

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES January 23, 2024
City Hall Council Chambers & LebanonNH.gov/Live
6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: (6/7) **Jessica Giordani** (Chair; Citizen Rep Ward 2)
 Nick Gaffney (Vice Chair; Arts Org. Rep)
 Devin Wilkie (City Council, Heritage Commission & DEI Rep)
 Brian Cook (Arts Org. Rep-LOH)
 Ben Van Vliet (Arts Org. Rep-UVMC)
 Clare Geno (Citizen Rep)

MEMBERS ABSENT: (1/7) **Linda Copp** (Citizen Rep Ward 2)

STAFF PRESENT: (3) **Kristine Flythe** (Program Coordinator, Leb. Rec)
 Paul Coats (Director, Leb. Rec.)-Remote
 Shaun Mulholland (City Manager)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Giordani called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES October 24, 2023

*Nick Gaffney MOVED to approve the October 24, 2023, as presented in the packet.
Seconded by Devin Wilkie.*

**The Motion was unanimously approved.*

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. WELCOME NEW ALTERNATE BOARD MEMBER CLAIRE GENO

Claire Geno introduced herself to the Board. She is relatively new to the Lebanon area and is passionate about the arts. She lives in Ward 2.

B. ETHICS TRAINING (City Manager Mulholland)

The City Council's ethics policy, CC108 is located on the City's transparency webpage. Shaun reviewed the highlights of the policy with the members. While the policy is more significant for Boards involved in enforcing City codes, such as the Planning and Zoning Board, it still has important guidelines for Arts and Culture. It is not to be confused with the ADM 108 policy, which pertains to City employees and appointees.

The policy started in 2012 and was updated in 2021. It states that members of boards and commissions are not allowed to vote on decisions where that decision would benefit the individual in any way that is personal and pecuniary. Individuals are required to recuse themselves in any situation where there is potential for personal gain. Individuals are required to disclose any conflicts of interest.

Whenever there is a quorum of this body, including emails that are emailed between a quorum of this committee. There also cannot be serial emails. Subcommittees have to be done in public with an opportunity for the public to participate. All meetings are required to have an online component.

The 91A rules are taken seriously and are transparent. Documents that are shared between members are public documents. Some communication can be shared, such as a cancelled meeting. That is acceptable but the emails cannot be substantive.

If there is a conflict of interest a member can be recused, stating pecuniary or personal interests. In that situation, a member can speak as a member of the public. Members are asked to go online to review the policy. If there are any complaints stating conflict of interest and the public complains, it goes before the City Council. If an individual does not ask to be recused, any other member or someone from the public can ask for a vote if a conflict is perceived. The Commission votes on it but that does not require recusal, but it goes on record as a conflict.

This has a lot more to do with other boards and commissions because this group is brought together because they have knowledge and abilities that serve the Arts in Lebanon. These members were brought in for a reason, to provide a springboard for Arts activities.

Members are asked to sign a document saying the policy has been reviewed with each member. As yet there have not been any past activities or situations that are noted to be a concern, including any commissions paid to artists.

C. 2024 PROJECTS

- **Finalize Master Plan – TIFF funds (Paul Coats)**

A Master Plan for the tunnel art was generated last year. That plan has not been fully vetted because it includes a public graffiti wall on a wall that is not owned by the City. Staff are still seeking permission from the owners and the City Manager. There may be some people who are concerned that the graffiti wall could be a public nuisance.

There is a need to fill the tunnel walls. Right now, there is room for about 25 pieces and there are only 4 pieces in the tunnel. There are about 21 sections of 25 feet available. The City Manager is committed to public art and agrees it is a good idea to make the tunnel an attractive venue.

Because downtown Lebanon is part of a TIFF District, there is a funding mechanism that allows for the creating of public infrastructure that generates economic growth. Creation of public art is part of the betterment to enhance Lebanon and provide financial incentives for further development of the City. That means TIFF funds will be available for enhancing and developing public art. If there is a \$3000 commission per artwork, there is potentially \$65,000 to invest in the rest of the tunnel. It allows room to dive deeper into other public art projects that require money for other areas. More sidewalk poetry, things go West Leb, and parks are coming in the near future. That means there is a lot to consider.

It may be possible for an artist to use more than 25 feet and allow for some flexibility. Moving sooner rather than later is important to get things moving and get the call out. There is not a time constraint that things have to be done this year.

There may be inspiration from other boards such as the Historical Society and the Heritage Commission. It may also be a good idea to consider different media and time frames, so everything does not need to be replaced at the same time. Replacement has to be taken into consideration and how long art pieces are up. There may be different times that each piece should be on display and the longevity of the work. There is potential for light displays or electronic image projects as there is electricity in the tunnel. One challenge is filling the 8-foot space under the sculptures currently on display.

The members will have many things to consider and discuss before the next call for art and artists. It could reflect more diversity and may have a more regional span. Members were asked to come forward with ideas or a plan for the February meeting. The selection process may be different this time, less of an actual judging. It could be that some members of this commission make the decisions. Or there could be a more rolling submission process. The members discussed how others could be included in the decision-making process for selecting pieces. Perhaps a rubric of qualities could be used to evaluate each submission.

The members reviewed other regional areas and determined that the commission paid is a reasonable amount and comparable to other communities. There is potential to have more types of art than just murals. The members want to consider a total budget and to determine what to spend up to that amount of the approved budget. Getting a handle of that budget would help before they get started on the next set of proposals.

- **Prepare for Poetry Contest**

Nothing has begun yet as this is the time to start. Everything that is in place from prior years can be used again. New judges will likely be needed. It is hoped to have everything finalized in March to present in April during poetry month.

- **Prepare a Spring Call for Artists**

This is covered in the conversation about the TIFF funds.

- **Continue to Promote, Connect and Support Arts and Artists in the Upper Valley**

Many of these energies will be connected to existing arts programs in Lebanon and the outreach to the call for artists for the TIFF work. Many arts organizations are celebrating major anniversaries that could be celebrated together to reflect the magnitude of the arts in Lebanon. Social media will continue to be a useful way to promote the arts.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. EDC (Vacant Seat) – Thank you Bill Dunn for your previous work, drive, and joy for A&C!

Bill Dunn is no longer with A & C. They will look for a new member of EDC to join this commission. The EDC will be contacted to see if someone would like to join A & C.

B. DEI, Heritage, Council (Devin Wilkie)

Devin has been absent from these groups for a number of reasons. Looking to these groups to get some collaboration for public art, specifically for the tunnel is on Devin's radar. He will reach out to both again to see if there is any interest in public art.

C. Arts Representatives

- Linda Copp – Lebanon Ballet School

Not present tonight.

- Ben Van Vliet – UVMC

UVMC is looking forward to their 30th anniversary. They are continuing to partner with Kilton Library to bring music to the public; it has been well received. They have music with the Rec Department coming up this summer.

- Brian Cook – LOH

Brian Cook said LOH is excited about the repairs of LOH and the lobby is spectacular. The Opening Event is February 7 with a full weekend of events throughout the weekend. There are a number of exciting events coming up at the Opera House.

Paul asked if suggestions of people to replace the representative from Ward 1. Members will check around.

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No comments

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Giordani Adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary