

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
Arts and Cultural Events Council
June 5th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM

Attending: Mayor Brad Belt, Chair David Wohl, Program Manager Caroline Wall, Communications Manager Meredith Blair, Members Kimberly Adele, Dylan Keith, Joan Collar, Kristin Thompson, and Bill Blizard

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Arts & Cultural Events Meeting Minutes of May 1st, 2025

The minutes from the May 1st, 2025, meeting were approved.

III. Old Business

- A. Review of the current season's financial report. The chair indicated that this information was included in the members' folders. Caroline had presented the financial information for the Arts Council from their two funds: the Cultural Events fund and the Arts fund. David proceeded to review the financial reports for both funds. For the Cultural Events budget, there were five events with a budget of \$182,000 and an estimated expense of \$142,000. The chair noted that they were close to where they were in terms of expense budget. David highlighted the fact that no-shows for free events were up to 35-45%, sometimes 50%. There was a correlation between ticket prices and no-shows, with more expensive events having fewer no-shows. The bottom line for both budgets was close to projections, with the Arts budget being about \$1,000 off from estimates.

David encouraged members to examine the estimates versus the actuals, noting that they were doing better with the original estimates. He mentioned that going forward, they would start tracking the proposal estimate versus the actual expenses, as many changes can occur between planning and execution.

There was a brief discussion ensued about specific line items and reimbursements. Joan mentioned that some expenses for food were not accurately reflected in the report. David advised members to review the line items, especially on their proposals, and to inform Caroline of any mismatches.

David briefly discussed the "carry-over" of box office income. SATAX and General Revenue funds were NOT carried over into the new fiscal year but two years ago he met with Dorota and Stephanie and it was understood that box office revenue would be carried over. Ticket revenue for 2024-25 was \$87,000 in total box office revenue and we started the season knowing that we would dip into that expected income to fund TUSK. David estimated that \$45,000 and \$50,000 would be carried over. Some of these funds would need to be earmarked for contingencies, the rest for new mid-season proposals. This amount would be finalized over the summer after all 2024-25 invoices were paid.

III. New Business

A. **2025-2026 Season Update**

Caroline provided an update on the upcoming season. She reported that they were doing well with contracts, with about half of them already received. Mayor Brad Belt and Caroline were planning to review and finalize these contracts soon. Caroline was trying to enforce a deadline for the remaining contracts by the following Friday, with the goal of starting promotions by June 30th.

David reviewed a spreadsheet prepared by Caroline that showed the estimated costs and actuals for the upcoming events. He explained that they were starting to track the proposal estimates versus the actual expenses to better understand any discrepancies. There was a discussion about piano rental costs. Caroline explained that she had used an average amount of \$2,000 for piano rentals, as weekend rentals were more expensive than weekday rentals.

B. Venue Updates: Holy Spirit Catholic Church and The Sandcastle

David reported that Holy Spirit Catholic Church had notified them last month that they couldn't use the venue for a couple of planned events. This change affected their ability to charge for a Lyubov Petrova concert, which would now be held at another church where they couldn't charge admission. David and Caroline plan to visit Holy Spirit to present a check and ensure the relationship remains positive. They noted that there had been changes in leadership at the church, which might have affected the availability of the venue.

Regarding The Sandcastle, KICA's new policy on guests was discussed. Joan had approached Seabrook as an alternative venue, but they required a list of attendees, which would affect the open nature of the events. Joan was also exploring the Church of Our Savior as a potential venue. David suggested having a further conversation with KICA about The Sandcastle, noting that they do allow outside people for events like weddings. One possibility of paying for the venue use, similar to how they handle wedding rentals, but the expense might be prohibitive. Alternative venues such as Seafields/Bishop Gadsden were suggested.

C. September Meeting Date Change

David announced that due to a scheduled event on the first Thursday of September, the next meeting would be moved to September 11th instead of September 4th.

David also discussed the process for new proposals which would be funded from the carried-over box office revenue. After contingencies, he estimated they would have between \$30,000 to \$35,000 in extra funds, possibly a bit more. Given that their average event cost was about \$17,000, they were likely looking at adding two or three events.

David outlined the priorities for new proposals:

- Filling gaps in the schedule, particularly noting that they only had one event each in January and February.
- Considering genre balance, noting they already had several classical and jazz events.
- Taking advantage of routing possibilities, such as booking acts that might be passing through the area at a discounted rate.

David asked members to limit themselves to one proposal each and emphasized that proposals were not mandatory. He also mentioned that they were working on a revised proposal form that would be sent out later in the month.

The deadline for new proposals was set for September 1st, with voting to take place at the September 11th meeting. The chair also tentatively scheduled September 18th as a backup meeting date if needed.

IV. Correspondence

The chair received another letter from Bob Hill, a former Arts Council member, requesting consideration of booking the Charleston Men's Chorus. The chair had initially thought it might be good for Christmas, but given the two December events already scheduled, he was less optimistic. He invited any interested members to contact Bob if they wanted to pursue this option.

V. Chairman's Comments

David mentioned that he had "unretired" again and taken a new full-time job as the interim director of the arts administration graduate program at Winthrop University through December. This position would be fully remote.

Mayor Belt was invited to provide an update on the design process for the new annex/venue. The Town has issued an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) and held an on-site meeting with 12 different firms attending. The chairman expressed surprise and enthusiasm about the level of interest. The firms came from various locations including DC, Columbia, and the Charleston area. He noted that everyone seemed excited about the project and thought it was feasible. He also mentioned ongoing conversations with organizations such as the Charleston Library Society, Gibbs Museum, and Charleston Museum about potential programming opportunities with Kiawah. The chair and Mayor discussed the increasing traffic issues affecting travel times to Charleston, noting that this might increase the desire for more local events.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Kristin Thompson. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM.