

Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund
July 27 – 28, 2007
Saunders Health Sciences Building, Casper College

Board Members Present: David Reetz, Chair, Tom Empey, Susan Hladky, Sara Needles, and Mike Shonsey

Staff Members Present: Renée Bovée

Advisors Present: Rita Basom, Wyoming Arts Council, and Marcia Britton, Wyoming Humanities Council

Chair David Reetz convened the meeting at 1:05 p.m., Friday, July 27, 2007.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Minutes

Moved by Mike Shonsey and seconded by Susan Hladky to approve the minutes as written. Approved unanimously.

Election of Officers

Tom Empey recommended Reetz continue to serve as chair for this next fiscal year. Hladky moved that nominations close and a unanimous ballot be cast, seconded by Sara Needles. No further discussion. Unanimous approval. Chair Reetz accepted and expressed his appreciation of this board and their willingness to work together.

Department Update

Needles noted the recent work of the department has been focused on preparing the biennium budget. As a part of the budget process, the department has recently completed the draft of the strategic plan. She also noted that the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources (TRWCR) Legislative Committee has made the State Historic Preservation Office their priority for interim study. Mary Hopkins, Interim State Historic Preservation officer, has been providing TRWCR information on SHPO's needs. Other TRWCR topics include the Veteran's Museum and State Parks. SHPO will be requesting additional staff to help with the oil & gas reviews in the biennium budget. TRWCR will be expressing their support for the additional SHPO positions. Additionally, Needles noted that the State Veteran's Museum is to be transferred out of State Parks and Cultural Resources into the Department of the Military. Additionally the department will be seeking a few other positions, including the request for administrative dollars and position for the Cultural Trust.

Needles also discussed Sen. Mike Massie's \$3 million bill regarding interpretation for the State Parks and Historic Sites. Last year, Sen. Massie's bill received 10% of its funding request and this upcoming session Sen. Massie will be submitted for the remainder of the request (\$2.7 million). The interpretation bill does not include visitor's centers due to their high expense. She also noted State Park Administrator, Pat Green's, resignation from the Department. Thus Milward Simpson will be in the process for looking for a new Administrator for the division.

Renée Bovée spoke on the request the Cultural Trust will be making for the administrative position and administrative dollars and \$10 million increase in Cultural Trust Fund itself. Governor Freudenthal is anticipating a letter from the Cultural Trust on this. According to the information she had received, the reason the Governor did not include additional funds for the corpus in the last legislative session, apart from process issues, was primarily because he wanted to hear how the granting program was going. Now with the WCTF actually working on its second grant round, we will be able to report to the Governor on our progress and on the response and impact of grant awards.

Bovée spoke on the status of the first round grants. Currently all contracts have now been completed. Delays were initially experienced with a couple of grants due to process or time extensions. The Sweetwater County Museum is the only award recipient which has declined the grant award, simply because the matching funds from the County have not yet manifested. The director of the museum will be working on a new plan for local fundraising and may apply in the future for WCTF funds.

Rita Basom, spoke about the potential of the Arts Council requesting and receiving an infusion of funds from the Legislature for funding their endowment program. The Arts Council Endowment Program provides dollars to arts and cultural institutions to help create or augment existing endowments. Currently this Program has no funds, but if this is indeed something that comes to fruition, this may alleviate some of the pressure on the Cultural Trust Fund. Basom also noted a request to the Governor to provide dollars to support the State's Poet Laureate, which currently is an honorary position, to help support the activities of the Poet Laureate. She also reminded the WCTF Board of a couple of dates to put on their calendars: October 19-20, 2007 for the first Arts Summit dealing with Creative & Vital Communities in our state that will be here in Casper; and February 22, 2008 for the Governor's Arts Awards in Cheyenne.

Needles mentioned that Senators Enzi and Barraso recently received the Preserve America grant that was awarded to the State Historic Preservation Office. The Wyoming SHPO recently hosted the annual SHPO board meeting that was held in Jackson this past month – 11 SHPOs from different states were present. As part of the meeting SHPO's toured the Jonah Field to understand the impact of oil and gas industry on our historic sites. Additionally, the SHPOs then toured the renovations to the Old Faithful Lodge.

TRWCR is again looking at supporting the request for funding for Historic Contexts by SHPO. Needles explained the value of these seven historic contexts that will help explain the value of and then help federal and state agencies establish management priorities for

historic preservation. Empey noted that having such a document should also aid this group's process, as we can't save everything.

