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Mayor's Council on the Arts Grants Subcommittee Meeting December 9, 2025

Mayor's Council on the Arts' Grant Subcommittee members Brad Lunz, Tyson Voigt, and Georgia Lynn Dean, along with Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman and Assistant to the City Clerk Trish Edwards, met in the Lake Crago Recreation Complex classroom to review the 2025-2026 Lakeland Mayor's Council on the Arts grant applications.

The meeting was called to order at 9:47 a.m.

Staff reviewed the revised grants process. Committee members were thanked for their participation and feedback. Trish Edwards reviewed the aggregated individual scorecards for the grant applicants.

The committee discussed:

- If there is a consensus among members, could the committee adjust average scores beyond the scorecards. It was noted that this is at the discretion of the committee.
- Challenges comparing organizations of differing capacity, particularly full-time staffed organizations versus all-volunteer or newer entities.
- Concerns were raised about the disproportionate impact of percentage cuts on smaller organizations.
- Future discussions on the application and rubric, specifically clarity on core programming and character limits (500 characters was noted as restrictive).
- Historically organizations were funded based on their role within the arts ecosystem.
- It was helpful to come together and discuss scores rather than working in a silo.
- Not all applicants can receive perfect scores and outcomes ultimately came down to rubric interpretation.
- Suggested providing feedback to applicants—either written or through a future meeting—to explain scoring outcomes. This suggestion was supported by the committee.

Trish Edwards reviewed the grant allocation spreadsheet organization by organization.

Funding Overview:

- Available funding: \$375,000
- Total requested: \$452,119.18

The committee discussed methods for reducing allocations equitably, including:

- Across-the-board percentage reductions
- Tiered funding based on organizational budget size
- Avoiding disproportionate penalties to higher-scoring organizations

Several funding scenarios were discussed, including:

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- Establishing funding “tiers” or multiple funding pots.
- Skimming modest amounts from larger organizations to fully fund smaller ones
- Exploring caps on operating budgets (noted as potentially alienating).
- Funding 81% of requested amounts, totaling approximately \$366,218.53, and reserving the remaining funds for further discussion.
- While the approach may not be perfectly “fair,” it would be equitable and aligned with the Council’s values.

Action: Member Brad Lunz moved to fund grant awards at 81% of requested amounts and bring the remaining balance forward to the full Council in January for further discussion. Member Tyson Voigt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Based on the action taken by the Grants Subcommittee, the awards are as follows:

- The Ashley Gibson Barnett Museum of Art (The AGB): **\$58,725.00**
- Bonnet Springs Park: **\$60,075.00**
- Florida Children's Museum: **\$60,075.00**
- Florida Dance Arts, Inc.: **\$10,850.40**
- Harrison School for the Arts Parents' Association: **\$3,600.00**
- The Lakeland Art Guild, DBA The Lakeland Arts Association: **\$8,968.48**
- Lakeland Community Theatre: **\$52,600.07**
- Lakeland Symphony Orchestra: **\$38,250.00**
- Platform Art, Inc.: **\$9,118.58**
- Polk Theatre, Inc.: **\$60,750.00**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 p.m.