



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

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Item #: A-1.

CAC - Consideration of (1) a Recommendation from the 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee Pertaining to the 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program Awards; and (2) Make a Recommendation to the City Council

Meeting Date: November 15, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: Lee Lawlor / Cultural Affairs - City Manager

Phone Number: (310) 253-5772

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐ **General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** Yes ☒ No ☐

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs Commission (11/10/22); Sony Pictures Entertainment (11/10/22); Culver City Arts Foundation (11/10/22); 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program Applicants (11/10/22)

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (11/07/22)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Cultural Affairs Commission consider the recommendation of the 2023 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee (Subcommittee) and approve a motion that (1) recommends the City Council approve the 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program awards in the total amount of \$213,043 and related grantee contracts; and (2) recommend that the City Council designate the related performances as City-sponsored.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Arts grant programs are considered a central component to programs and services provided by local arts agencies throughout the United States and also provide cultural services to the community. Arts grants help subsidize free or reduced ticket prices and encourage public cultural participation. Arts grants are an investment in the community and in the quality-of-life for residents, workforce, and visitors.

The Cultural Affairs Commission and staff have implemented Culver City's Performing Arts Grant Program (Program) since its inception in 1994. Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section

15.06.160 stipulates that no more than 25% of the money deposited into the Cultural Trust Fund (CTF) in the prior fiscal year be allocated for performing arts in the subsequent year. \$112,500 has been appropriated from the CTF for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 and is supplemented with \$256,959 in carryover money from prior fiscal year CTF allocations. Additional payments and pledged contributions from Sony Pictures Entertainment and Culver City Arts Foundation have been made in support of the 2023 Program. The Subcommittee (Tania Fleischer and Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin) propose total allocations of \$213,043 in grant funding for the 2023 Program from all sources.

Staff issued the 2023 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to the public during the week of August 8, 2022. The application guidelines stated that there was a grant limit of \$10,000 per organization, and applicants must provide matching funds that are equal to, or greater than, their requested grant amount. A copy of the NOFA and application guidelines is attached to this staff report.

The electronic application and detailed instructions were posted on the City's website, and notices were distributed by email, social media, email message groups, and other appropriate third-party sites, including the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture. A list of potential performance venues in Culver City was also posted on the City's website and staff provided workshops and consultations with potential applicants. Thirty (30) performing arts organizations submitted signed applications electronically via the City's website by the published deadline of September 16, 2022. Six of the applicants were applying for the first time.

Staff reviewed all applications to confirm eligibility. Twenty-nine (29) applications were determined to be eligible. Staff identified one first-time applicant whose submitted application and support materials did not meet the eligibility criteria of the NOFA. Staff sent a letter to the applicant identifying the reasons that it was ineligible and recommended that they consult with Cultural Affairs staff regarding eligibility if they are interested in applying in the future.

On October 14, 2022, the twenty-nine (29) eligible applications were reviewed by a Peer Review Panel. The six distinguished panelists included people with expertise in music, dance, theatre, and/or grantmaking and non-profit management. The members of the Subcommittee joined the panel meeting as observers and as an additional resource for questions.

The 2023 Performing Arts Grant Peer Review Panel included:

- Jason Blackwell - Grant Manager, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- Victor Herrera - Choreographer, Mar Vista Family Center Folklorico
- Nicolás Bejarano Isaza - Trumper Performer, American Youth Symphony
- Joshua R. Lamont - Actor, Teacher, Corita Art Center
- Emily Senchuk - Woodwind Performer, Teacher, Elemental Music
- Rosalie Tucker - Dance Resource Center, B. Dunn Movement

In advance of the panel meeting, panelists were instructed to review electronic copies of the grant applications, to view artistic video samples that were provided by applicants, and to provide preliminary scores. The panelists were provided a scoring template and criteria. The following four scoring criteria, with a total possible score of 100 points, were included in the NOFA and provided to the panelists:

1. Artistic excellence and cultural merit of proposed project (45 points)
2. Outreach and engagement with the Culver City community (20 points)
3. Realistic project budget and funding base (20 points)
4. Contribution to cultural equity and inclusion (15 points)

Members of the Peer Review Panel and Subcommittee gathered for a hybrid meeting on October 14, 2022; some members attended in-person at City Hall and others attended virtually via WebEx. Staff opened the panel discussion by providing a brief overview of the grant program's history, guidelines, contributions to the Culver City community, and cultural equity and inclusion goals. After the overview, panelists discussed each individual application and its corresponding artistic samples. Panelists took turns in leading the discussion about the individual applications and sharing professional expertise. Each panelist was encouraged to ask questions, offer comments, and provide scores in each of the four criteria. An average score for each criterion and a total score for each applicant was displayed and discussed by panelists. Only the peer panelists provided scores during the meeting. Prior to reviewing the applications, panelists stated whether they had a potential conflict of interest with any of the applicants. In the event of a conflict of interest, that panelist would leave the meeting during the discussion and would not score that application. For the 2023 grant program, no such conflicts were identified.

After the review of the individual applications was completed, the scores for all applicants were tallied by staff, which resulted in a ranking of the applications from highest to lowest. The Peer Review Panel discussed the overall scores and adjusted the scoring where necessary.

On October 26, 2022, the Subcommittee met and reviewed the total panel scores and the requested grant amounts for all applicants. The Subcommittee recommended that the panel scores should directly determine the grant awards, as a percent of the requested amount. For example, if an application scored 90 points and requested a grant of \$10,000, then the recommended award is \$9,000.

The Subcommittee revised the total score for Culver City Public Theatre (CCPT) by adding seven (7) points to the Peer Review Panel's score. This adjustment is based on CCPT's long history of community benefit and mission to present free original plays for audiences of all ages.

Due to the recent pandemic, many arts organizations have suffered financially. In an effort to promote recovery and sustainability, the Subcommittee recommends that all eligible applicants receive a percent of their requested grants. In addition, staff made significant efforts to recruit a larger and more diverse pool of applicants. Therefore, the total number of applications, the total amount of requested grants, and the total recommended awards, is significantly higher than in prior years.

City Sponsorship

To be categorized as "City-sponsored," an event or activity must meet the criteria set forth in Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 17.330.040.B.7.b.ii confirming that the City is (a) participating in an official capacity in the planning, preparation or promotion of the event or activity; and (b) contributing 25% of the total estimated costs of the civic event or activity or at least \$1,000, whichever is less. This contribution may take the form of funds, labor, staff time, materials, a waiver

of fees, or any combination of the foregoing. City Council Policy requires that in order for an event to be considered City-sponsored, the City Council determine, by specific action, that the above criteria have been met.

These events meet the criteria for City sponsorship. As a requirement of the grant contract, the performing arts organizations must identify the City of Culver City as a sponsor of the event in all promotional materials.

The total amount recommended for all grant awards is \$213,043. Staff will work closely with the grant recipients on the public outreach and promotional plans for their performances. The City will promote the sponsored performances via its website, email and social media. Each organization will submit an invoice and evaluation after their final sponsored performance.

Attached is a chart of the 29 eligible applications, panel scores, recommended grant awards and a brief description of each proposed performance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The Subcommittee recommends that a total of \$213,043 be allocated for the 2023 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program. The funding includes monies from the Art in Public Places Program (Cultural Trust Fund - 41311200.619800 PZ614) budget as appropriated pursuant to the CCMC. The CTF amount will be in the range from \$163,000 to \$189,000 depending upon fully executed grant contracts; \$25,000 from the 2022 contribution from Sony Pictures Entertainment; and a pledge from Culver City Arts Foundation (amount is pending).

ATTACHMENTS

1. 22-11-15_ATT 1_2023 Performing Arts Grant Program Guidelines and Notice of Funding Availability
2. 22-11-15_ATT 2_Overview of 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program Applications

The completed 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program electronic applications are available for public review by sending a written request by email to cultural.affairs@culvercity.org

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Consistent with the recommendation from the 2023 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee, recommend that City Council approve the 2023 Performing Arts Grant Program awards and related grantee contracts as outlined in the staff report; and recommend that City Council designate the related performances as City-sponsored.

OR

2. Recommend to the City Council that 2023 Performing Arts Grant awards be allocated as amended.