

# **BEMIDJI PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

**Conference Room  
City Hall – 317 4th Street NW  
1:00 PM**



## **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

WELCOME NEW MEMBER - SANDY HENSON

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 1) March 11, 2025

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL**

- 2) Review Annual Report and Method of Reporting to Council

## **PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION DOCUMENTS**

- 3) Document Review and Consider Approval of Policies and Procedures
- 4) Review and Consider Changes to By-Laws

## **REGION 2 - \$1,000 GRANT AWARD**

## **NEXT MEETING**

## **ADJOURN**

**CITY OF BEMIDJI**  
**PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2025**

**Present:** Cindy Burger, Lisa Bruns, Emelie Rivera, Lisa Jonas, Kristi Miller & Marcia BMarthaler via Webex

**Others:** City Clerk, Michelle Miller and Derek Bernard, City GIS department

Miller called the meeting to order at 1PM.

**Agenda:** The agenda was approved on a motion by Bruns with a second by Jonas. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** The Feb. 11, 2025 minutes were approved on a motion by Jonas with a second by Bruns. Motion carried.

**City GIS:** Derek Bernard attended the meeting to apprise us on where the original inventory ended up and if we can use any of it. It still exists and is usable with some modifications and he will develop it into a useable app for use on our phones. It was also suggested that we use many of the pictures that Kevin Johnson, of My Bemidji and the BDA, has taken and documented. Lisa Jonas stated that she can take many of the pictures. Bruns suggested we accomplish this by June 30, 2025.

**2024 Annual Report to the City Council:** Emelie would like the report to reclarify that, per the ordinance, that we'd like a budget. Additionally, we will take letter painting on the south side of the old Hotel Bemidji building out of any discussion. That project will cost much more than the \$1,000 from Region 2. Miller will edit and re-submit to this Commission for approval to send to the Council.

**Policies and Procedures:** A few, but not all, changes were suggested like drop 'procedures' and leave it as a policy. In section 3, it's just goals, drop values. Pg 4, Greater Bemidji Planning Board no longer exists. It should read 'City of Bemidji Planning Board'. Other edits were also suggested. Michelle will re-type it and bring to the May meeting.

**By-laws:** Michelle will bring them to the May meeting and we can review them.

**Hotel Bemidji mural restoration:** Despite the Heritage Commission making a motion to accept the \$1,000 from PAC, it's clear that the project (Bemidji Hotel repainting) cannot be accomplished with that amount so we will drop that idea at this time. There was discussion regarding the wastewater treatment plant's mural by Wesley May. It is fading and needs to be repainted. If someone can contact Mr. May that would be great. Possibly Paula Swenson may have his number.

**The \$1,000:** Maybe use it to promote the commission. Have a party or open house type event to celebrate Sandy Kaul and Paula Swenson and let folks know that we exist.

**Possible new members:** Sandy Henson and Mike DeWitt

**Next meeting will be May 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM.**

**Adjourn: Motion and second proffered. Carried by acclamation.**

## 2024 Bemidji Public Arts Commission Annual Report

Granted this is not an art piece in our town, however it is beautiful and Bemijigamaag can be considered art.

The Public Arts Commission appointed Kristi Miller as Chair and Katie Carter as Vice Chair in 2024 at their annual meeting. While not much is going on within the Commission, a few things occurred. They are:



