

**Bend Cultural Tourism Fund
Commission Meeting
Draft Minutes
11:00am - 1:00pm
Monday, November 28, 2022
ZOOM**

In Attendance: Leah Rutz; Michael Gesme; Eli Ashley; Amy Renalds; Steven Arrasmith; Miguel Edwards; Liora Sponko (entered 11:30am); Valerie Wilson, nonvoting BCTF staff member; Laurel MacMillan, Administrator; Shari Crandall, Minutes.

Absent: Rika Ayotte; Sandy Anderson.

Guests: Kevney Dugan

The meeting was called to order at 11:02am.

I. Welcome

After opening the meeting, MacMillan reported she and Wilson met last week to discuss BCTF technical assistance and outreach. She then briefly outlined the agenda.

II. Minutes for November 2, 2022

Action: Edwards moved, Rutz seconded: the November 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes are approved as written.

Vote: The Commission unanimously approved the Minutes.

III. Budget Report

Wilson reiterated the financial report from the November 2, 2022 meeting: the Visit Bend board has chosen to increase the BCTF funding from 7.5% City of Bend Transient Room Tax to 10% for FY2023; the current estimation for the BCTF FY23 is approximately \$650,000, from which BCTF expenses are also included. Wilson conveyed Visit Bend has amended its financial model for clearer tracking. MacMillan reminded the Commission the \$650,000 is a projected amount, the final funding amount will be defined just before the grant review process in May.

IV. Pre-Application Questions

MacMillan proposed the following three pre-application questions for Marketing Fund applicants:

1. Does your event/project fit within BCTF's arts and culture definition (include definition)?
2. What is the date of your proposed cultural tourism event/project?
3. Where will your proposed cultural tourism event/project take place?

MacMillan explained the goal is to create a quick pre-qualification process to allow applicants to spend their time writing the application. Upon applicant submittal, MacMillan will look for red flags and reach out to the applicant if the event/project seems to lie outside these three questions. This approach offers an opportunity for applicants, particularly those who have not previously applied, to speak with MacMillan. She accessed Zoom Grants, the process to create the pre-qualification questions should be easy; she will speak with the Zoom Grants administrator for guidance. Of note, since Zoom Grants provides notice to applicant and MacMillan upon applicant's submittal, MacMillan can provide prompt follow-up, if appropriate. She asked Commissioners for their thoughts regarding the three pre-application questions.

Commissioners asked whether applicants' pre-qualification questions could be asked and responded to prior to completing their applications. MacMillan reported BCTF wants to increase the number of applications, not to preclude them. Asking applicant to submit pre-qualifications before application submittal could prove difficult since, historically, some applicants wait until the last few days before the deadline to submit their applications.

For applicant clarity in answering the questions, Commissioners asked for the definition of "arts and culture" and the dates of the funded period to be included. In addition, Wilson recommended if applicant's event is to be held outside Bend, the application portal prompt applicant to contact MacMillan for guidance prior to application submittal.

Commissioners suggested an automated response to applicants upon answering the pre-qualification questions. MacMillan will also incorporate that into the Zoom Grants portal.

V. BCTF Technical Assistance and Outreach

A primary topic of interest at the November, 2, 2022 meeting is BCTF's desire to treat each application, no matter how well written, equitably; Commissioners asked how BCTF might provide grant writing assistance particularly for applicants who have had little to no grant writing experience. Pursuant to MacMillan's and Wilson's meeting last week, MacMillan proposes the following BCTF Technical Assistance package:

Goals:

- Encourage the development and expansion of new cultural events and programs in Bend;
- Create a more equitable environment for applicants who do not have previous grant writing experience or professional staff to write grants;
- Increase number of applicants that submit a fundable, quality application.

1. Grant Writing Assistance

- a. MacMillan continues to be open for technical assistance via phone and email (continuation from previous years);
- b. MacMillan holds open office hours two-three times before application deadline;
- c. BCTF 101, either in person or ZOOM 1:1;
- d. BCTF specific grant writing workshop with outside speaker;
- e. Grant Writing Workshop recommendations on our website.

Open for Technical Assistance: Since MacMillan began work as BCTF Administrator, she has provided technical assistance when applicants have asked. Commissioners agree this service goes beyond most other granting organizations.

Open Office Hours: For this FY23 grant cycle, in addition to taking calls or emails from applicants MacMillan will experiment with posting open office hours, in person at Visit Bend and/or via Zoom 1:1, beginning February or early March. Continuation of open office hours will be determined by the level of applicant interest.

BCTF 101: MacMillan prefers a question-and-answer (QA) audience format that can be recorded and uploaded onto the new BCTF website for review by other applicants. Commissioners noted certain BCTF questions are more difficult to answer: for example, ROI and concise explanation of how granted funds will be spent. MacMillan would like to inform previous applicants this is not a mandatory event, rather it is for those who feel they need additional information and/or BCTF guidance. From the ensuing discussion, Commissioners appreciated the open office hours and BCTF 101 options.

Specific grant writer: MacMillan and Wilson identified issues with hiring a grant writer for applicants. If BCTF hires someone to write the grants, and applicant does not receive an award, a question could arise: who is at fault – Grant Writer? Applicant? Further, they felt supervising the grant writer and the administration of, as yet, unknown costs are not a good use of MacMillan's time; Commissioners agreed.

Grant writing workshops, provided by speaker unaffiliated with BCTF/Grant writing info-links on BCTF website: MacMillan would need to research workshop speaker credentials and associated costs, provide clear instruction to the speaker prior to the workshop, and attend the workshop to provide fact-specific answers to potential applicant questions. While discussing the workshop option, Commissioners noted BCTF is unlike other funders – it incorporates a tourism and arts/culture components. Grant funders closest in kind to BCTF are probably Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) and Travel Oregon, and may be good points of reference. Edwards also suggested the State of Washington's Artist Trust as a potential resource. Pursuant to a query regarding OAC, Sponko replied OAC provides a virtual online component to explain the program; they have discussed providing a webinar on the OAC website but have not yet done so. Some Commissioners expressed hiring a grant writing speaker might go above-and-beyond what BCTF needs to offer: they suggest MacMillan's availability (calls, email, and scheduled open office hours), a recorded QA format, and possible online links to general grant writing support are sufficient. During the discussion, Renalds and others posted numerous online links for grant writing support and workshops that might provide applicant assistance. MacMillan will investigate these.

Commissioners agreed they would like MacMillan to do further research regarding the value provided and associated costs of the discussed options; she will implement those options that best meet the needs of both applicants and BCTF.

2. Better tell BCTF's story

- a. New Website—highlight a few success stories, especially how an organization can start with a Capacity Grant and move to a Marketing Grant, examples:
 - i. Out Central Oregon;
 - ii. Roots Revival Festival.
- b. Gather quotes and stories about BCTF's impact on projects from former grantees.

MacMillan reported BCTF is doing a better job of this, particularly implementing the new website which will list events/projects supported by BCTF. The infrastructure has been created, she is currently working hard to collect stories and good quality photos/images. The new website should be launched about same time as the grant application goes live. One of the themes the website will highlight includes grantees who began with Catalyst Grants and then moved on the Marketing Grants. A perfect example of this is Out Central Oregon's Winter Pride event.

- c. Implement similar marketing and social media strategy as done in FY22.
 - i. Visit Bend staff creates email blasts and targeted social ads;
 - ii. Include markets such as Eugene and Portland for organizations that may be located elsewhere but might tour to Bend.
- d. Promote BCTF to out-of-area cultural organizations with the idea of a Bend performance or event from a visiting cultural organization. Laurel to reach out to other Cultural Coalitions to promote.

Visit Bend's \$10,000 marketing campaign strategy of FY22 made an impact, more applicants applied in FY22 than in previous cycles. The plan is to again use the Visit Bend marketing team. This cycle, Visit Bend would also like do a marketing push in Eugene and Portland to organizations who would like to perform in, and who would bring tourists to, Bend. In addition, MacMillan has already connected with other cultural coalitions to help identify different organizations outside of Eugene and Portland. Messaging may be tricky since BCTF grants are awarded only for performances/events in Bend.

3. Build Grantee Capacity

- a. Utilize Visit Bend Photographer for Event Photos (grantee gets digital image for promotional use).

Wilson reported Visit Bend recently hired a full-time visual content manager whose job is to coordinate/take high quality photos and videos for press coverage; the content manager is just ramping up. BCTF would like to engage this person to help grantees promote their organization/event and to publish grantees' events/projects on the new website. BCTF will need to contact Wilson, who will speak with the Visit Bend marketing team to coordinate timing to assure there are no event conflicts between Visit Bend and BCTF.

On another matter, concern was voiced regarding the placement of BCTF on the Visit Bend website. Those currently interested in BCTF and/or BCTF funded events must scroll down to the bottom of the Visit Bend website. The query: is there anyway Visit Bend can reference BCTF higher on its home page? Wilson will speak with the Visit Bend website director about possibly repositioning BCTF, particularly during the BCTF open-application period. Dugan also suggested using the blue bar located at the top of the Visit Bend website to highlight special events. Of note: near the end of the meeting, Wilson learned the analytics for the Visit Bend website show BCTF has had 3,200 hits, overall, and 36 views.

4. New Small Grants Idea

- a. If there are funds left over at the after next grant allocation round, consider starting a new program for small grants.

During the November 2, 2022 meeting, Ashley raised the possibility of creating a new small seed program to be administered in addition to the Catalyst and Marketing Grants. In the past, BCTF has allocated the full budgeted amount to the two current grant programs. Because BCTF has not previously had \$600,000 funding, it may have residual funds after the May 2023 grant allocation. Currently, BCTF has one deadline for the two grant programs which is easier to administer than having more than one deadline in a given year. BCTF builds on its grant programs, and continues to move forward. If there are residual funds following the FY23 grant allocation process, MacMillan suggested renewing the conversation on how to best utilize the remaining funds, perhaps to include an additional program.

VI. Commissioner Terms/Recruitment

MacMillan presented the following table of the Current Commissioners, dated March 1 2022.

	Position	First Name	Last Name	Executive Committee	End of Term*	Term Year
1	Visit Bend Board or Staff Member (nonvoting)	Valerie	(Warren) Wilson		2022	Second
2	At Large	Sandy	Anderson		2023	Second
3	At Large	Rika	Ayotte	Chair	2023	Third
4	At Large	Liora	Sponko	Member	2022	Second
5	At Large	Leah	Rutz		2023	First
6	At Large	Michael	Gesme		2023	First
7	At Large	Miguel	Edwards		2023	First
8	At Large	Eli	Ashley		2024	First
9	At Large	Amy	Renalds		2024	First
10	At Large	Steven	Arrasmith		2024	First

*Commissioner terms end in December

Having served the longest, Sponko and Ayotte are currently the brain trust for BCTF. Sponko's term is slated to end December 2022; however, she has agreed to extend her term. Ayotte's term ends December 2023. While Ayotte would like to continue serving on the Commission to term-end, she is unable to continue as Chair due to work demands. MacMillan asked for volunteers to fill available openings on the Executive Committee (Committee).

MacMillan explained the Committee provides feedback when she has questions that do not require input from the whole commission or when she would like clarity of thought when an issue arises. Note: on occasion the Committee will decide to take certain questions/issues to the full Commission for further discussion and potential action. Serving on the Committee usually requires an additional four to five hours per grant cycle. Sponko, Rutz, Renalds, and Edwards volunteered to serve on the Committee; Rutz and Edwards have also volunteered to Co-Chair.

MacMillan would like to recruit an additional one or two commissioners. Last year's new Commissioners were recruited later in the grant cycle. This year she would like to connect with potential recruits in December or early January so they can participate in the grant training meeting scheduled in March 2023. Like last year, Visit Bend will put out a press release to help identify those who might be interested in serving on the Commission. MacMillan will also email the job description to the Commissioners for possible recommendations.

VII. Final Comments

MacMillan thanked the Commissioners for their input. She asked whether any Commissioners attended arts/culture events since the last meeting.

- Edwards stated at the time of the November 2 meeting, he was making a working art tour through California - he went to about fifty galleries.
- MacMillan attended the local holiday markets, including Open Space, and supported the local makers.
- Sponko attended the Green House Cabaret – it was the performance of a life-time. Others reported they had tried to get tickets, but the show had been sold out.
- Rutz shared Open Space had a remarkable PTSD awareness program which included a play and veterans' panel.
- Renalds provided an FYI for an event not yet publicized: BendFilm is planning its Annual Member Appreciation Event during which it will show the film NEXUS; the event will occur either January 13 or 14, 2023, at the Tower Theatre.

Edwards suggested BCTF start an Instagram account. Wilson and MacMillan noted maintenance of a social media site is time intensive that requires consistent posting; i.e., the sites require a lot of work for so few hits. Given her work responsibilities, MacMillan is not willing to take this on. She would rather Visit Bend allocate website space and provide

cross-over coverage for events. Wilson will speak with Visit Bend's assigned social media staff to determine whether he might be able to include relevant BCTF posts.

One final note, Visit Bend is planning a year-end post-holiday gathering in downtown Bend, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, January 26, 2023. It will include BCTF commissioners/staff; Bend Sustainability Fund advisors/staff and Visit Bend board/staff.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05pm.