

September 15, 2015

Dear Mayor Amyx and Lawrence City Commissioners,

I am writing in regard to regular agenda item #2 requesting \$100,000 for the Lawrence Arts Center's Free State Festival.

Such dependency on last minute City funding must be questioned. Capitulating to these demands would not only be unfair, but would open the City up to similarly ill-conceived requests, that circumvent civic process. As explicitly stated in the City's new Cultural Plan, we must ensure that our arts and culture resources are being allocated equitably.

In addition, it appears (from their NEA application attached to agenda item #2) that the Arts Center assumes that the as yet unknown infrastructure that may be developed along East 9th Street will be created for the Arts Center to use as it pleases.

The LAC'S Our Town application states, "In 2017 and 2018, in partnership with the City of Lawrence, the Lawrence Arts Center will transform the NEA-funded Free State Festival from a largely regional festival to an international on that will make use of the new infrastructure to be built along the 9th Street Corridor as a result of the ArtPlace-funded East 9th Street Project."

This flies in the face of my understanding of the intent of this project. In fact, the East Ninth Citizen Advisory Committee specifically discussed concerns about the project becoming the beginning of an entertainment district where East 9th Street would be used as a venue, and we voted unanimously that it should not.

Sincerely,
Dave Loewenstein

Bobbie Walthall

To: C L Suenram
Subject: RE: Item 2

To the Mayor and City Commissioners,

We have concerns about the Lawrence Arts Center request of \$100,000 from the City for the 2016 Free State Festival. There are many social service agencies that could benefit greatly if they also could get more money.

Another concern, what about the 3 lots south of the Arts Center, one of which houses the Salvation Army, that the guest taxes from the Marriott is/was to buy? What is the time element for developing that area as planned for the Arts Center as mentioned in paragraph 2 of the attached correspondence of Dave Corliss.

With these concerns, we would like to see this request of increased funding denied.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

With regards,
Arch Naramore
Cindy Suenram
1204 New York Street



City of Lawrence

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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CITY COMMISSION

MAYOR
ROBERT J. SCHUMM

COMMISSIONERS
MICHAEL DEVER
HUGH CARTER
MIKE AMYX
ARON E. CROMWELL

December 6, 2012

Dear NEA Our Town Panelists:

The Lawrence Arts Center is the City of Lawrence's centerpiece of art and arts education for the citizens of Lawrence, Kansas. Twelve years ago the City entered into a public/private partnership with the Arts Center to construct the 40,000 square-foot building that the Lawrence Arts Center calls home. The City has an ongoing commitment to underwrite the Arts Center's utilities and building maintenance costs. Providing seven percent of the Arts Center's operations funding, the City of Lawrence is proud of its ongoing partnership with the Arts Center, and is enthusiastic to serve as the local government partner in its Our Town application.

As City Manager, I believe that the Free State Cultural Connection Project will complement our city's cultural identity and catalyze our strategy to brand a cultural district in eastern Lawrence along the Ninth Street Corridor. To this end, the City of Lawrence has committed funding to purchase and landscape three city lots south of the Lawrence Arts Center to create a community green space where arts activities, such as outdoor performance events and film screenings, can take place. This green space will be central to this Our Town project. This urban green space will be curated by the Lawrence Arts Center to showcase films, musical performances, and theater during the Free State Film and Music Festival and throughout the year.

We are enthusiastic about the Lawrence Arts Center's Our Town proposal as it will catalyze and solidify the identity of the cultural district in which the Arts Center is located. The Free State Cultural Connection Project directly connects with the City's commitment to retaining artistic talent, supporting the work of creative professionals, and providing broadband access and digital arts education to all Lawrence families.

I am confident in the Arts Center's ability to successfully coordinate municipal, non-profit, and business entities to productively achieve the artistic and educational goals of the Free State Cultural Connection Project. I am also certain of their ability to leverage current support, with the added support from the National Endowment for the Arts, to garner any additional financial support and creative capital needed for the Lawrence community.

Sincerely,

David L. Corliss
City Manager



Bobbie Walthall

To: Diane Stoddard
Subject: RE: Please do not disburse any guest tax money without a fair and competitive process

From: Eric Kirkendall [<mailto:kirkendall1@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 10:50 AM

To: Leslie Soden; Mike Amyx; Matthew Herbert; Stuart Boley; Christie Scanlin Dobson; Diane Stoddard; John Hachmeister; Kathy Porsch; Patrick Kelly; Richard Renner; Sarah Harris; scr911@yahoo.com; Jerry Johnson; mmaude@develop-net.com; Michel Loomis (loomism@sunflower.com); Kate Dinneen

Subject: Please do not disburse any guest tax money without a fair and competitive process

Dear neighbors - City Commissioners and Lawrence Cultural Arts Commissioners,

I have been dismayed to read about "hair on fire" demands for travel and tourism money, and the threat to cancel an event if the funds aren't received.

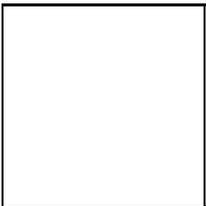
My group, the Lawrence Creates Makerspace, has been patiently waiting for procedures we were told would be issued soon for applying for guest tax funds, so we can apply for a small amount for tourism-related activities in the Makerspace.

Please create a fair playing field for all of your constituents, including the members of the non-profit Lawrence Creates Makerspace, who work hard to help make Lawrence a better community without the benefit of no-rent buildings, big salaries, and all the rest.

Please let the Lawrence Creates Makerspace and the other fine non-profit organizations of Lawrence compete fairly for these tax dollars.

Regards,

Eric Kirkendall
785-550-3408
Lawrence Creates Makerspace
512 East 9th Street
Lawrence KS



Bobbie Walthall

To: Diane Stoddard
Subject: RE: Free State Festival Funding: For Sept. 15, 2015 City Commission Meeting

From: steven c. watts [<mailto:scajj@sbcglobal.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 10:28 AM
To: Leslie Soden; Stuart Boley; Matthew Herbert; Mike Amyx
Cc: Diane Stoddard; Casey Toomay
Subject: Free State Festival Funding: For Sept. 15, 2015 City Commission Meeting

Commissioners:

Please refer to the LJWorld.com article here:

[City Commission to review Free State Festival's \\$100,000 funding request; arts center director says event will be canceled if city doesn't agree](#)

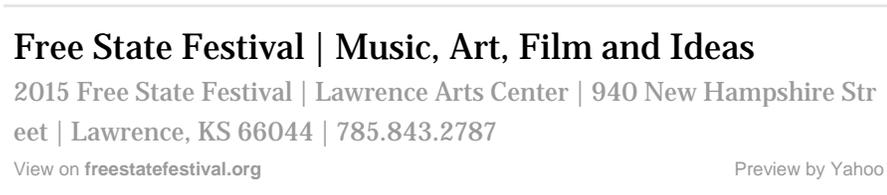


City Commission to review Free State Festival's \$100,000...
City commissioners will be asked to approve the Lawrence Arts Center's request for \$100,000 at City Hall on Tuesday evening. If festival organizers don't receive an...
View on www2.ljworld.com Preview by Yahoo

Questions:

What is the operating budget of the "Free State Festival" and more importantly the Lawrence Art's Center?
What are the salaries paid to whomever is paid? (I see five people listed at

[Free State Festival | Music, Art, Film and Ideas](#)



Free State Festival | Music, Art, Film and Ideas
2015 Free State Festival | Lawrence Arts Center | 940 New Hampshire Street | Lawrence, KS 66044 | 785.843.2787
View on freestatefestival.org Preview by Yahoo

The same question: What is the operating budget of the Lawrence Arts Center?
What are the salaries paid to whomever is paid? (I see TWENTY FIVE people listed).

What efforts has the Free State Festival made in securing commercial sponsorship from outfits like Budweiser or McDonald's or any other Corporate entity? I see in 2014 there was not one single corporate sponsor. Like it or not, corporations sponsor these events the Nation over. There were two public sponsors same being Arts Work and The National Endowment for the Arts. How about the KU Athletic Corporation footing the bill or even better, the KU Alumni Association? Still better, how about both? Were either one even approached?

What applications has the Lawrence Arts Center made from grant sources? Show the people of Lawrence and the Lawrence City Commission how much work has gone on in an effort to secure funding. Did these 30

people sit around and wait for a magical check to arrive via the mail or did they actually make applications? If so, how many? No guessing here: There ought to be a very succinct and exact number as to how many grants were actually applied for. Let's not leave out the names of the entities from which money was requested, please.

The time is long past for the City of Lawrence to stop footing the bill for the lifestyles and livelihood of 30 people. Surely 30 people could have stood on the street corner with a tin can and collected money for this festival or that festival.

I am all for festivals. However, sometimes they become simply too large and can't even be defined as "festivals". Too, the concept of VIP access to a publically funded event is beyond annoying. The message, once again, is: If you're well heeled, we'll treat you just fine. If you're a commoner, your seat is in the back of the bus." Perhaps Lawrence can have the festival, but in a scaled back version of sorts....one which is within the collective financial means of the City. One year it's Phat City. The next year it's well, not as good. How'd Dean Kay and Kelly Gordon put it out there for Frank? "You're riding high in April/
Shot down in May".

Lawrence confronts lean times. The Free State Festival and the Lawrence Arts Center are nice to have in Lawrence. However, the question remains "Why can't these entities be self-sufficient if they're so well received by the population?" I'd rather see the sidewalks put back together and the streets brand new if I were compelled to pick a festival over basic City infrastructure issues.

The salaries requested shall be very revealing I believe. Let's begin there. One report on Guidestar shows a \$0.00 sum paid. \$0.00 is laudable but it does appear that zero netted zero, if that report is true. At present, it appears as if the Lawrence Arts Board is placing a gun to the head of the Lawrence City Commission and proclaiming "Pay us or we quit the festival." Surely "they" saw this money shortage long ago. Perhaps their bank account became "compromised"? "Compromised" seems to be the word of the day here in Lawrence at present when it comes to money.

The Festival is nice to have, but if it can't pay it's own way, it's not needed or necessary.

Thank you

Steven C. Watts, MSW
Lawrence, Kansas

PS: Seeing George Clinton with the Parliaments and the Parlafunkadelic Thang at Hoch Auditorium in 1971 cannot be repeated. Same can be said about Johnny Winter: Bringing that ghost of a figure onto the stage to exploit money from his name was disgusting. Lawrence should not have been part of that. Very poor choice, Lawrence Arts Center.

Bobbie Walthall

To: Phil Collison
Subject: RE: Submission to CC Agenda, item #2

To the City Commissioners:

I am weighing in on the two requests in front of the CC to earmark \$100,000 from the Guest Tax Fund for the Free State Festival for 2016 and to support the NEA Grant for the 2017-2018 Free State Festivals. It seems like this is yet another case of putting the cart before the horse. If the grant is not given the Arts Center is threatening to take their ball and go home. The City has bent over backwards to accommodate the Arts Center over the last many years for the Free State Festival. We have created a Cultural District. We're attempting to adopt a Cultural Plan for the City to complement that Cultural District. We've hired a Cultural Czar. We've even embarked on a partnership to re-build a street to showcase the Free State Festival. At least that is what the grant requests have stated. A different picture emerges when reviewing the minutes of the Citizen Advisory Committee that was formed to provide input from stakeholders regarding the Ninth Street Project.

There is no mention of the Free State Festival in the March, April, May, June 3 or June 27 minutes.

In fact, the first mention of the Free State Festival is in the July 29 minutes and those are denials that the street project is being built for any specific venue. Those minutes state, "The grant says that the street will be the showcase for Free State Festival events." Response: "The specific direction that was given to el dorado was to incorporate language about the project not becoming an entertainment corridor in a way that stood out and wasn't buried within the document. The design team would never pursue this project as a sanctioned entertainment corridor".

The CAC added to the work plan specific wording that states "This project, officially titled East Ninth, is specifically a right-of-way improvement project that includes integrated artworks and new multimodal transportation strategies. As such, the project scope does not include future redevelopment/rezoning plans for surrounding or adjacent properties. The project goals do not include establishing East Ninth Street as a sanctioned "entertainment corridor" that diminishes the authenticity of East Lawrence's rich, cultural history. Rather, the project seeks to become a vital, public street that sensitively and artfully engages each block from Massachusetts Street to Delaware Street -a cultural asset for East Lawrence and the City of Lawrence alike.

These Grant Requests make the assumption that their receipt will come together to take this Free State Festival to an International Level. Unfortunately the Street hasn't been built, yet, and the Cultural Plan is not yet adopted. In fact, the street re-hab has been portrayed as a Neighborhood enhancement, and any talk of it becoming a venue for the Free State Festival has been overtly downplayed. Additional direct questions about the street project becoming a venue for this festival have had answers that ranged from "Within the parameters that the Design Team has been charged, we do not control future programming of the street. to "The design team cannot be prescriptive about what events can happen in the future."

I would urge you to take these true and valid statements into consideration as you weigh these grant requests. There has been a significant effort by the Arts Center, the City and the Design Group to downplay the association of the Free State Festival with the Ninth Street Project. Support of these grants will demonstrate the true intent of the 9th street project. I would recommend the street get built and the cultural plan adopted before we consider taking the "Free State Festival from a largely regional festival to an international one that will make use of the new infrastructure to be built along the 9th Street Corridor".

Thank you for your Consideration,

Phil Collison

9th street CAC member, ELNA Board Member, and Property owner along 9th street in affected area.