

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Ms. Gunderson, 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 asked for a motion to approve the corrected July 10, 2025, meeting minutes and the August 28, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes:

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

ITEMS 4: Recommendations for Statewide Services Request for Proposals: Pennsylvania Creative Industries – Promotion and Activation Projects

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap reported that during the July 2025 meeting, Council approved a request for proposals for promotion and activation projects to support multi-year initiatives promoting Pennsylvania's creative industries and products to national and international audiences. Dunlap stated that Ms. Dunlap reported that Agency staff issued an open Request for Proposals (RFP) and reported that nine proposals were received by the September 5, 2025 deadline.

Ms. Dunlap stated that after committee review, Agency staff recommended funding two proposals totaling \$187,000:

1. Amplify Philly – \$100,000 (24-month project)

Mr. Dunlap stated that the Agency will again collaborate with Amplify Philly to present the *Keystone House* activation at the South by Southwest conference in 2026 and 2027, showcasing Pennsylvania's creativity, innovation, and industry leadership. Ms. Dunlap explained that this builds on the 2025 debut that drew over 1,500 visitors and garnered significant media attention. Dunlap stated that this will feature curated programming, immersive brand experiences, and partnership visibility for Pennsylvania's creative and economic sectors.

2. Pittsburgh Glass Center – \$87,000 (24-month project)

Ms. Dunlap stated that this is a partnership with Contemporary Craft and Union Project, will promote "*Pittsburgh Is Craft*" as a national destination for contemporary craft. She stated that it will include a promotional video, participation in the 2026 Seattle Art Fair, and presentations at three national craft conferences in 2027, which are listed in the Council memo.

Ms. Dunlap indicated that these recommendations were based on published criteria assessing creativity and innovation, impact and reach, experience with similar projects, and organizational capacity. She said that this type of RFP was unique for the Agency, because it allowed for the ability to work toward one of the goal areas in the strategic plan.

Chair Cohen stated that she had some concerns about the name "Keystone House" because other state houses at the last South by Southwest conference contained the names of their states. Chair Cohen asked if the name Keystone House will remain the same or if it will be named Pennsylvania House. Ms. Dunlap said she would ask Amplify Philly about the name and explained that the organization is working with DCED's tourism group to work on branding.

Ms. Cohen asked if the grant with the Pittsburgh Glass Center will be required to highlight the Agency and Ms. Dunlap replied that she will make sure that the PA Creative Industries' logo is prominently displayed to provide exposure.

Ms. Goldberg commented that she was in Seattle a few years ago and discovered that glass art is very prominent in that area. She added that there was a wonderful program designed for veterans.

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

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

ITEM 5: Recommendations for Program Guidelines for Pennsylvania Creative Asset Program

Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration

Ms. Gabriele stated that this recommendation is to approve guidelines for a new program called the Pennsylvania Creative Asset Program. Gabriele provided an overview of the proposed program and explained that it was developed in alignment with the Council's new strategic plan.

Gabriele reported that the program will be administered directly by Agency staff and stated that the guidelines that will be acted on begin on page 30 of the Council book.

Gabriele explained that this program is designed to support small- to mid-sized creative organizations that contribute to the Council's focus areas of Asset Development, Workforce Development, Community Development, Visibility, and Policy.

Ms. Gabriele stated that this a program where eligible grantees from the Arts Organizations and Arts Program (AOAP), the Entry to AOAP and Creative Sector Flex Fund Programs can apply for funding. She added that new creative arts organizations that have never applied before are also eligible to apply.

Ms. Gabriele provided a brief overview of some of the key highlights of the program:

- Program is scheduled to launch in FY 2026–2027, replacing the Creative Sector Flex Fund, Entry Track, and Arts Organizations and Arts Programs (AOAP).
- Provides funding to eligible creative organizations for services, products, and programs, and facilitates collaboration and networking opportunities.
- Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness, with funding recommendations presented to Council.

Ms. Gabriele listed the eligibility requirements of the program:

- Two-year average revenue is between \$100,000 and \$2,000,000. Gabriele stated that this is a range that would make a difference using the Agency's limited sources.
- Must be a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization serving the creative arts sector.
- Must be located in and registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Gabriele reported that at every strategic planning session that was held across the state, Agency staff heard that communities value and are eager to participate in networking and professional development. She stated that the Agency is responding to that need by adding opportunities for collaboration, hosting webinars on relevant topics and peer to peer conversations.

