Q2 2026 Washington Art Association
Board / Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: July 14, 2026 (Quarterly Membership Meeting)
Location: Washington Art Association & Sunshine Center (hybrid with Zoom participants)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order, and members were welcomed. An apology was offered for technical and studio setup issues before proceeding with committee reports.

Treasurer's Report

Presenter: Bob Whelan, Treasurer

Financial Position

The Treasurer reported that the Association remains in a very strong financial position. Current assets included:

- Approximately **$487,000** invested with the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, earning approximately **17% annual returns** since 2025.
- Approximately **$50,000** invested in a Fidelity mutual fund established in September 2025, with approximately **10% return** to date.
- Approximately **$4.18 million** held in Fidelity money market accounts.
- **Total organizational assets:** approximately **$4.74 million**.

Operating Results

Revenue highlights through June 30 included:

- Exhibitions: approximately **$19,000** against a $25,000 annual budget.
- Education: approximately **$104,000** against a $110,000 budget.
- Membership dues: approximately **$19,700**.
- Donations (excluding the Peckerman gift): approximately **$78,000**, significantly exceeding budget projections.

Expenses included:

- Payroll and benefits: approximately **$96,000** versus a $100,000 budget.
- Education expenses: approximately **$76,000**, slightly above budget.

Investment income generated approximately **$37,000** in dividends during the first half of 2026.

Investment Strategy

The Finance Committee recommended:

- Maintaining **$750,000** in Fidelity for anticipated capital improvements.
- Moving **$500,000** into National Iron Bank's higher-yield money market account.
- Implementing a zero-balance operating checking account to maximize investment earnings.

The committee also recommended transferring approximately **$3 million** into the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation investment pool to create a long-term endowment.

The Treasurer explained:

- Funds remain fully accessible.
- A policy limiting annual withdrawals to approximately **5%** would provide long-term financial discipline.

- Estimated annual operating support from investments would range between **$175,000–$200,000**.

Discussion

Members discussed:

- Investment risks.
- Community Foundation management.
- Long-term investment performance.
- Developing a formal investment withdrawal policy through future bylaw amendments.

Education Committee Report

Presenters: Nancy Lasar, Education Chair

Survey Results

The committee received **74 responses** from member and teacher surveys.

Overall findings included:

- Strong satisfaction with instructors and current class offerings.
- Requests for expanded printmaking programming.
- Plans for future woodcut and gel-printing workshops.
- Continued evaluation of additional instructor recommendations.

New Classes

Upcoming educational offerings include:

- Abstract Oil Painting and Mixed Media
- Creative Intent: Neuroscience and Symbolism
- Your Creativity
- Visual Alchemy (digital/photographic mixed-media techniques)

Educational Events

Upcoming events include:

- Bus trip to the Calder Sculpture Garden.
- Lecture by cartoonist Barry Blitt.
- Presentation by Jane Eckhart and sculptor Jonas Sterner.
- Fairfield Porter exhibition trip.
- Studio visits with Rob Ober and Jane Doyle.

Teachers also requested additional student exhibition opportunities, which the committee intends to expand.

Exhibitions Report

Presenter: Megan Marden, Exhibition Chair

Highlights included:

- Standardization of exhibition applications, acceptance letters, and rejection letters.
- Increased exhibition opportunities for members through additional juried shows.
- Plans to establish an annual national juried exhibition as a major fundraising event.
- Target fundraising of approximately **$20,000** through national submission fees.

Upcoming exhibitions include:

- August 14 Landscape Exhibition featuring nationally recognized artists.

- Partnerships with the Washington Environmental Council.
- Future collaboration with the Macular Degeneration Foundation.

Exhibition scheduling is now planned through **2028** to facilitate fundraising and grant opportunities.

Development Report
Presenter: Nate Cardonsky, Executive Director
Fundraising
Highlights included:

- Give Local campaign raised approximately **$28,000**, nearly $10,000 more than the previous year.
- Norman and Alan provided **$25,000** to support artwork relocation and storage.
- Judy Jackson continued funding improvements to the kiln shed.
- Recognition of the transformational Peckerman gift.

