

**Minutes
Council Meeting
July 10, 2025
9:00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS: Chair Cohen, Mr. Astorino, Senator Bartolotta, Senator Cappelletti, Representative Ciresi, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Gunderson, Representative Labs, Judge Morgan, Mr. Stull, Ms. Vilayphonh, Mr. Warfield

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Mr. Gabel, Mr. Parks, Ms. Zaborney

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Blischke, Executive Director; Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director; Christopher Duerr, Program Coordinator & Grants Specialist; Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning; Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration; Norah Johnson, Director of External Affairs; Laura Kline, Executive Assistant; Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector; Sarah Merritt, Director of Creative Communities; Dana Payne, Director of Capacity Building and Creative Asset Development; Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services; and Ian Rosario, Director of Arts Organizations & Arts Programs & Grants Liaison

GUESTS PRESENT: Addie Abelson, Chief Counsel.

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER: Karl Blischke welcomed those in attendance and informed them that the meeting would be recorded for the administrative purpose of minute taking. Mr. Blischke then turned the meeting over to Chair Cohen.

ROLL CALL:

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established.

ITEM 2: REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Cohen asked if the PCA received any requests for public comments. There were no requests for public comment.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Chair Cohen reminded the Council of the PCA's Conflict of Interest Policy.

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chair Cohen noted that the March 5, 2025, meeting minutes would be corrected to show that Mr. Stull was in attendance.

Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the corrected March 5, 2025, meeting minutes and the April 28, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the minutes. Judge Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEMS 4: Recommendation for Consent of Agenda Items:

Mr. Blischke explained that this recommendation is for consent agenda items that Council acts on each year. Blischke stated that this recommendation authorizes the staff to submit applications for which state arts agencies are eligible. Blischke also said that it authorizes the staff to implement contracts and grants based on actions that Council takes and approves, and it also authorizes staff to appoint panelists to serve on review panels.

Mr. Blischke explained that this request is for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation.

Ms. Stull made a motion to approve the recommendations. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 5: Recommendation for Capitalization Pilot Project

Dana Payne, Director of Capacity Building and Creative Asset Development

Ms. Payne reported that in March 2025, Council approved guidelines for accepting letters of interest to participate in the Capitalization Pilot Program. Ms. Payne provided a brief overview of the project and explained that it was developed to serve as an extension of the capacity building support continuum provided by the Strategies for Success Program.

Ms. Payne reported that she received 12 letters of interest which were reviewed by a three-member advisory committee. Payne provided a brief description of the criteria that were utilized by the advisory committee:

Ms. Payne stated the following top two organizations were recommended to participate in this pilot are listed below:

1. **Chester Cultural Arts and Technology Center** located in Chester City/Delaware County. Ms. Payne stated that this organization is focused on reducing poverty through arts, technology, and education, with programs in STEAM and partnerships with local universities, pursuing facility growth, social enterprise, and philanthropic support.
2. **Mexican Cultural Center (MCC) – Philadelphia/Philadelphia County:** Ms. Payne stated that this organization promotes Mexican culture through major festivals and partnerships with Philadelphia institutions and that its strategy centers on expanding corporate partnerships and private funding.

Ms. Goldberg asked whether organizations typically progress through the 3 levels of the Strategies for Success program or exit earlier. Ms. Payne explained the program is structured in three levels focused on capacity building and added that organizations may advance as they meet eligibility requirements, but those that no longer qualify cannot continue. Payne stated that current applicants have advanced through prior stages.

Ms. Payne requested Council approval of \$100,000 to support two organizations referenced above. Payne stated that each will receive \$50,000 annually, disbursed into two installments, for three years. She noted organizations must meet annual goals, provide a 2:1 match in the second year, and a 3:1 match in the third year.

Ms. Goldberg sought clarification on the total award per organization, which Ms. Payne provided.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council meeting.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 6: Recommendations for Entry Track Funding

Ian Rosario, Director of AOAP and Grants Liaison

Chair Cohen stated that she is aware of the following conflicts: Ms. Goldberg for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Representative Ciresi for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Mr. Stull for the Bucks County Symphony Society.