Ms. Gabriele stated that Agency staff recommends that Council approval of the Pennsylvania Creative Asset Program beginning FY 2026–2027, as a successor to the AOAP program, Entry to AOAP and the Creative Sector Flex Fund.

Gabriele stated that Agency staff also recommends applying the previously approved AOAP policies such as:

- No match requirement.
- Grant funds may be used for capital expenditures directly tied to operations and the organization's creative mission.
- Grantees must sign the award agreements within 45 days or forfeit the awards.

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.

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

ITEM 6: Recommendation for Request for Proposals for Creative Entrepreneur Administrator

Amanda Lovell, Director of Access to the Creative Sector

Ms. Lovell stated that this recommendation is for a statewide service request for proposals for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator (CEA) – Statewide Program Administrator. Lovell explained that PA Creative Industries is aiming to align with an organization that can continue to evolve and sustain the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program statewide. Ms. Lovell added that this will begin with the Fiscal year 2026-2027 grant cycle.

Ms. Lovell outlined some of the program goals as well as reasons for moving towards this program model, which are listed in the Council memo. She also provided a brief overview of the guidelines that follow the memo in the Council Book and outlined some of the key aspects that Agency staff is looking for in this statewide administrator. Lovell indicated that this will be a \$1 million grant per year and will not require a match. She stated that Agency staff anticipates that the selected administrator of the program would basically have to align with PA Creative Industries for a five-year period.

Ms. Lovell provided the following breakdown of the \$1 million:

- \$700,000 would go toward the actual regranteeing of the funds to the individual creative entrepreneurs, which would be administered in a cohort model of knowledge sharing, networking and business planning through both in person and virtual meetings and discussions.
- \$300,000 would be programmatic and administrative costs which are listed in the Council book and include elements such as statewide outreach, networking and business program support, marketing and the continued development and implementation of the program, collection of applications, collection of final reports, and collection of data.

Ms. Lovell indicated that proposals are due November 21, 2025, with staff aiming to bring a recommendation to Council at the December 2025 meeting.

Mr. Parks asked if Agency staff is thinking that this will be only one organization that can do this or if Agency staff has identified multiple organizations that would apply, such as SDBC's or some group of organizations that might qualify for this program. Ms. Lovell replied that Agency staff is aware of several organizations across the state that will apply that will meet the requirements. Lovell added

that in its current model, there are steps that grantees are required to go through and added that Agency staff found that the step that most often appreciated by the grantees is business planning and networking resources

Ms. Lovell stated that there are a several different organizations across the state that Agency staff believes will be able to successfully administer this program.

Chair Parks asked if Agency staff thinks that this model is a better approach than an addition to the staff. Ms. Lovell responded that the reason Agency staff are pursuing this model is because the key component is the business planning aspect which will help entrepreneurs with marketing, networking and the ability to set up regional cohorts and opportunities for skill sharing.

Judge Morgan asked if the administrator would always be an organization and not an individual. Ms. Lovell replied that individuals would not have the ability to re-grant the funds directly to the entrepreneurs. Judge Morgan also asked for some clarification on the amount that the organizations will be paid. Ms. Lovell indicated that the goal is to have 140 grantees statewide, which would roughly be \$5,000 per grantee with \$2,500 up front in this cohort model and \$2,500 when they complete the program.

Chair Cohen asked if it is possible to present some follow-up reports on previous grantees and Ms. Lovell stated that this will be possible. Ms. Lovell said that she has several of the reports completed that can be shared to Council. She added that it is rewarding to see the impact the program has had, especially regarding the increase in profit for these entrepreneurs. She added that the feedback that is continually received is about the need for more marketing support such, website development, logo development and outreach.

Ms. Goldberg asked if the groups that are being considered as administrators are self-contained or if they will have to sub-contract for things like marketing and promotion. Ms. Lovell stated that Agency staff has spoken with a few of its current business referral resources who offer nuts-to-bolts services that the Agency is looking for and explained that Agency staff is looking forward to seeing what types of organizations respond to the RFP to learn what types of resources can offer.

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.

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

ITEM 7: Recommendations for Creative Catalysts

Jamie Dunlap, Chief of Creative Catalysts & Lifelong Learning

Ms. Dunlap provided an overview of the below listed Creative Catalyst Grant recommendations (7) which total \$94,500:

Applicant:	<u>Reading Symphony Orchestra Association DBA Reading Symphony Orchestra</u>	Proposal:	<u>Reading Symphony Orchestra Regional Collaboration Student Challenge</u>
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Ms. Dunlap reported that the Reading Symphony Orchestra, in partnership with the Yocum Institute for Arts Education, will launch a county-wide student collaboration and art challenge titled "What Berks County Means to Me" during the America 250 Celebrated that they are aligning

with their 2026–2027 season. Dunlap stated that the project will engage youth in visual and musical arts to create a large-scale mosaic video of over 2,000 student photographs synchronized to a live orchestra performance.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the orchestra will also develop a replication toolkit to be shared at no cost with orchestras and schools statewide, presented through Pennsylvania Music Educators and Art Educators Associations. Ms. Dunlap added that the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra and Allentown Symphony Orchestra will participate as observers to learn the process and prepare for similar initiatives. Ms. Dunlap indicated that the toolkit would include planning templates, outreach strategies, case studies, key challenges and solutions, a video example, partnership recommendations, and mentorship contacts.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: Handmade Arcade

Proposal: Modern Craft Market

Ms. Dunlap reported that Handmade Arcade requests support for their new Modern Craft Market, scheduled for March 27–29, 2026, at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh. Dunlap explained that this juried shopping event will showcase over 150 contemporary craft makers from Pittsburgh and the greater Appalachian region, featuring categories such as basketry, ceramics, fiber and textiles, jewelry, metal, wood, glass, and furniture.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the market is designed to provide economic opportunities for skilled craftspeople who currently must travel outside the region to sell their work. She added that Handmade Arcade plans to expand advertising and partnerships with regional tourism bureaus and Visit PA to increase statewide visibility for both entrepreneurs and shoppers.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: Community Partnerships
Resource Conservation &
Development Council

Proposal: Wild Geese: Flock Together
Collaboration with OriginLabs

Ms. Dunlap reported that Community Partnerships RC&D plans a new project that will build on the *Wild Geese: Flock Together* public art initiative. Dunlap explained that this will be in collaboration with OriginLabs at Penn State University and stated that local artwork will be reproduced using photogrammetry and 3-D printing to create a merchandise line, including mini-geese keychains and ornaments.

Ms. Dunlap indicated that the project will cover production costs, artist fees, and administration, while testing and developing additional prototypes to promote regional artists and the centuries-old Goose Day tradition. She stated that documentation of the process will allow replication in other communities, and the initiative will be shared with statewide tourism outlets and conferences. Dunlap added that a Zoom session with OriginLabs is planned to demonstrate the process.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: The Womens Coalition for Empowerment Inc.

Proposal: Juneteenth Wellness & Arts Festival 2026

Ms. Dunlap reported on the first-ever Juneteenth Wellness & Arts Festival is a new family-friendly celebration honoring Juneteenth through arts, wellness, and education. She stated that the event will be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026, at Cherry Street Pier in Philadelphia.

Ms. Dunlap indicated that this alcohol-free festival will feature live regional performances, interactive art installations, health screenings, fitness sessions, and panel discussions promoting dialogue, healing, and empowerment. She explained that the event is designed to attract attendees from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York and added that the festival aims to boost economic opportunities for local artists, vendors, and small businesses while positioning Pennsylvania as a leader in wellness-focused, heritage-based cultural programming.

Request: \$10,000

Recommendation: \$10,000

Applicant: Society For Arts in Crafts DBA Contemporary Craft

Proposal: Blacksmithing Symposium

Ms. Dunlap reported that Contemporary Craft will be launching a new Blacksmithing Studio in Fall 2025 and plans to host a day-long symposium in June 2026 to promote its new facility. Dunlap explained that the event will target experienced blacksmiths, metals students, and community members interested in the craft.

Ms. Dunlap stated that the symposium will include lectures, demonstrations, networking and sales opportunities, and will also offer an optional hands-on session. She indicated that Contemporary Craft will market the event nationally and regionally through outlets such as *Metalsmith Magazine* and the *American Craft Council*, as well as local media platforms.

Request: \$5,000

Recommendation: \$5,000

Applicant: Squonk Opera Inc.