Membership
Membership renewals remain approximately **15% below** the previous year due to:

- Website migration issues.
- Gravity Forms failures that disrupted online renewals and firing fee payments.

These technical issues have now been resolved.

Special Events
Updates included:

- Planning for a Halloween event at the Sunshine Center.
- Development of an "Exquisite Corpse" collaborative artist fundraiser.
- Continued efforts to revive the Holiday Sale with new leadership.

Strategic Planning
Presenter: Marcella Manubens, Membership Cha**ir**
Primary goals include:

- Strengthening community impact.
- Increasing member engagement.
- Growing membership by approximately 10%.
- Building partnerships with nonprofit organizations.
- Expanding business sponsorships.
- Improving member benefits and appreciation programs.
- Better coordination between marketing, development, exhibitions, and education.
- The committee is reviewing/improving the membership system to ensure they have an accurate listing of members, renewals and can measure adequately membership increase and retention.

A quarterly implementation timeline was presented.

Marketing Report
Marketing Committee members reported meeting with a nonprofit marketing agency specializing in arts organizations.

Discussion included:

- Social media management.
- Digital advertising.
- Brand awareness.
- Increasing attendance at classes and exhibitions.
- Marketing budget priorities.

The proposed marketing package begins at approximately **$1,000 per month**.

Volunteer Report

The Board recognized:

- Strong volunteer participation.
- Successful volunteer appreciation efforts.
- Increased committee participation.

Members suggested reinstating broader volunteer recruitment using SignUpGenius for receptions, gallery sitting, and special events.

Building Committee Report

Presenter: Darryl Wright, Building Chair

Washington Art Association Building

Immediate priorities include:

- HVAC replacement.
- Boiler replacement.
- Window repairs.
- Drainage improvements.
- Sink replacement.
- Additional storage.
- Roof and gutter work.

Members discussed distinguishing essential repairs from long-term improvements.

John Simmons made the following motion:

Motion: Authorize the Building Committee and Finance Committee to proceed with essential maintenance and repairs to the main building, with expenditures up to **$100,000**, subject to Finance Committee oversight.

Result: Motion carried unanimously.

Sunshine Center

The Building Committee reviewed work completed to date:

- Interior demolition.
- Structural cleanup.
- Roof replacement (insurance funded).
- Basement preparation.
- Stair relocation.
- Initial ADA planning.

Remaining priorities include:

- ADA-compliant restroom.
- Drainage improvements.
- HVAC installation.
- Stair construction.
- Chair lift.
- Mechanical systems.
- Completion of floor slab.

Discussion focused on:

- Compliance with bylaws.
- Need for additional member input.
- Long-term programming for the Sunshine Center.
- Appropriate approval process for capital expenditures.

John Simmons made a motion that the Norman Sunshine Center be allocated the amount of $165,000 for all the necessary work and while it did reach a vote for "Yay's" it did not proceed to completion. Much discussion ensued. It didn't proceed to asking for the "Nay's" and it did not reach the point where the motion was approved

Bob Whelan, the Treasurer, suggested $200,000 and put forth the following motion:

Motion: A motion was made to authorize the amount of $200,000 for the use of the Building Committee, working with the Finance Committee. Going forward the Building Committee will obtain bids and proceed with necessary repairs and code-related improvements required to preserve and safely operate the Sunshine Center. Expenditures reviewed by the Finance Committee and regular reports provided to the membership.
Result: Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Discussion

Members requested:

- A dedicated town hall meeting focused on long-term use of the Sunshine Center.
- Greater member involvement before major renovation decisions.
- Continued transparency regarding capital projects.
- Regular reporting from the Building and Finance Committees.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the work of the Board, committees, volunteers, and members, and with agreement to continue planning discussions regarding the future use of the Sunshine Center.