Mr. Rosario provided a brief overview of the Entry Track program and outlined the program guidelines and requirements.

Mr. Rosario reported that staff received 146 eligible applications, an increase from last year, and explained that these were divided and reviewed by six panel groups. Rosario stated that based on panel scores and feedback, staff recommends funding 59 of those 146 applications, totaling \$295,000. Mr. Rosario added that each entry applicant will receive \$5,000.

Mr. Rosario stated that the panel review scores are listed in the memo in the Council Book and provided a brief explanation of how the scores were assessed.

Chair Cohen asked if there were any questions, and hearing none, she made a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book except for the conflicts of interest. Chair Cohen asked to let the record show that Council Members Ciresi, Goldberg and Stull did not make a motion, second a motion, participate in any discussion or vote on the recommendation with which these Council Members have a conflict.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Gunderson seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

Chair Cohen then asked for a motion to approve the recommendation for the grants with which the Councils members Ciresi, Goldberg and Stull have a conflict of interest. Chair Cohen asked to let the record show that these Council members did not make this motion, second this motion, participate in any discussion of this motion or vote on this motion.

Senator Bartolotta made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 7: Recommendations for the Arts in Education (AIE) Division

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Chair Cohen stated that she is aware of the following conflict of interest: Mr. Parks for ArtsQuest. Mr. Blischke asked to let the record show that since Mr. Parks is not in attendance, he will not be participating in this motion in any way, so this motion can be carried out in one vote.

Ms. Dunlap reported that the FY 2025/2026 Arts in Education Partnership funding request structure remains consistent with previous years; however, there is a slight variation in total amount is due to several differences that are listed below.

1. Ms. Dunlap stated that the Capital Area Intermediate Unit will be taking over the management of Poetry Out Loud programming through their network of IUs across the state.
2. Ms. Dunlap reported that we will not be hosting an all partnerships meeting in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and explained that previously each partner was allocated \$1,000 to attend that two-day meeting.
3. Ms. Dunlap stated that in Fiscal Year 2025-2026, there will be no Arts in Education partner in Region 13 (ArtsPath/Indiana University.) Dunlap explained that this is due to the university's capacity and budgetary considerations.

Ms. Dunlap stated that staff is requesting approval of \$1,415,076 in funding for the AIE (Arts in Education) Division for FY 2025-2026. She explained that the funding will support AIE Partnership activities, including \$550,288 for residency support and \$868,288 for program administration.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendation. Judge Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 8: Recommendations for Funding Parameters for Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) Partnership and Regranting Programs

Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector

Ms. Lovell provided a brief overview of the PPA Partnership and regranting program.

Ms. Lovell provided some examples of positive outcomes from the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 cycle, including an increase in participation and added that the program has reached 61 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Ms. Lovell stated that 80 of those grantees were first time recipients and added that this demonstrates the expanded reach and improved accessibility of the grant program. She also pointed out that there were numerous leadership transitions within the partnership organizations, both at the executive leadership level and with regional managers that we work with directly.

Ms. Lovell reported that the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program is almost complete in distributing what the Council authorized and is on target to serve 309 grantees, bringing the program total to 1,306 individuals served. Ms. Lovell also indicated information from final reports showed that 73% of the grantees reported seeing an increase in revenue after receiving the CEA grant, with many citing equipment upgrades and improved marketing as key investments in usage of the funds.

Ms. Lovell reminded Council that following their April 2025 decision, Berks Arts was removed as a PPA Program Partner for Region 7, which is Berks, Lancaster and Schuylkill Counties. Ms. Lovell explained that to continue continuity and services for Region 7, staff will manage the CSFF Program internally for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, while the CEA Program for Region 7 will be temporarily paused for that region.

Ms. Lovell directed Council to the memo which breaks down, per region, where the proposed funding will go for each of the partnership organizations. Ms. Lovell stated that the total for the PPA Program for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is \$2,863,755.