Needles also informed the Board that SHPO and Mainstreet are looking at presenting a preservation conference in Wyoming in the spring of 2008. Additionally, Basom noted the commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the WPA and the New Deal in Wyoming and the activities of the department in promoting this event with special events, exhibitions and special grant categories. Many of the State Parks have CCC buildings/sites and there will be many events focusing on these and other resources in the state.

Empey noted that during the WPA era there was a specific program involving historians and the collection and preservation of many diaries. These were then placed in nine museums around the nation. It would be of interest to find out where the Wyoming diaries were placed. His family had a diary from the time of the Morman ferry at Fort Caspar, which currently resides at the Huntington Museum in Los Angeles, California. Needles will pass this information on to Archives, in case they are not already aware of these collections.

Reetz commented on all these activities and how the "winds of heritage" and preservation are moving. There is a lot happening in the state, and it is time.

Budget

Bovée reviewed the budget and dollars available for the grant round. She noted how valuable it has been to have the expenses of the Cultural Trust identified, even though we are using funds from the department, to as she will be using these expenses to craft the budget for 09-10. Bovée reviewed the status of her contract, which expires September 30. It is anticipated that the next contract, which will cover from October 1 through June 30, will be paid with funds from within the department, most likely from vacant positions. She further explained how the interest income for the Trust is fluctuating as grants that have not yet been paid out are still earning interest. Bovée noted that grant awards can only be awarded to the level of which funding is available at the time contracts are written.

A general discussion was held on the benefits or not of having two grant rounds per year, and the impact on the funding available. It was noted that statistically, the two grant rounds show basically the same ratio of requests to dollars available. The issue about multiple deadlines may be more appropriate in relation to how often the board wishes to meet, how often it wishes to go through the grant review process and the perceived accessibility of constituents to the program, whereby two deadlines a year allow the opportunity to apply without a long time delay.

Empey inquired about the possibility of "holding over" a grant application if it is not time sensitive...rather than have them re-apply. Additionally, he also commented on the need for us to communicate better with our constituency about what we are really interested in

funding, versus having this so wide open. Empey also noted the need to lower the cap on grant applications. Chair Reetz, suggested carrying this conversation to tomorrow's agenda.

The available dollars for this round can be at maximum around \$285,000, but Bovée recommended no more than \$225,000, as there are estimates involved and there is the need to have some funds accumulating interest in preparation for the next round. Shonsey noted that some of the applications cover more than one year of activity and thus we can "creep" over the \$225,000 level as their "payouts" occur at a later date.

Empey asked the Board's opinion on "holding over" grants for another round. The board discussed the ramifications of holding over a grant. Considering that things may change at the local level in the time frame between grant rounds, and that even if an application was held over it would still be in competition, it might be fairer to the organization to just give them the option to reapply.

There was also a general discussion about the matching requirement to the application and whether the WCTF should tighten the matching requirements to the application. Should the application require more of a cash match, or should the language talk about preferences given for a higher cash match. There was also a discussion about the value of in-kind given on applications. A discussion on the challenges of giving partial award versus full awards was held. It was noted that there is always the opportunity to award fewer grants at a higher level, which creates a level of prestige versus the need to get money into "every corner of the world", which causes more partial grant awards. There was also a suggestion that for certain size grants it may be appropriate to ask for full financial statements, to provide more information to the review. Again, Chair Reetz will note these comments for tomorrow's discussion.

Grant Application Review and Award

The Board agreed to take their preliminary rankings of the grants and to review the applications in reverse order (lowest ranking to highest ranking). Each application is to be reviewed and commented on by the Board. Board comments will be noted and will be made available to constituents upon request and will be kept in the applicant file. The Board then commenced review of applications.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 5:15 p.m.

Saturday, July 28, 2007

Dave Reetz reconvened the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Grant application review continued.

After reviewing all applications, the preliminary funding recommendation is at \$281,245, which would essentially eliminate any carry-over of interest in the Fund and pushes the estimated income levels. It was recommended that the board go back and look at several of the grant applications that they had noted they wished to go back to and discuss their recommended funding levels.

The meeting paused for lunch 11:45 a.m.

The meeting reconvened 12:35 p.m.