Proposal: "Joy Machine"

Ms. Dunlap reported that Squonk is requesting Creative Catalyst support for "Joy Machine," an immersive outdoor performance series to be presented at four public sites across Pennsylvania. Ms. Dunlap stated that the basis of this project was inspired by the Commonwealth's folk toy-making traditions and explained that the project celebrates community connection through large-scale, participatory performances.

Ms. Dunlap stated that "Joy Machine" features parade-float-sized interactive sculptures powered by audience participation, transforming public spaces into creative playgrounds where art and play intersect. Dunlap indicated that performances are planned in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Erie, and Philadelphia Counties, in partnership with local festivals and cultural organizations, including the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Arts Landing, Westmoreland Arts & Heritage Festival, Erie Music & Arts Festival, and South Street Headhouse District's Fourth Friday/FIFA Celebration.

Ms. Dunlap stated that multi-day engagement is a self-contained production offering paid opportunities for Pennsylvania artists and technicians in music, design, and production.

Request: \$30,000

Recommendation: \$30,000

Applicant: Da Vinci Art Alliance

Proposal: Collective Futures Festival

Ms. Dunlap stated that Collective Futures, a citywide celebration aligned with the semi quincentennial, highlighting Philadelphia's network of artist-run spaces, DIY venues, and grassroots cultural organizations. Ms. Dunlap said that the festival is scheduled for October 2–November 15, 2026 and added that the initiative will unite over 30 independent spaces to present coordinated exhibitions, performances, workshops, and public programs emphasizing the power of collective cultural practice.

Dunlap explained that the project, guided by a steering committee of participating organizations, aims to elevate the visibility and sustainability of independent artist spaces as vital cultural infrastructure. She stated that programming will include oral histories, site-specific installations, collaborative exhibitions, and interdisciplinary performances rooted in local communities.

Ms. Dunlap reported that Icebox Project Space in Kensington will serve as the central organizing hub, hosting anchor events such as the launch exhibition, the *Parallel Play* symposium, and convenings for artists and organizers. She added that the symposium will feature panels, screenings, and workshops focused on collaboration and sustainable creative practices

Request: \$20,000

Recommendation: \$20,000

Chair Cohen asked if the Pittsburgh project is going to be for the greater Pittsburgh area and Ms. Dunlap replied that it is happening in downtown Pittsburgh at the David Lawrence Convention Center but will be marketed broadly. Dunlap added that advertising will be included in VisitPA and other national publications to draw interest to come to this event. Ms. Dunlap also stated that the event will draw a regional participant presence, not just the city of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Parks encouraged Council members to attend a Squonk Opera performance and said they are fantastic.

Ms. Goldberg asked for some clarification about the request from the Reading Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Dunlap stated that it is a collaboration with the Reading Symphony Orchestra, the Reading School District and the Yocum Institute, which is a local arts education organization. Dunlap added that they are hoping to have 2,000 student photographs synthesized to this music.

Ms. Goldberg also suggested that the Yocum Institute consider doing this sort of project with local school districts that have orchestras for local America 250 celebrations. Ms. Dunlap said she would share this recommendation with the Yocum Institute.

Mr. Stull stated that as a music educator, there is always a district and regional orchestra before they even get to an all-state student orchestra, so even if that local school district may not have an orchestra, there may be opportunities for students to participate in a district or regional one.

Chair Cohen stated that each of these recommendations are exciting and asked if these organizations are required to send the Agency information about the events so that staff and Council members can see the advertising and promote the events. Chair Cohen asked if it would be possible to have this as requirement of the grant.

Ms. Dunlap replied that although it is currently not a part of the grant requirement, she thinks it is a good idea to put that language in the email when the organizations are approved for the grant.

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.

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

ITEM 8: Policy Landscape Report

Heather Doughty, Deputy Executive Director

Ms. Doughty provided an overview of the landscape report that is included in the Council Book. She stated that Council has already seen some examples of policy-based programs with the Agency's CEA Program and the upcoming report about the Creative Districts Program.

