

**ARTS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 25, 2025
City Hall, Conference Room #6**

Attendees: Chairman Mary Lee Ryba, Vice Chair Abby Light, Commissioner Charlotte Doutriaux, Commissioner Chuck Ethridge, Commissioner Kate Walker, Commissioner Sally Shortridge, Commissioner Tracey Benson, Commissioner Cynthia Newkirk, Commissioner Duncan Menzies, Commissioner Nora Crabtree, Commissioner Alysyn Amaya, City Administrator Troy Tymesen, and Councilmember Amy Evans

Guests: Jackie Butera, Shayla Tyler and Alexis Wood of CHS

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Ryba called the meeting to order.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION: There was none.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Doutriaux, seconded by Commissioner Light, to approve the October 28, 2025 meeting minutes. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Tymesen provided a brief overview of the October 2025 financial report. He noted that in Fund 076 (Public Art und – Ignite), the October column reflects a \$2,000 expenditure covering the renewal of stipends for Dale Young's *Gaia* and *Eternal Mudra* installed at Atlas Waterfront Park for the period October 2025–October 2026. In Fund 074, October expenses include \$999 for the Mayor's Arts Awards, \$799 for a digital piano rental and \$200 for Matt Goodrich's performance, and an additional \$8,500 consisting of \$6,000 for ArtCurrents annual artist stipends, \$1,000 coverage for the damaged *Blue Spire* sculpture following negotiation with the artist, and \$1,500 for next year's Poet Laureate stipend. Fund 077 had no notable expenditure, with its balance remaining intact.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Menzies, seconded by Commissioner Walker to approve the October 2025 Financial Report. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

COMMISSIONER/ STAFF COMMENTS: None

CREATION OF A FILM SUBCOMMITTEE: Commissioner Doutriaux outlined the goal of supporting local artists by building two sub teams, one dedicated to local filmmaking and one to film festivals such as NoID, so the city can better promote filmmakers and aid in planning for the 2026 festival. She described challenges producers face in finding local talent and proposed creating a comprehensive database of filmmakers, actors, crew, locations, studios, and grant resources. Ms. Jackie Butera of Paradox Studios shared their locally produced film *Recollection*, and her broader efforts to grow the film community by developing workforce pathways, establishing internships, and advocating for a state level film incentive program to ensure funding and opportunities are

shared equitably across Idaho. She stressed the need for a unified infrastructure in North Idaho and noted that a city-supported subcommittee could provide legitimacy, central coordination, and help maintain databases, streamline permitting, and decrease barriers for filmmakers. Commissioner Doutriaux then outlined potential support for film festivals, including expanding venues, promoting events through press outreach, coordinating with tourism partners, assisting with submissions, facilitating workshops, supporting sponsors, and possibly helping with long-term sustainability through an endowment fund. She concluded by proposing sub team membership, meeting frequency, and a tentative timeline leading up to the September 2026 NoID Film Festival.

Chair Ryba supported the idea of including non-commissioners, noting that knowledgeable community members like Blair Williams and new commissioner Denise Yost, who works with Art Spirit, could contribute meaningfully. She emphasized the value of involving Innovation Den and acknowledged that Spokane already has substantial filming infrastructure, including converted spaces in the former North Spokane Mall. Commissioner Menzies asked whether NoID, which now meets monthly and has expanded beyond its annual festival, could potentially manage the proposed filmmaker database, suggesting the Arts Commission might serve more as a conduit than a repository. Commissioner Doutriaux responded that while she has not specifically asked NoID to manage a database, they are aligned with the subcommittee's goals and would likely be willing contributors, making it a strong idea to add to the action plan. Chair Ryba noted the NoID film festival is now entering its third year and thanked Jackie for her ongoing work. Ms. Butera clarified that although Spokane has strong film infrastructure such as Hamilton Studios, Idaho's proposed film incentive, if passed under current language, would prohibit productions from using out-of-state facilities because qualifying projects must spend a required percentage of their budget and hire crew within Idaho. She emphasized that North Idaho currently lacks enough film crew to operate independently and can support only one project at a time, and she is working to amend the incentive language so border communities could temporarily access Spokane's resources without jeopardizing eligibility.

Commissioner Ethridge suggested connecting with Adam Kroger, the new theater professor at North Idaho College, noting that he has experience in workforce-development film grants in Los Angeles and serves in an advisory role to U.S. military film operations. Commissioner Light inquired about the subcommittee membership and Commissioner Doutriaux estimated four. Commissioners Benson, Menzies, and Light signified interest in joining Commissioner Doutriaux in the Film Subcommittee. Commissioner Ethridge added that many film-crew professionals come from theater tech and suggested exploring crossover talent for the database, noting shortages in both fields. He shared conversations with contacts in Spokane and highlighted the potential alignment between scenic painters, theater technicians, and film crew needs.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Doutriaux, seconded by Commissioner Shortridge, to create a Film Subcommittee. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

MURAL CO-FUND PROGRAM PROPOSAL: Vice Chair Light explained that the co-fund program is designed as a co-funded partnership between artists and interested businesses, modeled after Gabrielle Lewis's successful Tomlinson Sotheby's mural project. She noted that not all artists have the experience to pitch projects or build proposals, so the commission plans to support them by using free guidebooks from Springboard for the Arts and possibly hosting workshops through

the Arts & Culture Alliance's Arts Buzz sessions with experienced muralists like Melissa Cole. Vice Chair Light emphasized that the program's foundation is to empower artists and private businesses - without the City taking ownership, managing projects, or fully funding them - by contributing roughly 10% as a baseline, adjusted depending on project size. She stressed that the City's role is to provide tools, resources, and guidance so partnerships can grow sustainably.

Chair Ryba stressed that the co-fund model in which the Arts Commission contributes roughly 10% to demonstrate public support for local mural projects while primary funding remains the responsibility of artists, businesses, or partners. Vice Chair Light added that applicants must show those partnerships before being eligible for the City's portion. Mr. Tymeson suggested incorporating environmental considerations such as paint types and proximity to water into the guidelines. Chair Ryba proposed revisiting this in the February meeting since the January meeting is already dedicated for guidelines review.

CANCELLATION OF DECEMBER 23, 2025 ARTS COMMISSION MEETING: Chair Ryba announced that the December 23, 2025 Arts Commission meeting will be cancelled. She noted that the January meeting will be brief and will include a presentation on the guidelines. She added that she hopes to invite the incoming Mayor to attend the Commission's meeting in March.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES: Chair Ryba stated that she distributed a template intended to help subcommittee chairs keep their materials organized for continuity when leadership changes. She emphasized the importance of ensuring each subcommittee's plan aligns with Commission priorities. She requested that chairs provide her with at least a draft of their completed templates by December 31 so she can review them with the consultant preparing the updated guidelines ahead of the January meeting.

Coeur d'Alene Arts Awards: Chair Ryba thanked Ms. Mateski for helping to send out thank-you letters, cosigned by herself and the mayor, to performers, silent-auction contributors, and other participants.

ArtCurrents: Commissioner Menzies explained that he is developing a project to create short videos by commissioners highlighting public artworks around the city, sharing each piece's location, artist, and story, for use on social media, and he is compiling a masterlist so commissioners can select pieces and upload content, hoping to have it ready by the next meeting. Chair Ryba estimated February as a more realistic timeline and mentioned the Otocast Audio app and the importance of driving more engagement as it provides valuable analytics showing which artworks attract the most attention.

Arts Commission Applicant Review: Chair Ryba announced the recent appointment of Denise Yost to the Arts Commission.

Visual Arts: Vice Chair Light announced that the Arts & Culture Alliance has received a major EPA grant for a two-year "Living Lake Project" fellowship, developed in partnership with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, which will engage artists from Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshone counties to work with environmental scientists and create projects that communicate issues affecting lake health. She explained that the call for artists

opens in January, the \$350,000 grant fully funds participants, and the final projects may take many forms, from performances to murals, based on a cohort model inspired by Springboard for the Arts. Chair Ryba congratulated Vice Chair Light and noted that the Green Energy Dragon served as a strong local example of art translating complex environmental concerns; she also asked about artist compensation, program structure, and timeline, to which Vice Chair Light confirmed full funding, multiple info sessions, and a two-year window for completion. Mr. Tymesen asked what constitutes a finished product, and Vice Chair Light emphasized that the format is intentionally flexible. Chair Ryba reminded the group that the Arts Commission supported this grant, and Vice Chair Light offered to share additional materials with anyone interested. Commissioners Crabtree and Amaya expressed interest in joining the Visual Arts Subcommittee.

Performing & Music Arts: Commissioner Benson reported that theater activity is currently light, noting that *Little Women* is running at Lake City Playhouse and Aspire is presenting a one-night Christmas variety show titled *Offbeat Christmas* on December 8, along with the annual holiday production at the Kroc. She added that planning for the Art Spotlight program will begin earlier this year so the subcommittee can launch it sooner, though no major changes are anticipated after a successful inaugural year. Chair Ryba mentioned that singer Jenny Shotwell, who performed at the Arts Awards and won the Excellence in the Arts Award, is featured in the newspaper for her annual Christmas show at the CDA Resort and noted that Shotwell's son stars as a young John Travolta in an upcoming film.

Marketing & Technology: Chair Ryba mentioned that they will schedule a meeting to discuss the Otocast Audio Tour guide in December or January.

Emerge Art Scholarships: Commissioner Walker stated that the next 90-days report will come next month.

Commissioner Ryba shared that Commissioner Walker wanted to do a subcommittee about the two fallen firefighters. She will be reaching out to the Fire Department to explore possible collaboration as they may have started a similar project.

New Member Training/ Policies: Chair Ryba stated that there is still one vacancy in the Commission.

Poet Laureate: Chair Ryba shared that Jenni will attend a conference in April. Commissioner Shortridge mentioned that Jenni is requesting funding support. Mr. Tymesen stated that she can submit a proposal.

Guidelines Development: Chair Ryba noted that Max Mendez, an experienced local artist and longtime NIC faculty member skilled in strategic planning, will lead the guidelines review in January.

CDA October Arts & Humanities Month: Chair Ryba stated that the subcommittee acknowledges that limited sponsorship this year resulted from outreach occurring too late. She emphasized the need to begin sponsorship cultivation earlier, ideally by June.

Northern Journeys Publication: Commissioner Newkirk reported that the subcommittee met and confirmed that Chelsea Cordova of *Northern Journeys* is currently securing advertising for the upcoming issue, which will feature several arts-focused articles, including pieces on Poet Laureate, information about the Arts Commission provided by Chair Ryba, a story on muralist Gabrielle Lewis, a profile of arts supporter Dan Pinkerton, and an article on Jackie Butera and Paradox Studios. She noted that individual artists are also encouraged to submit work, as the publication includes clear submission directions, and she highlighted its high-quality color reproduction and wide distribution throughout local restaurants and venues. The subcommittee aims to finalize all content by mid-February, with printing scheduled for mid-March and distribution running from April through September for the spring–summer issue, followed by a fall–winter issue released in October. Commissioner Newkirk added that she and Chelsea reviewed distribution locations, suggesting additions such as the Coeur d’Alene Library and Museum of North Idaho, and she plans to provide an updated report in the February meeting. Chair Ryba suggested including a photo of the Arts Commission members.

ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Crabtree, seconded by Commissioner Doutriaux to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. **Motion carried.**

The meeting ended at 5:15 p.m.

The next Arts Commission meeting will be on January 27, 2026.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jo Anne Mateski
Executive Assistant