Chair Cohen asked if the organizations are required to turn in an accounting for the end of each year for the administrative funds. Ms. Lovell stated that they do have to provide that information in their final report.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as stated in the Council meeting materials.

Mr. Stull made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Gunderson seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 9: Recommendations for Updates to the Creative Sector Flex Fund Grantee Applications for Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector

Ms. Lovell stated that this first recommendation in this Council memo is for the proposed updates to FY 2025–2026 Creative Sector Flex Fund (CSFF) criteria.

Ms. Lovell reported that following feedback from Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) organizations and grantees, staff has proposed revisions to the CSFF application criteria for FY 2025–2026. Lovell stated that concerns were raised regarding recent federal mandates. Ms. Lovell indicated that the proposed changes aim to maintain program goals while improving clarity for applicants and partners.

Ms. Lovell listed the current evaluation criteria. Ms. Lovell then explained the proposed new categories and framing which are outlined below:

1. Community Value
2. Participation and Engagement Value
3. Stewardship Value

Ms. Lovell indicated that the recommendations will include the addition of eight new application questions that are designed to guide applicants in preparing responses aligned with the revised criteria. She explained that these will contain an emphasis on narrative clarity and alignment with organizational practices.

Ms. Lovell stated that staff recommends Council approval of the FY 2025–2026 CEA Program funding update and the administrative and program allotments per partner organization for the upcoming grant year.

Ms. Goldberg asked if PCA is always trying to reach new audiences. Ms. Lovell stated that staff is always working to reach as many audiences as possible with this funding.

Ms. Goldberg said that she appreciates the question because as it is worded, creates a greater focus on the importance of audience reach.

Chair Cohen added it that allows grantees to feel better on how they address that issue.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendation. Judge Morgan seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 10: Recommendations Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Dana Payne, Director of Capacity Building and Creative Asset Development

Ms. Payne reported that the Folk and Traditional Arts Partnership includes 10 regional organizations serving 49 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. She stated that all 10 of these existing organizations have applied to continue as partners for the FY 2025–2026 program period.

Ms. Payne stated that staff received 45 apprenticeship applications and that a five-member advisory panel met virtually on June 11–12, 2025, to review and score the applications. Ms. Payne indicated that the panel recommended 30 apprenticeship projects for funding.

Ms. Payne noted that supporting materials in the Council Book detail the applications submitted, recommended and non-recommended projects, county representation, assessment scores, and partnership service areas.

Ms. Payne stated that staff recommends Council approve \$264,000 in funding: \$160,000 for the 10 partnership organizations, \$92,000 for the 30 apprenticeship projects, and \$12,000 to Community Partnerships RC&D for administering the apprenticeship awards.

Chair Cohen said she enjoyed reading about the apprenticeships listed in the Council Memo and appreciated the variety of the applicants.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council material.

Mr. Stull made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 11: Recommendations for Creative Communities Initiative

Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities

Ms. Merritt provided an overview of the Creative Communities Initiative, which provides multi-year funding for communities to do arts-based work for their community as well as economic development work. Ms. Merritt also provided information about the program requirements.

Ms. Merritt stated that staff is recommending Council approval of continued funding for the current 16 Creative Communities projects which are listed in the memo.

Merritt reported that a new applicant is also being recommended for approval: Freedmen's Arts Alliance in Chester, Delaware County. Ms. Merritt stated that this group has previously received Creative Cultivation Grants and has successfully developed projects in Chester's downtown corridor. Merritt added that other state agencies are considering collective investment in Chester.

Ms. Merritt reminded Council of the six new communities joined after the March 2025 Council meeting.

- Four communities will graduate this year (second graduating class). Ms. Merritt shared highlights of their projects.
- Updates were provided on last year's four graduates, who will present at the October Council meeting.

Chair Cohen expressed support for interagency participation in Chester and asked about the Indigo Mill, which Ms. Merritt described as an adaptive reuse project.

Ms. Goldberg praised program growth, requested details about graduating organizations, and asked about Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocate’s project (Norse Square) which Ms. Merritt provided.

Mr. Astorino requested assistance from Ms. Merritt to arrange a visit with Hill CDC.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as proposed in the Council material.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Astorino seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 12: Recommendations for Creative Catalysts and Updates to the 2025–2026 Creative Catalyst Guidelines

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap provided a brief overview of the Creative Catalysts Program and outlined the program requirements.

Dunlap the presented the following recommendations for Creative Catalyst support, which are the first for Fiscal Year 2025–2026.

Applicant:	<u>Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU19)</u>	Proposal	<u>Career Readiness for the Creative Sector</u>
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Ms. Dunlap reported that NEIU19 is partnering with Career Ready Region 7 (Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties) to develop a career readiness event focused on the creative sector. Dunlap explained that this event, targeting middle school students, their teachers, and caregivers, aligns with the Department of Education’s career readiness goals.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this event is scheduled for March 2026 and added that the one-day expo will connect students and educators with creative industry professionals and businesses. Dunlap reported that if awarded, Creative Catalyst funding will support this pilot event, covering artist and venue fees, guest speakers, collateral, and development of an initial website. She added that this site is intended to evolve into a statewide online resource for exploring creative careers.

Request: \$5,000

Recommendation: \$5,000

Applicant:	<u>South Fayette Township School District</u>	Proposal:	<u>SHOUT (Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment) Uncommon Conference</u>
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Ms. Dunlap reported that the SHOUT program at South Fayette Township School District hosted its fifth annual Uncommon Conference in November 2024 and welcomed over 450 participants from 28 schools across six counties in Western PA. Dunlap stated that this student-led experience integrates the arts, wellness, leadership development, and social connection. Dunlap provided an overview of the results of the Shout program.

Ms. Dunlap stated that currently, the SHOUT program is expanding beyond Southwestern Pennsylvania with the establishment of a new chapter in Octorara School District in Lancaster

County. Dunlap explained that the Creative Catalyst Grant will support the expansion and enhancement of the Uncommon Conference.

Ms. Dunlap reported that if awarded, Creative Catalyst funds will support the professionals who train and work alongside the students during the Uncommon Conference, in areas such as stage production teams, videographers, media mentors, and creative facilitators. Ms. Dunlap stated that funds will also be used to develop a printed SHOUT starter guide, editable planning tools, a slide deck of student-led success stories and documentation of the conference and process. She added that items will help interested schools across the Commonwealth begin their journey with the SHOUT program.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: ArtsQuest

Proposal: ArtsQuest Professional Development Series

Ms. Dunlap reported that ArtsQuest plans to pilot a brand-new project to improve the cultural and educational vitality of Pennsylvania’s communities through the arts. Ms. Dunlap stated that beginning in fall 2025, ArtsQuest will host quarterly professional development sessions in person at the ArtsQuest Center that will also be streamed to engage an online audience. Ms. Dunlap stated that these sessions will also support patrons who have hearing impairments, each session will include an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.

Ms. Dunlap provided an overview of each of the proposed sessions:

- Fall 2025: Public Art (with Mural Arts Institute).
- Winter 2026: Art Therapy & Expressive Arts (with certified therapists).
- Spring 2026: Topic chosen by attendees.
- Late Spring/Summer 2026: Culminating 4-hour community artmaking session.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the program will be marketed statewide via online platforms and locally through partnerships.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania (TCCP) **Proposal:** GENERATE 2025

Ms. Dunlap reported that the Technology Council of Central Pennsylvania (TCCP) will launch GENERATE 2025, an AI Art Contest celebrating the intersection of technology and creativity. Dunlap explained that this is open to artists and AI enthusiasts across TCCP’s 22-county service area and stated that the no-cost contest invites original AI-generated visual artwork.

Ms. Dunlap stated that this contest aims to highlight AI’s creative potential, connect the tech and arts communities, and increase visibility for local artists. Dunlap reported that the theme is: “*We believe that bringing together the technology community unleashes unimaginable capacity for Central Pennsylvania to thrive.*”

Ms. Dunlap stated that GENERATE 2025 promotes ethical AI use, requiring participants to disclose tools, respect IP, and avoid imitating others’ styles. She explained that entries will be judged

through public voting and a panel based on creativity, originality, craftsmanship, and use of AI. Dunlap added that finalists will be recognized online and at TCCP's 2025 Holiday Event.

Request: \$5,000

Recommendation: \$5,000

Applicant: Astrobotic Foundation Dba Moonshot Museum **Proposal:** Cosmic Creation: Where Art Meets Space

Ms. Dunlap reported on the Moonshot Museum's Cosmic Creations program that integrates art into STEAM by engaging students in creative projects linked to real aerospace challenges. Dunlap stated that students learn artistic skills such as drawing, graphic design, and visual storytelling to explore how creativity supports innovation in the space industry. Dunlap explained that this program highlights the role of artists in Pennsylvania's aerospace sector, including visualizing data, communicating research, and imagining future technologies.

Ms. Dunlap stated that Cosmic Creations collaborates with artists, schools, and community organizations to expand access to arts-integrated STEAM education and support the creative economy. She added that seven partner organizations are confirmed across the state—including in Erie, Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Lancaster, and Harrisburg—with a focus on serving Title I and underrepresented youth and connecting them to creative careers in aerospace.

Request: \$15,000

Recommendation: \$15,000

Applicant: Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation **Proposal:** Next Stage PA

Ms. Dunlap reported on *Next Stage PA*, a statewide artist development initiative offering a four-stop performance tour across Pennsylvania, combined with training in branding, marketing, legal readiness, and logistics. Administered by The Chamber Foundation of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, the program connects emerging artists with venues, mentors, and creative businesses.

Ms. Dunlap explained that artists receive stipends, perform in various community settings, and reinvest in local services, advancing both their careers and local economies. She added that the program emphasizes practical skills for long-term sustainability in the creative sector.

Dunlap indicated that a local band call will be issued soon, with venues selecting three artists for the pilot and added that confirmed venues include Zoellner Arts Center (Bethlehem), The Appell Center (York), the Rose Garden (Bethlehem), and Sellersville Theater (Sellersville).

Ms. Dunlap stated that if funded, the program will support artist fees, training, promotion, venue costs, and production—positioning *Next Stage PA* as a scalable model for artist entrepreneurship and regional collaboration.

Request: \$15,000

Recommendation: \$15,000

Applicant: Jewish Heritage Programs **Proposal:** Old City Jewish Art Center (OCJAC) – “Intersections”

Ms. Dunlap reported on *Intersections*, a statewide hybrid initiative by OCJAC exploring the intersection of art, religion, and community to promote inclusive outreach and cultural understanding. Dunlap stated that the project will engage artists, religiously affiliated galleries, and culturally specific institutions across Pennsylvania.

Ms. Dunlap explained that the key components include quarterly webinars featuring artists, curators, and religious leaders; a statewide outreach campaign; and a hybrid public symposium with a roundtable of experts discussing inclusive engagement strategies.

Dunlap stated that promotional materials will be created by artists and shared through partnerships with arts councils, community groups, and universities.

All events will be recorded, captioned, and made available online to support ongoing access and resource-sharing.

Request: \$6,000

Recommendation: \$6,000

Mr. Astorino indicated that he might have a possible conflict of interest with the South Fayette School District. Mr. Blischke stated that if this may be a conflict or perception of conflict of interest, he suggests that Mr. Astorino recuse himself from voting on this action item.

Ms. Goldberg commented on the importance of the Next Stage PA Initiative, emphasizing the need for young artists and musicians to understand how to protect their intellectual property and stated that she is happy that this issue is being addressed, as she has seen young musicians taken advantage of due to lack of legal support.

Ms. Dunlap agreed and added that one of the programs that the group wants to focus on is contract management.

Chair Cohen commented that she is pleased that AI is being addressed and said it will be very interesting to see how that turns out.

Chair Cohen asked for questions, and hearing note, she made a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book except for the conflict of interest. Chair Cohen asked to let the record show that Council Member Astorino did not make a motion, second a motion, participate in any discussion or vote on the recommendation with which these Council Members have a conflict.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

Chair Cohen then asked for a motion to approve the recommendation for the grant with which Council member Astorino has a conflict of interest. Chair Cohen asked to let the record show that these Council members did not make this motion, second this motion, participate in any discussion of this motion or vote on this motion.

Mr. Warfield made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

UPDATES TO GUIDELINES

Ms. Dunlap provided an overview of the proposed changes to the updates to the FY 2025-2026 Creative Catalyst Guidelines that are outlined in the Council Book. She explained that these updates are in response to the Council's new strategic framework and areas of opportunities.

Ms. Dunlap reported updates to key sections, including an Overview now aligned with the five strategic plan focus areas, a reduction in eligible administrative expenses from 25% to 20%, and revised funding review criteria prioritizing applications that best align with and advance Pennsylvania Creative Industries' areas of opportunity.

Chair Cohen asked if there were any questions, and hearing none, made a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 13: Recommendation for Request for Proposal for Promotion of Creative Industries

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap presented a new opportunity titled PA Creative Industries Promotion and Activation Projects, aimed at increasing visibility and public engagement with Pennsylvania's creative industries.

Dunlap reported that staff recommends approval of the guidelines for a Statewide Services RFP to support multi-year projects that promote Pennsylvania's creative industries to national or international audiences. She explained that up to three proposals will be funded, with each project lasting 24–36 months and including at least one activation per year.

Ms. Dunlap stated that proposals are due September 5, with a 1:1 match required for awards up to \$100,000 and added that recommendations to Council will be presented at the October meeting.

Chair Cohen stated that she hopes the September 5th deadline will be enough time and asked if organizations are already aware that this initiative is happening.

Ms. Dunlap stated that if Council approves the recommendation, the staff will immediately begin promoting the opportunity.

Ms. Gunderson asked if there are specific areas that staff is hoping will apply.

Ms. Dunlap stated that there are no specific areas other than promoting Pennsylvania creative businesses and industries. She added that staff is open to seeing what people are thinking.

Ms. Goldberg stated that this is long overdue and added that in the past, Council has discussed the importance of marketing and promoting the creative sector.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council Book.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Stull seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 14: Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Grants Budget

Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration

Ms. Gabriele reviewed the FY 2025–2026 grants budget proposal as outlined in the Council memo. She noted that the Governor's \$9.5 million column reflects the proposed state appropriation, which is still pending legislative approval. The FY 2024–2025 budget is included for reference.

Ms. Gabriele explained that many of the budget line items relate to programs and recommendations presented and acted on in other sections of the Council Book.

Ms. Gabriele reported that the Statewide Creative Catalysts and Statewide Services line items represent grants to be approved at future Council meetings as applications are received. She noted these amounts may increase with cancelled or returned grants or pending waiver approval. Staff expects an update on the waiver balances in August.

Ms. Gabriele stated that the awarding of all grants is subject to applicants entering into grant award agreements as well as compliance with the state's terms and conditions, the state's Contractor Responsibility Program, and certain required representations and warranties made by awardees.

Mr. Blischke reiterated the important point made earlier that at this time, all the budget recommendations are pending and subject to passage of the state budget. He added that should there be any significant changes due to the budget, staff will come back to Council and address those at a subsequent meeting.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council material.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 15 Chair's Report

Susan Cohen, Chair

Chair Cohen thanked staff members for their hard work and added that reading about the activities and the work with panels shows a depth of interest, enthusiasm and dedication. She also thanked staff for making excellent recommendations for the creative sector.

Chair Cohen reported that at the December meeting, Council authorized staff to accept proposals for public-private partnership project administration. In March, staff recommended the Team PA Foundation as a partner, and Council approved a grant for the organization.

Cohen announced the first pilot project resulting from this partnership: *Powering the Arts*, a program developed with PECO and Team PA to support grassroots artist development. The program provides funding to arts organizations in Philadelphia's five-county region and parts of York County.

Cohen noted the program aims to expand access to the arts. Applicants must assess their audiences and develop strategies to engage new participants, strengthening connections between arts programs and local communities.

Chair Cohen stated that in 2026, Pennsylvania cities will participate in the America250 celebration, the FIFA World Cup, the MLB Allstars game, and the NFL Draft, which should draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to the commonwealth.

Chair Cohen stated that the NFL draft is expected to draw 750,000 visitors to Pittsburgh. She also reported that Vice Chair Alaquiva's media company, Ya' Momz House, was selected by the NFL's local business procurement program, to provide media and creative services for this event

Cohen stated that the America 250 will provide a moment for the creative sector to shine and explained that the staff is expected to receive some extra funding from NEA to support artistic

residency projects related to celebration. Cohen added that staff will provide recommendations to Council regarding these funds at a subsequent meeting.

ITEM 16: Executive Director's Report (1:32:45)

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke provided updates on recent Council and staff activities:

Mr. Blischke visited Camp Security in York, PA for the America250 dedication, noting its historical significance as a Revolutionary War POW site and the location where the Articles of Confederation were created.

Blischke reported that we sponsored a second creative industries event in Philadelphia, hosted by REC Philly and emceed by Emma Alaquiva. The event successfully showcased creatives working at the intersection of arts and technology.

Mr. Blischke stated that he, Chair Cohen, and Ms. Payne attended the ImpactPHL event, a gathering of investors and funders focused on socially impactful investments. Blischke emphasized the need to position the creative sector as a viable investment opportunity. Chair Cohen added that there are funding opportunities available, and we must find ways to attract investment into creative industries.

Mr. Blischke provided an update on the strategic plan and explained that staff are developing an action plan, to be presented at a subsequent Council meeting.

Mr. Blischke unveiled the new Pennsylvania Creative Industries logo: "*Creative Industries powered by PA Council on the Arts*". The Agency is working with Commonwealth Creative Services to develop cohesive branding and collateral materials.

Mr. Blischke stated that Ms. Doughty is conducting a comprehensive review of creative sector policies at the state, national, and international levels, and will present information at the October Council meeting.

Mr. Blischke reported that a Special Council Meeting is scheduled for late August.

Mr. Blischke thanked Council for their hard work and engagement and willingness to work not only on our new plan but in helping to create a vibrant and robust creative industry in Pennsylvania.

ITEM 17: Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 10:48

**Minutes
Special Council Meeting
August 28, 2025
9:00 a.m.
Virtual Meeting**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS: Chair Cohen, Vice Chair Alaquiva, Mr. Astorino, Senator Bartolotta, Senator Cappelletti, Representative Ciresi, Mr. Gabel, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Gunderson, Representative Labs, Judge Morgan, Mr. Parks, Mr. Stull, Mr. Warfield

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Ms. Vilayphonh, Ms. Zaborney

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Karl Blischke, Executive Director; Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director; Christopher Duerr, Program Coordinator & Grants Specialist; Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning; Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration; Norah Johnson, Director of External Affairs; Laura Kline, Executive Assistant; Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector; Sarah Merritt, Director of Creative Communities; Dana Payne, Director of Capacity Building and Creative Asset Development; Seth Poppy, Director of Data Systems & Creative Services; and Ian Rosario, Director of Arts Organizations & Arts Programs & Grants Liaison

GUESTS PRESENT: Addie Abelson, Chief Counsel.

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER: Karl Blischke welcomed those in attendance and informed them that the meeting would be recorded for the administrative purpose of minute taking. Mr. Blischke then turned the meeting over to Chair Cohen.

ROLL CALL:

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke called the roll. A quorum was established.

ITEM 2: REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Cohen asked if the PCA received any requests for public comments. There were no requests for public comment.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Chair Cohen reminded the Council of the PCA's Conflict of Interest Policy.

ITEM 3: Recommendations for Program Descriptions

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

Mr. Blischke stated that this action item is for Council to approve recommendations to certain program descriptions. Blischke reported that in response to recent federal mandates, as well as updated federal contractual compliance requirements, staff recommends that Council approve revisions to the program descriptions for the following

initiatives: Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator, Creative Business Loan Fund; and Strategies for Success

Blischke explained that these revisions, which are outlined in the Council memo, reflect the current descriptions as well as the proposed revised descriptions. Blischke stated that the revised guidelines reflect the recently updated compliance requirements while maintaining the purpose and description of the program and our ability to serve all of Pennsylvania well.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council material.

Ms. Goldberg made a motion to approve the recommendations. Mr. Warfield seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 4: Recommendations for AOAP Funding

Ian Rosario, Director of AOAP and Grants Liaison

Mr. Rosario provided a brief overview of Arts Organization and Arts Programs (AOAP) and stated that since 2020, the Council has implemented the same funding strategy and stated that this year, there is a slight shift in that staff recommends that Council implement a new strategy in which applicants generating \$2 million or less in revenue will be awarded \$18,000 and applicants generating more than \$2 million in revenue will be receiving \$13,000.

Mr. Rosario also reported that staff also recommends the previously approved policies, which are outlined in the Council memo and are listed below:

- No match required
- Funds may be used for capital expenditures tied to operations and artistic mission
- Grant agreements must be signed within 45 days, or the award is forfeited

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council material.

Judge Morgan made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Goldberg seconded the motion. Motion carried, none abstained or opposed.

ITEM 5: Recommendations for Strategies for Success

Dana Payne, Director of Capacity Building and Creative Asset Development

Ms. Goldberg indicated that she may have conflict with one of the grantees and stated that she will be abstaining from voting on this recommendation.

Ms. Payne provided an overview of the *Strategies for Success* program, noting that 58 applications were received this year, with 57 reviewed due to one being incomplete.

Ms. Payne stated that two panel reviews were held: the first on June 17–18 for the intermediate and advanced levels, and the second on August 12 for the basic level.

Ms. Payne reported that, given the existing grant budget and unexpected application volume, award amounts were reduced. She explained that details are outlined in the Council Book memo.

Ms. Payne directed Council to page 15 of the Council Book, noting that *Culture Trust Greater Philadelphia on behalf of United We Heal Film Festival* is listed in bold, but the legal applicant is *United We Heal Film Festival*, which is not using a fiscal sponsor.

Ms. Payne stated that staff recommends Council approve \$621,000 in total funding: \$275,000 for advanced, \$224,000 for intermediate, and \$122,000 for basic levels.

Chair Cohen asked Council if there were any questions. Hearing none, Chair Cohen asked for a motion to approve the recommendation as presented in the Council material.

Mr. Gabel made a motion to approve the recommendations. Mr. Parks seconded the motion. Ms. Goldberg abstained. Motion carried, none opposed.

ITEM 6: Update on Arts in Education Partnership

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap provided a brief update about the Arts in Education (AIE) partnership.

Ms. Dunlap reported that Millersville University at The Ware Center will conclude its role as an AIE Partner effective FY 2025–2026, with its current contract ending August 2025. Ms. Dunlap explained that Millersville University cited capacity and budget constraints for this decision.

Ms. Dunlap stated that as of August 31, 2025, Region 7 (Berks, Lancaster, Schuylkill counties) will not have an AIE Partner—similar to the recent change with IUP's ArtsPath program.

Mr. Gabel asked how the Agency will handle the applications from the district now that Millersville is no longer organizing this partnership. In response to his question, Ms. Dunlap said we will pause AIE partnership activities in Region 7 for FY 2025–2026, following the same approach as with ArtsPath.

Mr. Gabel asked if organizations in Region 7 can still apply for grants. Ms. Dunlap clarified that while AIE residencies will be paused, organizations may still apply for other funding opportunities, including the Creative Sector Flex Fund and operational support. She added that staff will share information about alternative funding resources, such as EITC and PA Department of Aging grants.

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 AM