- The Sculpture Walk folks visited a couple times and asked if there was anything we could help them with regarding the process of getting artists to develop and submit renderings of their sculptures to be vetted by the committee. They have run out of interested members. As we cannot commit to assisting, we encouraged them to contact the new City Manager.
- Sam Anderson, City Engineer/Director of Public Works, wanted the Commission to begin to think about possible art and greenery that could be in the 3 roundabouts that are to be installed on the west side of town.
- The art inventory (an electronic data file that describes the art, shows a picture, the artist and medium information, when it was installed or painted, its condition and what kind of maintenance it may require) started by Brett in GIS in 2022 still exists and the Commission would like to look at it and see if it is of value and can be utilized and updated. The person, now in the GIS Dept, will attend our March 2025 meeting to report on this.
- We seem to always be searching for members but were able to pick up Lisa Bruns, Lisa Jonas and Marcia BMarthaler during the year. We were at 7 members, per the ordinance, as of the end of 2024.
- During the year, the Bemidji Downtown Alliance asked for our support and/or direction (when needed) for them placing art in their downtown kiosks. One has been completed according to Kevin Johnson of the BDA.
- There is overlapping and outdated language in the Policies and Procedures, Ordinance and By-laws that we are looking at. We're aware that no changes can be made by PAC but will suggest updates for the Council's approval in 2025.
- Bemidji City Manager, Rich Spiczka, visited the Commission in 2024 and restated that public art, being considered for public view, should be vetted by PAC with the City

Council having the final decision. Additionally, art should be representative of what we want our city to be.

- In 2022 PAC was granted a \$1,000 stipend from Region 2 Arts Council to develop goals, objectives and collaborative initiatives. It can also be used for capital improvements that will support art access, education, and arts and cultural heritage activity. To date we have not utilized it, however *section 2-430, Arts Fund of the **PAC ordinance**, passed on March 19-2012, states: A special fund shall be established by the city for the purpose of collecting and retaining funds from public and private sources for public arts projects. The general tax levy of the City of Bemidji shall not be the revenue source for this special fund.* We're very aware of limited dollars available when developing the budget but wanted to clarify that the ordinance states that a special fund "shall" be established.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Miller, Chair

# Public Art Policies And Procedures

Bemidji Public Arts Commission

*City Council Adopted March 21, 2016*

**City of Bemidji**

Bemidji Public\_Arts Commission  
317 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
218-759-3560

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Purpose and History .....	3
Definition and Scope .....	3
Values and Goals .....	3
Responsibility, Authority and Partners .....	4
Public Education .....	5
Gifts and Loans .....	6
Artwork on Public Right-of-Way .....	6
Removal .....	6

## **SECTION 1**

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND HISTORY**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

Art enhances Bemidji's identity as a community that values creative and diverse expressions. It builds our sense of civic pride, and enriches the quality of our lives. Public art fulfills these purposes in a myriad of ways; by improving our experience of public spaces through excellent harmonious design, by sensitively preserving or highlighting vistas, by introducing surprising and enlivening elements into otherwise ordinary spaces, and by engaging us with insightful interpretations of our community's activities, aspirations and history. In sum, public art has the capacity to humanize our urban environments. In recognition of the importance of integrating public art into the daily lives of the residents of Bemidji, the City of Bemidji supports a strong public arts program. To this end the City hereby establishes the Bemidji Public Arts Policy with the following values and goals in mind.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the display of public art in the City of Bemidji and to provide a mechanism for the inclusion of public art and memorial structures throughout the city primarily in parks, open spaces, in the downtown area, and inside and outside City structures.

#### **History**

In 2011 the city council appointed an ad hoc committee to draft an ordinance to establish a Public Arts Commission (PAC). The council passed the ordinance after three readings in 2012. The PAC began meeting in 2012 and drafted by laws that the council approved in 2013.

## **SECTION 2**

### **DEFINITION AND SCOPE**

#### **What is Public Art**

"Public art is not an art 'form'. Its size can be huge or small. It can tower fifty feet high or call attention to the paving beneath your feet. Its shape can be abstract or realistic (or both), and it may be cast, carved, built, assembled, or painted. It can be site-specific or stand in contrast to its surroundings. What distinguishes public art is the unique association of how it is made, where it is, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, this art is there for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art is a reflection of how we see the world—the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are."—Association for Public Art

#### **Scope of Policies and Procedures**

These public art policies and procedures pertain to permanent artwork commissioned or purchased by the City, donated to the City as a gift, or on temporary loan. These policies also apply to the planning for, purchasing, commissioning, conserving and maintaining public artwork under the jurisdiction of the City.

Any agreements the City of Bemidji develops with private site owners or managers, and other partners for public art projects, shall be consistent with these policies. The breadth of public art is vast. Artworks can be made of bronze, brick, steel, water, or fabric; they can be in the form of a mural, sculpture, park bench, banner, or imprint; it can be colorful or subdued, interior or exterior, monumental or diminutive, utilitarian or decorative. Artworks can be integral to public works projects or a stand-alone piece of art.

## **SECTION 3**

### **VALUES AND GOALS**

#### **3.1 Create Exciting, Appealing and Harmonious Public Spaces.**

- a. Integrate art into architecture, urban design and planning of infrastructure at the earliest design stage.
- b. Insure consideration of artistic/aesthetic issues in local decision-making.
- c. Identify sites in the City's built and natural environments with the greatest potential for enhancement of art and the space in which it would reside.

- 3.2 Celebrate Our Community’s Heritage, Ethnicity, Commonality and Civic Pride.**
  - a. ~~Initiate~~~~Stimulate and collaborate~~~~collaboration and understanding~~ between artists and Bemidji’s diverse community.
  - b. Provide support and encouragement for the development of public art programs.
  - c. Encourage partnerships with neighborhoods, commercial areas, and other City and Regional cultural/heritage organizations.
- 3.3 Enhance Bemidji’s Image Locally, Regionally, and Nationally.**
  - a. Insure the creation of the highest quality public art.
  - b. Review all proposed artwork for compliance and aesthetic appropriateness.
  - c. Coordinate with various City departments to encourage inclusion of art spaces in the early development of public spaces and parklands.
- 3.4 Value Artists and Artistic Processes.**
  - a. Encourage artists to live and work in the Bemidji area and participate in community life.
  - b. Promote working spaces for artists.
  - c. Investigate means to promote Bemidji as an attractive place for artists to live in various media/information sources.
- 3.5 Generate Economic Impact.**
  - a. Coordinate with various tourism departments on new ways to promote local artwork.
  - b. Attract new audiences, media attention, and cultural tourism.
  - c. Provide support and collaborative efforts among existing arts organizations that are currently promoting/displaying public art in the city.
- 3.6 Use Resources Wisely.**
  - a. Identify potential public/private resources for public arts programs and projects and use those resources wisely.
  - b. Work with various City and State organizations to identify new funds and/or grants and other enhancements to existing funding for public arts programs.
  - c. Ensure budgets adequately support artists and programs, and funds are used in the most cost effective manner.

**SECTION 4**  
**RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY AND PARTNERS**

- 4.1 The Bemidji Public Arts Commission**  
The Bemidji Public Art Commission shall initiate or manage the review of public art projects based on the criteria identified in these policies and procedures.
- 4.2 City Departments**  
City departments may initiate public art projects but they shall adhere to the PAC policies and procedures and be subject to the PAC evaluation and approval. City departments may also be called upon to offer assistance and advice to public art projects.
- 4.3 Independent Boards and Commissions of the City**  
Independent Boards and Commissions may recommend public art projects to the PAC. Public art projects developed in partnership with these entities must be reviewed and approved according to these public art policies and procedures. Agreements with these boards and commissions shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.
- 4.4 Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board**  
The preliminary location and design of public art projects shall be reviewed by the Planning Board (unless they waive this review).
- 4.5 The City Council**  
The City Council approves the membership and budget for the Public Arts Commission, as well as other budgets for public art. The execution of all contracts must be approved by the City Council. The City’s ownership of artworks must be documented in writing upon receipt, completion, and

acceptance of the artwork, and upon approval by the City Council.

**4.6 Artists**

Artists may suggest public art projects to the city or be invited to submit RFPs for the creation of works of public art. Local Artists shall also serve on project steering committees and artist selection panels.

**4.7 Bemidji Sculpture Walk Board**

The Bemidji Sculpture Walk is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The BSW program partners with City staff on installation and maintenance of the sculpture walk. The program conducts an annual juried sculpture competition and approved works are displayed downtown for one year. The PAC will approve art works that are to be displayed on city property or right-of-way.

