% last year we only would have funded about three, which some commissioners would consider a fail. Should we consider funding only organization's that get 80% or higher? The challenge with that is the variance in scores – if we provided a rubric we might be able to move towards that. Is it possible for the panelist to include the recommendation they would make? Are the funds supposed to only be for marketing? No, they are intended, as well, to support the cultural institutions of Bend. The question was asked if there any organizations that couldn't do all they wanted to do because they did not receive full funding. Some discussion on a survey response about not receiving full funding required the organization to go out and raise money. In the end the intent is to bring people to Bend for overnight stays, and people will come for good, high quality projects.
- 4) Concern with giving the top three, for example, full funding is that we might further reduce the amount of applications next year.
- 5) Planchon will look into building the award recommendation into the panel scoring process so that we can start with an average grant recommendation.

ACTION: Switzer moved; second by Schiffman - When the grants have been reviewed the full Commission may come up with a proposal as a group regarding how many organizations we want to fund. Once that has been decided each grant award will be recommended and a Commissioner who has declared a conflict of interest may not speak to an individual grant award.

Motion approved.

VIII. FY15 Grant updates

Planchon provided FY15 grantee updates, final report information will be emailed to Commissioners.

IX. Public Comment

Hamm, Tower Theatre, wants to note that the fund requires a high bar and that it would be important to not lower the bar too much. As an applicant who works hard to make it right, she is concerned that other folks are able to make major revisions. Hamm also is willing to volunteer as a mentor for other organizations, helping them to prepare a successful project.

Solley, Tower Theatre: even though this is a model for the state, this is a local grant fund in terms of who you are funding he would hope that as local groups are seeking funding for local groups that with \$145,000 all went to partial grants made the deficit of the gap was \$147,000 which made them go to local organizations to raise the gap.

X. Commissioner Comments (15 minutes)

Switzer remarked that he was impressed with the conversation about the funding process, noting the improvement in process ideas from last year.

Wagner wants the field to know that the Arts and Economic Prosperity Study, by the Americans for the Arts– Arts and Cultural Association (ACA) is helping to participate in one of 12 studies that are happening around Oregon now. These are intended to show good information on the impact of arts and cultural activities. This will give an excellent overview statewide. Please participate in the intercept surveys when requested, as well as the organizational surveys that you might receive. This will make the information more important to the users. Participation and financial information will be sent back to each of the 12 areas, providing good action and advocacy material. This area also has a regional solutions office run by Annette Liebe, and they are running a study on where the “low hanging” fruit might be for improving the economic outlook. They will try to streamline the studies, so that they can reduce potential redundancy.

XI. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm