

April 4, 2018

Teleconference with Florida Senate President Joe Negron

Re: 2018 Legislative Funding for Arts and Culture

Nancy Turrell, Janeen Mason, and Pat Williams

Actionable Information

-- Current strategies are no longer viable; arts and culture advocates need to “breathe fresh air” into efforts. It is not working. We need to regroup with new legislators.

--Don’t spend too much time on what happened this year. “It was an aberration.”

(1) Hurricane Irma was very costly

(2) School Saftety (Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting in Parkland) \$400 million

(3) Corporate tax revenue down \$100 million

(4) His priorities were education and environment

--“Special projects” will remain a strong trend. Following the downtown in this year’s funding for the arts we should expect to see an upturn in more special interest projects – or line items. “Legislators like to fund projects for their areas and there is resistance in the legislature to turning the entire process over to the ‘experts’.” Although when asked, no one is against the vetted process and “it is regarded fair.”

--We need a MacGyver for the Arts on the TED committee and/or in Appropriations. Both he and Gates were arts supporters and believed in full funding when possible. Gaining support in the “first level of funding” is critical. . .the subcommittee level. Arts organizations and FCAC have to have relationships with their legislators now. Work to create advocacy EARLY. When the committees are announced in November everyone needs to activate right then, not wait until session starts.

--Legislators must be made aware of the things that won’t happen in their areas if funding is not supported. “Work to say if this isn’t funded this is what will happen.”

-- Know who existing allies are. Incoming Senate President Galvano from Bradenton is an ardent arts supporter with a daughter who is a gifted performer (dancer), and southwest Florida in general has strong arts support. Who do we have there that we can partner with/learn from? Look to partner/learn from them.

Observations and Insights

--Arts funding is considered an add-on even in the best times.

--Odds against us this year: corporate tax revenue down \$100 million; Medicare came in \$130 million higher than expected; add Irma, Parkland, and environmental water priority projects and it was a perfect storm.

--We were one of many that lost major funding: 80-90 education projects got nothing; 100 basic services and healthcare projects meeting peoples' basic needs were slashed or completely unfunded. Out of priority lists that had years of seniority they ended up funding only homeless vets and AIDS. Tough year all around.

--Normally at the end of session there is time to fix things, but not this year.

--Galvano and Aleva, new leaders of the Senate and House respectively. Galvano=arts supporter and Aleva=unknown.