



COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Marshall Garrett, Chair
Derek Dean
Sheila Hennessey
Adrian San Miguel
Laurel Sayer
Blair Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Marsha Bjornn
Julia Oxarango-Ingram
LaVerne Sessions

COMMISSIONERS JOINING LATE

Diana Livingston-Friedley, Vice Chair

PUBLIC PRESENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Laura Curry, Executive Director
Jadee Carson, Chief Operating Officer
Jenni Florendo, Communications, Outreach Specialist
Steven Hatcher, State Folklorist
Rebecca Martin, Arts Education Director
John McMahan, Operations Analyst
Jocelyn Robertson, Deputy Director
Maribel Saucedo-Gonzalez, Grants, Ops Specialist

STAFF ABSENT

None

GUESTS

None

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Chair Garrett called the meeting to order on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 12:03 pm MT.

2. State of the Arts

Arts Education Director Martin gave a presentation about the agency’s Creative Aging work.

3. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2025

It was moved (Commissioner Hennessey) and seconded (Commissioner San Miguel) that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Chair’s Remarks

Subject

Chair Garrett encouraged commissioners to calendar upcoming meeting dates.

5. Executive Director’s Remarks

WELCOME NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Director Curry welcomed Maribel Saucedo-Gonzalez as the new Grants and Operations Specialist, noting her extensive grants and compliance experience, her BS in Criminal Justice Administration, and her fluency in Spanish. Maribel will become the primary contact for grant recipients. Director Curry also welcomed Jenni Florendo as the new Communications and Outreach Specialist, highlighting her background in communications, digital design, and community engagement. Jenni will lead the team in the creation of a comprehensive communications plan aimed at deepening the agency’s connections with Idaho communities, grant recipients, and legislators.

BUDGET OUTLOOK

Director Curry shared that latest reports estimate that Idaho faces a projected \$600 million to \$1 billion gap for FY 2027, in addition to the FY 2026 shortfall, due to lower revenues and recent tax policy changes. She noted that the balanced-budget requirement may lead to spending adjustments and the use of reserves. She noted that the agency must clearly demonstrate how the arts support statewide priorities such as education, rural communities, economic vitality, and quality of life.

DOGE COMMITTEE UPDATES

Director Curry reported that the DOGE Task Force advanced proposals to eliminate or merge six state entities, with estimated savings of just over \$300,000. She noted that some proposals were controversial or tabled. She reminded the Commission that recommendations move to the Legislature for 2026 consideration and that the task force has narrowed its review to 32 agencies, likely including ours. She stated that no action affecting the agency is expected before the December meeting or the upcoming session, giving time to finalize the annual report and engage legislators.

NASAA EXECUTIVE FORUM RECAP

Director Curry summarized her participation in the NASAA Executive Forum, citing valuable strategic discussions and peer learning. She noted that many states are working to strengthen commissioner engagement, making the Commissioner Activation Plan timely, and that small agencies are expanding impact through partnerships, aligning with the agency's strategic plan. She also observed the importance of including other agencies and organizations in future communications efforts.

A250 UPDATES

Director Curry provided updates on three A250 events: Idaho Poetry Out Loud will continue spotlighting student recitations; Cowgirl Congress in Ketchum (June 11–21) will feature workshops and exhibitions with women Western artists; and the Smithsonian-affiliated Blackfoot Ranch Rodeo (June 26–27) will offer competitions, youth activities, music, vendors, and fireworks.

IT'S WORKING!

Director Curry reported strong positive feedback from the Governor's office about the thank-you notes from grant recipients and shared that one recipient received a personal response from the Governor. She noted that these interactions show growing engagement and confirm that the agency's outreach strategy is effective.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. New Business

Meeting Procedures

Chair Garrett invited commissioner feedback on the Meeting Procedures document included in the December Commission Meeting Book. Commissioners discussed the importance of clearly noting action items on the agenda and considered requiring commissioners to review meeting minutes and submit proxy votes to approve them if absent. There was general agreement that proxy votes could be useful, agendas should be specific, and a simple majority

constitutes a quorum. Director Curry and Chair Garrett will revise the document and present it to the Commission for ratification.

8. Old Business

Commissioner Activation Plan

Chair Garrett asked for feedback on the Grant Recipient Interview Forms included in the December Commission Meeting Book. Commissioners agreed to submit completed forms to Director Curry, who will identify common themes and highlight regional impact stories. Operations Analyst McMahon provided instructions via email for accessing Webgrants to review information about grant recipients and offered support to anyone needing assistance. With no questions about the forms or process, Chair Garrett encouraged Commissioners to begin their grant recipient interviews.

North Star

Chair Garrett recapped the previous Commission discussion on the Grants North Star, highlighting the key themes that emerged from the conversation: meaningful impact, public benefit, and access. He asked Commissioners to consider what would be different if the agency were achieving these goals effectively. Suggestions included: JFAC would be proactively offering funding to the agency; the agency would not be an afterthought in funding conversations; and the Commission would be widely recognized for its work.

Chair Garrett asked whether, in this scenario, the agency would be giving more or fewer grants. Commissioners noted that the focus should be on fostering creativity, providing resources, and connecting grant recipients with other funders, rather than simply increasing the number of grants awarded. It was observed that part of the agency's current diminished impact results from grants becoming smaller and "watered down." A weighted system for scoring grants was suggested, prioritizing applicants with greater community impact. Commissioners also noted that some smaller individual grants may still be valuable, such as those supporting artisans who pass on their skills to others through apprenticeships.

9. Adjournment

Chair Garrett adjourned the meeting at 1:31 pm MT.