The board continued discussion on the status of grant awards at this point. They had a general discussion on change of deadlines, once a year versus twice a year, to allow the trust fund interest to grow. Deadlines also have to avoid conflicts with the review agencies (Arts Council, Humanities Council and Historic Preservation) workloads. There was discussion about how the general public will perceive the change of deadlines; where two deadlines have the appearance of being more accessible, but that has to be balanced with the need for the interest on the trust fund to accumulate. Empey suggested that if we have a late spring deadline, it would allow the Fund a chance to accumulate interest and we would also know how the legislature responded to our request to increase the Trust Fund.

The board went back to a few of the grants where they felt they can trim back or cut the award to reach a more comfortable level with the estimated amount of funding currently available. It was finally suggested that the National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center grant be reduced to zero and the Friends of Guernsey State Park grant be reduced to zero as both of these involve bronze works that are not original pieces which had gone through an artist competition or are specific to the site or community, and that the Lander Community Foundation award level be reduced by \$5,000, which would bring the total grant award level to \$256,245.

Empey moved to modify the awards as suggested and approve of awards totaling \$256,245 (as itemized in the attached grant award list). Seconded by Sara Needles. Motion approved unanimously.

Hladky asked Bovée what the status and feedback on the grant awards given in February has been. Bovée provided a brief update to the board on the site visits she had conducted to date. She will provide a written update to the board on her site visits and will provide such updates on a regular basis.

The board continued the discussion on the next grant deadline. It was suggested that if we move the deadline to late spring, several of the future applicants would know what their legislative appropriations will be for the biennium. It was suggested that with a May 1 deadline, grant review would be in May, and a Board meeting in June. Hladky moved to have the next deadline on May 1, 2008, for projects that begin July 1, 2008. Empey seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

The board continued discussion on the grant application form. Discussion focused on caps; matching requirements; inclusion of information about whether requests have already gone through the institutional process for organizations such as the colleges or university, or the state parks or for those larger institutions that have strong internal processes; adherence to historic preservation standards; if the request is for a specific project does the board want a copy of overall budget; and sustainability for salaries and the required reduction of WCTF support over successive years.

The board agreed to keep the cap level at \$50,000 for one more year. If the legislature does not support an increase in the Trust Fund, then the caps may be lowered in the future.

The Board discussed whether they wish to increase the requirement on the match, to where more cash match is required. The board decided not to strengthen the requirement on the cash match at this time. It was suggested that Bovée work on the language in the application about the match requirement. The language must be strengthened to show that cash and in-kind must equal the WCTF award dollar for dollar.

Bovée will also work on incorporating a question into the application as to whether a request has gone through an institution's internal review process or strategic plan, or not, into the questions. She will also modify the questions to inquire that if a project is not following historic preservation standards, why are they not.

The board decided to require that applications which are requesting over \$25,000, provide a copy of their complete annual budget, in addition to the project budget, for review.

It was suggest that the board e-mail Bovée with any suggestions for eliminating redundancies in the evaluation form. She will provide a blank evaluation form to the board.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Other Business

The board reviewed the draft of the letter to Governor Freudenthal requesting his support in funding administrative expenses and the administrator position, and increasing the

Trust Fund itself by \$10 million. The board approved by consensus the letter as written. A copy of the signed letter is attached.

The draft position statement was the crafted after the recent situation that occurred with Sweet School in Weston County. The Sweet School demolition made it into several newspapers and other media in the state and the Cultural Trust Fund's name was mentioned as the Weston County CLG had applied for funding from the Trust to help save the school. Additionally, the state also recently lost the Lingle School. The board discussed whether this statement would be effective as a letter to the editor or whether it would be an internal document. The board discussion lead to this statement being developed as an internal document to aid staff and board in responding to similar future issues. However, the board decided not to proceed with the position statement at this time, and to find an opportunity to meet with Mary Humstone of the University of Wyoming, who has an expertise in the preservation of historic one-room schools.

The board discussed whether they wished to have a future board meeting that is not tied to a grant round, as an opportunity to share of information, meet with colleagues or discuss topics such as strategic planning or responding to larger issues occurring in the field. There was an idea of meeting at a time when the Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Legislative Committee will be meeting or at the upcoming Arts Summit. Chair Reetz also requested that he would like to have the opportunity to meeting with the TRWCR specifically to present an update on the Cultural Trust Fund and to answer questions. Needles and Bovée offered to check into the scheduling a meeting with the TRWCR and for Bovée to schedule a future board meeting that is not grant related.

Needles motioned to adjourn the meeting to go into the Executive Session at 2:35 p.m. Seconded by Shonsey. Unanimously approved.