

MINNESOTA DANCE ADVOCACY TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, October 7, 2024 – 5-7PM – Red Eye + Zoom

In attendance:

Zhané Jackson(facilitator), Elayna Waxse, Mathew Janczewski, Sarah Larose- Hollan, Louise Robinson, Raymond Terrill, Michael Pettee, Kayla Schiltgen, LaTia Childers, Gary Peterson, Laurie Van Wieren, Ben Johnson, Vie Boheme, Dana Kassel, Kari Schoner, Chitra Vairavan, Valerie Oliviero, Karen Charles, Eve Schulte, Emily Gastineau, Jim Lieberthal, Joanne Gordon, Kealoha Ferreira, Iman Siferllah-Griffin, LaKisha Hollmon-Griffin

Summary:

Welcoming circle began providing information on who was in the room.

Ben Johnson provided updates on the City of Minneapolis's budget proposal for arts and cultural affairs, highlighting the importance of community advocacy for dance funding. He discussed the Bridge Fund for Dance at the Kohl Center, urging attendees to connect with their council representatives to support arts initiatives. Johnson outlined key components of the budget, including funding for civic arts programs and dance education, while also addressing concerns about parking affordability and public safety during events. He reassured participants of his commitment to transparency and effective use of funds, emphasizing the need for ongoing dialogue to address these critical issues.

The conversation also delved into the complexities of equity, inclusion, and the importance of creating a genuinely welcoming environment within the dance community. Val Oliviero, Zhané, Elayna, Karen and others facilitated discussions on the nuances of language related to these themes, stressing the need for clarity and awareness of historical oppressions that shape power dynamics. Participants shared personal motivations for engaging in the dance community, with a focus on fostering deeper connections and ensuring accessibility for future generations. The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to advocate for a more equitable and vibrant dance culture in Minnesota, highlighting the potential for growth and collaboration within the community.

Chapters & Topics:

Introductions and Opening Remarks

The meeting began with Zhané Jackson facilitating introductions among participants. Attendees shared their names, affiliations, and pronouns. This approach fostered a sense of community and connection among the diverse group.

* Introduction of participants and their affiliations.

Updates on Dance Community Advocacy

Ben Johnson shared insights on his recent presentation to the city council advocating for the dance community's funding through the Bridge Fund for Dance. He encouraged attendees to reach out to their council district representatives to express gratitude and support for arts initiatives, highlighting the significance of community voices in influencing budget decisions.

Funding and Support for the Arts in Minneapolis

Ben Johnson outlined the City of Minneapolis's budget proposal for arts and cultural affairs, which includes funding for a civic arts program, dance education, and art preservation in George Floyd Square. He emphasized the importance of community advocacy for these initiatives and mentioned the bridge funding aimed at supporting dance companies during the closure of the Cowles Center.

* Communication and collaboration between the dance community and city officials.

Funding and Communication for Dance Programs

Ben Johnson outlined the new funding for dance programs, which ranges from \$10,000 to \$20,000, and highlighted the necessity of effective communication with the task force. Laurie Van Wieren expressed her desire for better engagement in decision-making and noted a lack of awareness about previous meetings. Johnson reassured her that he aims to be transparent and responsive to the community's needs.

Parking and Safety Concerns in the Dance Community

Karen Charles highlighted the importance of addressing parking costs and public safety in town hall conversations. They pointed out that high parking fees, sometimes reaching \$40, are a significant burden for the dance community. Ben Johnson responded by recognizing these challenges and mentioned that funding could be utilized to alleviate parking expenses for dancers, while also noting the overall safety concerns in busy downtown areas.

Community Engagement and Support for the Dance Sector

Ben Johnson discussed the various programs aimed at addressing safety and vagrancy in downtown Minneapolis while advocating for the dance community to engage with city council members. He encouraged artists to share their stories and concerns, emphasizing the need for a boilerplate email to facilitate communication. Johnson also mentioned the impending end of funding from the National Dance Project, urging the community to explore new funding opportunities.

Discussion on Equity, Inclusion, and Safe Spaces

Zhané Jackson led a dialogue focused on refining the language used to describe safe spaces, equity, and inclusion. The discussion emphasized the importance of clear terminology that reflects an awareness of power dynamics and historical context. Participants debated the effectiveness of terms like "safe space" and "welcome," considering their implications for trust and vulnerability within the community.

Exploring Aspirations and Trust in the Minnesota Dance Community

Michael Pettee raises the idea of celebrating the breadth of the Minnesota dance community while acknowledging that not everyone may feel included. The conversation highlights the significance of understanding historical oppressions and their impact on power dynamics, aiming to build trust and deeper connections within the community.

- * The importance of collaboration and reducing competition within the dance community.

Exploring the Purpose Behind Dance Advocacy

Zhané Jackson led a conversation about the personal motivations for engaging in the dance community, members shared their reasons for involvement. LaTia Childers emphasized the importance of accessibility in dance. Zhané also reflected on the need for true engagement and collaboration within the Minnesota dance ecosystem.

- * The need for organizational development to support dance outside of urban areas, particularly in rural Minnesota.

Action Items:

- * all share 1-2 pics with photo credit and description (artists/company, performance, class, etc) to mndancetaskforce@gmail.com to aid in posts to our socials
- * Ben Johnson will provide updates and information regarding the funding and support for the dance community. Develop a plan for ongoing communication between the task force and city officials.
- * Ben Johnson will ensure that all efforts are made to distribute and spend the allocated funds effectively.
- * Louise Robinson and Emily Gastineau will revisit the “equity” language in the RFP
- * if members have questions of Michael’s “notes” within budget shared with the AGENDA, please inquire
- * Emily Gastineau and Karen Charles will Create a boilerplate email to share with dance community to encourage city council members to support the dance arts and approve the Mayor’s suggested budget for the “Bridge for Dance”
- * Mathew Janczewski will create a framework for engagement and collaboration among different dance communities in Minnesota by working with Regional Arts Councils
- * We as a group contemplate and share personal motivations for being part of the dance task force.
- * Mathew will follow up with Stephen Magner on Graphic Design willingness

NEXT MEETING -

Monday, October, 21

5:00PM -7:00PM (4:45 pm -5:00 pm; new visitors welcoming)

(Hybrid) Center for Performing Arts and Zoom

3754 Pleasant Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55409

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89653598404?pwd=nwH1sZlYzaMwFaXkHDIwJAYhMZeU5n.1>

Meeting ID: 896 5359 8404
Passcode: 215983