Ms. Doughty reported that national and international trends recognize the creative sector as a driver of economic growth and community benefits. She explained that policy is one of five focus areas in the Council's new Strategic Plan. Ms. Doughty indicated that an initial scan of creative industry policies—including legislation, strategic plans, and investments from other states, countries, and cities—has identified several areas for further research and Council discussion:

1. **Private Investment** – Expanding capital access for artists and creative enterprises, with models from California, the UK, and Calgary.
2. **Creative Districts** – Designated districts concentrate economic activity, foster collaboration, and drive tourism; staff will propose a framework for Pennsylvania.
3. **Talent Attraction & Retention** – Strategies to develop, retain, and attract creative talent through mentorships, incubators, student-to-career pipelines, and incentives.
4. **Tax Credits & Incentives** – Examples include Colorado's Community Revitalization Tax Credit and Massachusetts' Live Theater Tax Credit to support creative-sector growth and job creation.

Ms. Doughty reported that Agency staff will continue evaluating these policy tools to position Pennsylvania as a leader in the creative economy and engage Council in shaping a high-impact policy agenda.

Chair Cohen thanked Ms. Doughty for the research and for enlightening the Council as to what is going on nationally and internationally.

ITEM 9: Creative Districts

Sarah Merritt, Director PA Creative Communities & The Creative Economy

Ms. Merritt reported that Pennsylvania staff proposes launching a Creative Districts program to support community revitalization, economic growth, and cultural identity by leveraging local artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses. Ms. Merritt explained that Creative Districts are walkable, geographically defined areas with a high concentration of cultural assets that enhance quality of life, attract visitors, and foster inclusive economic development.

Ms. Merritt stated that the program will require districts to assemble an advisory committee, conduct community asset mapping, define boundaries, designate a district administrator, and develop a 5-year action plan. She indicated that eligible applicants include Pennsylvania-based

501(c)(3), 501(c)(6) organizations, and local governments. Merritt added that district designation is for five years, after which reapplication is required.

Ms. Merritt reported that benefits include technical assistance, state marketing and branding, peer learning, networking, and eligibility for grants supporting district management, planning, public art, cultural activities, and small business development. Ms. Merritt stated that final program components and guidelines will be presented to Council in December 2025.

Ms. Goldberg stated that she thinks this is a wonderful concept and asked for some clarification regarding smaller areas where one could have a creative district. She asked for some clarification for large cities such as Philadelphia, will there be a concept of having multiple districts.

Ms. Merritt indicated that this question has come up and there are some examples of that in other states where there is more of a regional district in an urban area. She stated that one of the things that has been great about Creative Communities and PA Creative Industries is that the Agency can be flexible and nimble and be able to consider all iterations.

Goldberg said this goes along with the concept of a community within, for example, Philadelphia. She explained that there are several communities in Philadelphia that the Agency has supported in different ways, but now this would give them an alliance or partnership within that community. She stated that down the line, there might even be some interaction that could develop between the communities.

Mr. Blischke stated that this is a good point and indicated that this is the way it is done in Denver, where they have several communities that are aligned with their business improvement district and added that they also cross-promote.

ITEM 10: Fiscal Year 2023–2024 Grants List

Amy Gabriele, Chief of Finance & Administration

Ms. Gabriele reported that the FY 2023-2024 Grants Report provides a complete list of all Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) grants for the year, with representation from all 67 counties. She stated that the report, included in the Council Book, is organized by county, with the last three pages summarizing:

- Grant totals by Track/Program/Division
- Grant totals by county (both alphabetical and per capita, with the statewide per capita funding at \$0.73)

The “Council PCA Program” category includes grants to the MidAtlantic Arts Foundation (MAAF), which PCA funds to administer programs and distribute grants. The report demonstrates PCA’s statewide presence through both direct grants and those distributed via partners.

Chair Cohen stated that a report has been created that lists the Council approved grants for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. She said that the report also provides a brief description of each grant and explained that the report will help to keep Council members abreast of what has been approved. Mr. Blischke stated that the report would be sent following the Council meeting.

ITEM 11 Chair’s Report

Susan Cohen, Chair

Chair Cohen reported that Council recently provided a grant to AI Horizons to support creative industry components for the AI Horizons Summit that was held in Pittsburgh this past September. Cohen provided a brief report about those who attended and stated that thanks to Council support, the summit featured a dynamic panel discussion with Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center and Deep Local, a Pittsburgh Based Immersive Marketing Agency with national and international reach. Cohen stated that Mr. Blischke was the moderator of that panel and added that it was well attended and received. Chair Cohen also reported on largest and most engaging exhibit showcasing PA Creative Industries alongside interactive activation, including a giant AI powered pinball machine.

Chair Cohen thanked Ms. Dunlap and Mr. Poppy for their efforts in making this summit successful. Mr. Blischke also thanked them for facilitating this and getting fantastic representation of creative industries in a very important space. Blischke emphasized the importance of having the Agency at large scale events where there are investors as well as policy makers and elective officials.

Chair Cohen reported that during the Summit, the Governor participated in a workshop with the head of Westinghouse, the head of the Bank of New York and the head of Carnegie Mellon.

Ms. Dunlap and Mr. Poppy also provided brief comments about the success of the event.

Chair Cohen reported that earlier this year Council approved a grant to TEAM PA to help administer private contributions in support of the arts. Cohen stated that the first round of grants were made possible through a partnership with PECO. Chair Cohen reported that through the collaboration with TEAM PA and PA Creative Industries, PECO Awarded 30 grants totaling \$150,000 to art institutions and cultural organizations across Southeastern PA. She explained that these grants were part of the Powering the Arts Program and will support music, theater, visual arts and other cultural experiences throughout the region. Chair Cohen thanked Ms. Merritt for her special leadership in launching this initiative.

Mr. Blischke stated that he will send a recent press release to Council so they can see the list of recipients.

Chair Cohen took a moment to recognize and celebrate Jeffrey Gabel who has served on the Council with generosity and distinction for over 15 years. Cohen stated that Mr. Gabel recently shared that he will be stepping down, making his final meeting. Chair Cohen stated that Gabel's contributions have been invaluable, always offering sharp insights, good humor and steadfast leadership.

Cohen stated that Mr. Gabel previously served as Vice Chair and was once the beloved emcee of the statewide Poetry Out Loud competition and added that he hosted a memorable Governor's Arts Awards at the Majestic Theatre in Gettysburg. Cohen said that Gabel's impact extends far beyond Council and stated that he was the founding director of the Majestic Theatre and a national leader in the League of Historic American theaters. Ms. Cohen said that he has left an indelible mark on Pennsylvania's art landscape and mentioned his delightful appearance on Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. On behalf of PA Creative Industries, Chair Cohen thanked Jeffrey Gable deeply and sincerely for everything he has done for the Agency.

Mr. Gabel thanked everybody and said that it has been a privilege and pleasure to serve with everybody.

Ms. Goldberg also stated that it has been an honor and privilege to have this opportunity to serve with Gabel for all these years and thanked him for his mentorship and friendship.

ITEM 12: Executive Director's Report

Karl Blischke, Executive Director

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

Mr. Blischke reported that Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Tech Center (ETC) will be hosting a showcase on December 5, 2025 that will highlight student work over the past year. Mr. Blischke stated that the ETC is at the forefront of immersive storytelling and indicated that would provide Council with information about the event.

Mr. Blischke reported that over the past year, Agency staff has been working with the University of Pennsylvania on a research project on Pennsylvania's Creative Workforce. Mr. Blischke stated a report "Understanding PA's Creative Workforce" will be published soon and added that this work aligns with Council's strategic plan's focus area of workforce development. Mr. Blischke said that the report will be previewed during a virtual webinar on October 30, 2025 at noon and added that Council members will be receiving an invite as a copy of the report.

Mr. Blischke reported that Agency staff is excited to begin implementing Council's Strategic Plan. He stated that the kickoff time point for implementing the new plan and mission will be Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Mr. Blischke stated that the Agency has plans to sunset some of its legacy and partnership programs. He explained that Agency staff will be providing a runway for FY 26/27 and will have the new expanded opportunities ready at that time. Blischke reported that Agency staff will be communicating with the regional partners personally to discuss the transition as well as the Agency's new funding opportunities for constituents across the state. Blischke said that the staff's communication plan is to work with partners every step of the way during this transition from now until September of next year. Mr. Blischke stated that he will be sending Council a document that provides summary of where the Agency is going into next fiscal year.

Chair Cohen thanked Mr. Blischke and Agency staff for their energy and enthusiasm in getting the Agency prepared for next year. She stated that the information that will be provided is very thorough and will help to keep Council members engaged and informed.

Mr. Blischke took a moment to thank Mr. Gabel for his service on Council. He stated that he met Mr. Gabel during his first tenure at PCA and said that Mr. Gabel was always very welcoming and engaging.

ITEM 17: Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 10:39 am