

## Arts & Culture Board of Trustees Special Meeting: January 6, 2024

### Board Members

Chair: Michele Carter

Vice Chair: Betsy Varland

Secretary: Chevy Meyer

Treasurer: Richard Burk

Shea Burk

Amanda Smylie

Karma McKelvey

City Staff: Clara Chaffin

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**Meeting Called to Order** at 8:33am.

### Attendees

Andrew Schneider, Wyoming Arts Alliance

Amara Fehring, State of Wyoming, Wyoming Arts Council

Amanda Smylie, Board Member

Betsy Varland, Board Member, Vice Chair

(Absent) Chevy Meyer, Board Member, Secretary

Shea Burke, Board Member

(Absent) Karma McKelvey, Board Member

Richard Burke, Board Member, Treasurer

Michele Carter, Board Member, Chairperson

JD Cox, City Manager

Clara Chaffin, Community Development Director (Board Liaison)

Heidi McCullough, Planning Technician (Historic Preservation)

Jen Goodwin, Enterprise

(Absent) Jen Rassmussen, Railroad Museum (Enterprise)

Josh Butts, Culture Officer, Converse County Bank

Matt Carlson, CCSD Middle School Shop Teacher

[andrew.schneider@wyomingarts.org](mailto:andrew.schneider@wyomingarts.org)

[amara.fehring@wyo.gov](mailto:amara.fehring@wyo.gov)

[aismylie@gmail.com](mailto:aismylie@gmail.com)

[betsy@conversehope.org](mailto:betsy@conversehope.org)

[chevyk522@gmail.com](mailto:chevyk522@gmail.com)

[vanessa.shea.burke@gmail.com](mailto:vanessa.shea.burke@gmail.com)

[snktadj@gmail.com](mailto:snktadj@gmail.com)

[ra.burke@hotmail.com](mailto:ra.burke@hotmail.com)

[michele@thinkwy.org](mailto:michele@thinkwy.org)

[jdcox@cityofdouglas.org](mailto:jdcox@cityofdouglas.org)

[cchaffin@cityofdouglas.org](mailto:cchaffin@cityofdouglas.org)

[hmccullough@cityofdouglas.org](mailto:hmccullough@cityofdouglas.org)

[jgoodwin@candowwyoming.com](mailto:jgoodwin@candowwyoming.com)

[angelmom715@yahoo.com](mailto:angelmom715@yahoo.com)

[jbutts@ccbdouglas.com](mailto:jbutts@ccbdouglas.com)

[mcarlson307@gmail.com](mailto:mcarlson307@gmail.com)

### Introduction

Richard gave a quick introduction. The purpose of the special meeting is to put together the Board's purpose, mission, and strategic plan (5-year).

Andrew reviewed MAP (More Arts Program), Wyoming Arts Alliance (WYAA), and the Wyoming Arts Council. The arts touch all aspects of a community.

At the end of the meeting, the Board will have set goals and have a vision and a map to guide next steps.

Participants introduced themselves and what the arts mean to them.

### The Collaborative Community

An alliance of individuals and organizations working together for a common purpose.

Develop a community voice.

Enhanced legitimacy.

Improve relationships.

Challenges: working alone, working in groups, differences of opinion. Key to overcoming challenges is to slow down but continue to move in a forward direction → builds strong collaboration.

5-year: Consider who will be at the table in the future. Develop a clear plan.

Develop a local network. Who can assist with the vision and mission of the Board? How can other organizations be a part of the vision and mission? When asking others to join the conversation, collaboration happens.

Map out expectations: welcoming and inclusive, but clear expectations to new members or collaborative entities.

Ensure all members of the board have a strong voice.

Consider the idea of a brand for the board.

When other people with aligning talents present themselves, invite to join the Board (when openings are available) or as an ex-officio member.

SWOT Exercise

<b>Strengths (What are the strengths of the Board? What are the strengths of the community?)</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
1. Arts & Culture Board of Trustees.	1. Fear of boom/bust economy. Fear to invest in the community long-term.
2. Diverse backgrounds on the Board.	2. Social Media (very active, sometimes angry, social media platforms).
3. City Council Support. Financially support.	3. Negative Public Opinion.
4. Community Partners who have been attending Board meetings.	4. Might not always have financial support.
5. Diverse leadership – on the Board and partners.	5. Lack of follow-through.
6. Douglas' lack of A&C enables the Board to start from the beginning.	6. Ability to get new membership on the board when terms expire.
7. Clean slate.	7. Board not working together.
8. Board has a common goal (unity) to get A&C in Douglas.	8. Board taking ideas into action.
9. Hunger for A&C at the community level.	9. Board has a lot of idea people, but unsure of action people.
10. Resources: WYAA, WAC, WY Humanities, WY Community Foundation, individuals.	10. Board turnover.
11. Stakeholder (local) support.	11. Ability for the Board to prioritize.
12. Unity within the Board.	12. Clean slate.
13. Lots of existing groups and efforts within the community.	13. Proximity to Casper.
14. Community is becoming more diverse and accepting.	14. Migratory worker population not invested in Douglas.
15. Advocacy from CCB encouraging others to step up.	15. Douglas is not attractive (built environment).
16. Natural beauty. Hidden gem.	16. Locals take beauty of natural environment for granted (visitors see the beauty).
17. North Platte River.	17. Public opinion: art is unnecessary – art is not essential, it's an option.
	18. Opinion on how tax dollars are spent.

<p>18. Location and linkage (I-25). 19. Wyoming State Fair.</p>	<p>19. Online preference for experiencing art (digital divide). 20. Lack of participation. Interest does not translate to action/commitment. 21. Cultural outreach and coordination between groups. 22. Winter. 23. We don't know what we don't know. 24. Apathy. 25. Lack of professional services. 26. No culture of community service in Douglas. 27. Lack of labor pool in Douglas. 28. Housing shortage (missing middle). 29. Dug-in on opinions. 30. Traditions. 31. Water constraints. 32. Energy capital but highest cost of fuel in the state. 33. Communication challenges.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p>
<p>1. Clean slate. Create identity. 2. Review City ordinances and guidelines. 3. "Look where we live." 4. Cultural Tourism as an Economic Driver. 5. City Council supporting economic investments to diversify economy. 6. Increase community excitement. 7. A&amp;C education (schools, clubs, activities, partnerships). 8. Increase community interaction. 9. Increase community events. 10. Attract Casper residents. 11. Conferences are drawn to culturally rich communities. 12. Diversify income: Development of new A&amp;C related businesses. 13. Use Placemaking SWOT analysis from May 2017. 14. Youth involvement. Develop mechanism for youth engagement. Mentorships. 15. Pride in the community. 16. Development of leadership succession. 17. Diversity of the community. 18. Diversity of the Board. 19. Build partnerships with the State. 20. Coalesce groups under umbrella of collaborative community. 21. Create a culture of engagement.</p>	<p>1. Negative Public Opinion. 2. Change political leadership. 3. Vandalism. 4. City regulations and ordinances. 5. Community mind-set "we can't." 6. Not open to "outsiders." 7. Youth moving away. 8. Funding. 9. Never being satisfied. 10. Lack of communication. 11. Community says they want it, we do it and they don't show up. 12. Inability to collaborate between stakeholders. 13. Educating new or returning residents about activities and services in Douglas. Develop information center as a centralize point of information. 14. Narrow view of what art is and can be (focus on visual only). 15. Economy (boom/bust). 16. Lack of civility and information bias. 17. Sustainability (e.g. water constraints). 18. Political threats (e.g. losing State Fair, 1-cent sales tax). 19. Boad not being able to follow-through. 20. Longevity of communities. 21. Harsh weather. 22. Uninformed political leadership.</p>

<p>22. Integrate out historical narrative into our modern identity.</p> <p>23. Leverage natural beauty for cultural events.</p> <p>24. Walled garden: COG companies want to do business in WY.</p> <p>25. Improve beautification of community.</p> <p>26. Make community desirable to encourage new residents to stay through the winter and for years.</p> <p>27. Engage new residents.</p> <p>28. Find ways to help existing residents be welcoming to new residents.</p> <p>29. Brownfield Remediation (EPA Brownfield Grant).</p> <p>30. Develop an overlay: Creative Arts District.</p> <p>31. Collaborative Opportunities (County, Glenrock, Glendo).</p> <p>32. Demonstrate professional creative pathways to youth. A&amp;C does not have to be a vocation to be an artist.</p> <p>33. Redefine what art is.</p> <p>34. Wyoming is attractive currently.</p>	<p>23. Stuck in ways “this is the way we’ve always done it.”</p> <p>24. Failure to plan for longevity.</p> <p>25. Social media.</p> <p>26. Lack of engagement.</p> <p>27. Public mistrust of government and/or others intentions.</p>
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In future, check back on this SWOT and discuss how the needle has moved.

### **Building a Shared Direction**

Writing activity, minimum 10 sentences, envisioning Douglas as an arts community in 2034. Articles were shared by each attendee. Common themes:

- Community growth.
- Community participation.
- Prosperity.
- Supportive community.
- Natural environment.
- Identity was enhanced.
- Douglas as a destination.
- Diversified economy.

Activity showed that the group has a common vision.

Use exercise for other groups of stakeholders (youth, seniors, leaders, etc.) to obtain what the community sees as the future of Douglas.

### **Community Support (Amara Fehring)**

Amara reviewed the Wyoming Arts Council.

- Resource for the state.
- Have different types of funding opportunities.

- Focuses Reviewed: Health & Wellness – Josh Chrysler (focus on aging citizens and folklore), Creative Specialist – Kim Mittelstadt (works with individual arts), Community Development and Arts Learning – Amara Fehring (education and planning for change, sustainability).
- [Staff at WAC.](#)
- Grant Possibility: [Community Support Grant](#) (max \$10k for operations and max \$7k for arts education) – operation and project support (bills, salaries, marketing, etc., large art projects, or arts education including conferences).
  - 50/50 match. Cannot use other federal funding for the match.
  - Must be a non-profit or governmental entity to apply.
  - Amara and Andrew will review grants prior to being submitted.
  - Grant funding is available for programs and services that take place between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.
  - Applications for FY25 will open February 19, 2024, and close March 29, 2024.
  - Process: Reviewed by staff, reviewed by the panel, public panel (virtual meeting), feedback will be sent to applicants, recommendations, WAC Board review (can call in to defend the grant or change the grant – advocate), WAC Board decision.
  - Identify the community and who will be served by the program.
  - Can apply for the same project multiple years in a row if the project crosses fiscal years.
  - Must demonstrate knowledge of the community (demographics and socioeconomics).
  - A guidebook will be posted closer to the application period opening.
  - Amara has a PowerPoint that will step through the grant process and criteria.
  - More than one organization within a community can apply at the same time.
  - \*Review past grants and comments on the website.
- Art in Public Buildings: program run by WAC.
- The State has many resources that could be beneficial to the vision of the Board.
- Structure: All employees work remotely; relationships are built through the grant process typically but attempts to build relationships outside of grants are encouraged.
- WAC will assist with marketing: will share information via their newsletter and social media.

WYAA support WAC as the arts bring people together.

National Endowment for the Arts will assist with grant writing. Also have funding opportunities.

### **Brainstorming: 5-year Vision & Mission**

Reviewed Resolution 2022-28 language. Highlights:

- “public-sector leadership”: supported by local government.
- “community core for arts and culture”: the Board serves as the supportive center for all of the arts in Douglas; the core is the socioeconomics of the community; a philosophical place; things that make Douglas unique are the core; people power and the philosophical place the Board creates.
- “overseas implementation of A&C”: the Board is not the executors of art, but rather to support and build upon the existing A&C through collaboration; informs decisions made by political leadership; connects to Strategic Doing (Unique & Promotable Identity).

JD briefly discussed the development of the idea of the A&C Board of Trustees. The Resolution was built from other communities’ efforts. Emphasized the Resolution was a start but is a living document that can be modified at some point in the future.

## Vision Brainstorming:

- Build from the City Vision.
- Envisioning a community in which the Arts & Culture play an integral role.
- The arts are integral to the overall vision of Douglas: To be a community with the highest quality of life, growing towards tomorrow.
- To depart from Brown Town.
- Energy sector reliant community – economic future.
- To stabilize and grow Douglas' economy.
- Foster/encourage creativity.
- An environment that cultivates creativity.
- Douglas as a vibrant destination.
- Colorful future.
- Natural environment as a point of pride.
- Gateway to nature
- Embracing our natural beauty.
- SEE Douglas. See the beauty of Douglas (art, history, nature, etc.).
- Where you can touch history. Where history touches you.
- Where you can experience history.
- Adventure is just around the corner.
- Dark-sky.
- Rugged individualism.
- Belief in opportunity.
- Hope in self.
- Resilient.
- Upbeat, positive, adventure creative ethos.
- The arts support the economy.
- The arts are \_\_\_\_ (have impact) to Douglas's economy.
- A gateway to Wyoming's backcountry beauty.
- Inviting, beautiful built environment.
- Cultural events happen.
- North Platte River, Medicine Bow National Forest, Thunder Basin Grasslands
- Build a brand.
- Strategic Doing: Unique and Promotable Identity – Downtown Streetscape.
- Tourism. When visitors see the community as a center for the arts it encourages spending and possible increase in businesses and residents.

Vision Summary: To foster an environment that encourages and cultivates cohesive creativity.

Mission Idea: The A&C Board will cultivate a community of collaboration in which the arts serve as a boon to the local economy, help define Douglas's identity as a vibrant destination, and act as a catalyst for the City's Vision: To be a community with the highest quality of life, growing towards tomorrow.

## **Priorities: Your Role**

1. Show the City Council and the community what the Board can do and to show that very quickly: focus on something that can contribute to the economy of Douglas before the end of the fiscal year.

- a. An old billboard was recently found in the baggage car at the Railroad Museum. The Museum would like to put the billboard up for display and use to screen the industrial property adjacent to the Museum.
2. Foster environment for existing agencies/groups to engage and collaborate. Provide a venue for people to collaborate. "Friend-Raiser." Empower people and provide a framework so that it is self-sustaining.
  - a. Local businesses (host happy hours)
  - b. Churches
  - c. Nonprofits
  - d. School district
  - e. B&G
  - f. 4-H
  - g. Master Gardeners
  - h. Individual artists
  - i. Tourism
  - j. Other Municipal Boards
3. Participate in existing events (e.g., Jackalope Days).

#### FY2024 Ideas (1-Year)

1. **Jack Statue (UPI-05):** Jack at Walnut Street Parking Lot. Install in FY2024. Consider a traveling Jack & Harriet. Consider placing at Tourism Center (Railroad Museum)?
  - a. Develop a sub committee to bring ideas to the Board.
2. **Murals (UPI-08) (UPI-01):** Opportunity to educate the community about the A&C Board. Get one mural done in FY2024.
3. **Interactive Feature at Jackalope Square (UPI-06).**
4. **Train Graffiti (UPI-09):** Incorporate with Railroad Days/Jackalope Days.
5. **Destination Development (WORTH Initiative).**
6. **Beautification (FUN-01):** Develop a process and provide tools to beautify eyesores in the community.
  - a. Inventory existing spaces and pros/cons.
7. **112 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street:** Participate in 112 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street visioning – expand to vacant spaces in Downtown.
8. **Branding Workshop:** Identify and develop the brand of the Downtown District that will be promoted. Douglas Main Street, Downtown business and property owners need to be involved. Involve diverse demographic groups (e.g., youth, seniors, business owners, families, government, etc.).
  - a. Consider inviting high-school kids to the A&C Board meeting. Future: Develop a Youth A&C Board of Trustees.
  - b. **Downtown Sketchbook:** Define the finite details of the Downtown Sketchbook.
9. **Community Involvement:** Set-up booth at events (e.g., First Thursday's) with art related activity.
10. **Collaboration:** Enhance existing meetings and activities to enable more collaboration.
  - a. Attend the Community Calendar meetings (next meeting February 1); may evolve to be more of a collaborative style meeting.
  - b. Board members start inviting stakeholders to the February 1 meeting.
11. **Policy:** Develop a policy to accept art donations by the end of FY2024. (May need to recommend to City Council for adoption dependent on the nature of the policy.)

5-Year: Establish by March 2024.

1. Jackalope Event Center as the Center for the Arts in Douglas. Establish culinary/creative/doing space. Establish a gallery/exhibit space.
2. Encourage youth involvement. Create Youth Leadership program (The Enterprise is already working on this idea).

### **Action Items**

1. Develop a Best Practices Handbook and Map Expectations (will assist new members in knowing what are the expectations).
2. Consider development of bylaws stemming from the Resolution outlining all the different roles (board vs community vs city etc.).
3. Consider a brand for the Board. "Look where we live."
4. Amara to send a listing of WAC staff and the programs each staff member covers.
5. Review priorities/goals and use to help frame the Mission & Vision.
6. At January Board meeting prioritize the 1-Year projects.
7. Install Jack statue.
8. Install one mural.
9. Work on Collaboration starting with Community Calendar meetings.
10. February 23, 2024: Annual Cultural Recognition Day. Show up to the Capitol to speak with legislators and share the "wins".
11. Invite legislators to events and activities.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 5:13pm.