**4.8. Private Site Owners**

Site owners must also comply with the City's Public Art Policies and Procedures when working in partnership with the City. Project Steering Committees coordinating public art projects shall work closely with the representatives of these sites and adhere to their policies when working in partnership or placing projects on their property. Agreements entered into with private site owners shall reflect the policies and procedures of all partners.

**4.9 Project Steering Committees**

Various project steering committees may be created to provide guidance and leadership for public art projects. Project Steering Committees shall be determined by the Public Arts Commission.

**4.10 Artist Selection Panel**

The purpose of the Artist Selection Panel shall be to interpret and review artist's proposals based on the selection criteria. The PAC will recommend Artist Selection Panel members for each project. In most cases the Project Steering Committee will act as the Artist Selection Panel. In some cases the PAC may act as the Artist Selection Panel. However, additional or alternative panel members may be recommended by the PAC to satisfy needed expertise or insight not present on the current panel, or to replace someone with a conflict of interest.

**SECTION 5**  
**PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**5.1 Objectives**

- Educate the community about public artworks and artists.
- Use artworks as a means to educate the community about City services and places.
- Encourage educational programs that are appropriate for the community.
- Reduce the risk of vandalism.

**5.2 Public Information and Events**

Upon completion of a public artwork, the City shall distribute a press release to local media informing the public about the, artwork, post information on the City's website and hold a public dedication. The City may provide informational flyers about the artwork at the site and to relevant community groups and neighborhood organizations. Information about each public artwork owned by the City shall be posted on the City's website.

**5.3 ~~Plaques Signage~~**

~~SignagePlaques~~ shall be installed for each public artwork developed by the City. ~~SignagePlaques~~ shall contain the title of the artwork, artist name(s), year of dedication, responsible department for the commission, and a credit to all sponsors who contribute major funding if required by a Project Steering Committee ~~(if applicable)~~. Sponsor credits shall be limited to the individual or institution name and shall not exceed the point size of responsible department. The ~~signageplaque~~ shall also acknowledge the Bemidji Public Arts Commission and the City of Bemidji. When appropriate, ~~signageplaques~~ shall include ~~contact informationa phone number~~ for reporting vandalism or damage.

**SECTION 6**  
**ART ACQUISITION GIFTS AND LOANS**

The process of evaluating and accepting, or rejecting, a gift or loan of art shall begin with a presentation to the Public Art Commission. The PAC will then advise the city of their recommendation.

**SECTION 7**  
**ARTWORK ON PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY**

The Public Arts Commission will review and coordinate with the city street and parks departments on placement of art on right of way or in parks.

At the request of the City, the Public Art Commission shall evaluate and comment upon requests to place art in the right of way. For long-term projects or projects of significant public interest, this review process may include a request form and one or more public meetings. Requests for art in the right of way shall be evaluated based on the review criteria outlined in Section 3.

**SECTION 8**  
**REMOVAL DECOMMISSIONING**

The City shall remove and dispose of works of art and memorials in its collection when it finds such action to be in the public interest. Life spans that have been assigned to the work during the commissioning process shall be taken into consideration as part of requests for removal. For artworks that have not been assigned a life span, the City may engage experts to assist in assigning the artwork a life span, based on the life expectancy of the artwork's materials and fabrication methods.

# **BEMIDJI PUBLIC ART COMMISSION BY-LAWS**

The purpose of the Public Arts Commission is to serve as an advisory board to the Bemidji City Council. The By-laws shall be constructed to assist the commission to make meaningful recommendations to the City Council, Mayor, City Manager, or department heads.

## **A. Commission Membership.**

Commission shall consist of seven (7) members in accordance to Bemidji City Code, Division 10, Sec. 2-423(a). Commission members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

## **B. Attendance.**

Attendance at regular commission meetings is expected from all commission members. Anyone unable to attend a meeting must contact an officer in order for his/her absence to be deemed excused. Three (3) consecutive unexcused absences by a commission member will result in a contact from an officer to determine the status of that commission member's interest and intent.

If that commission member is committed to remaining on the commission, his/her status will be maintained, unless an additional three (3) consecutive unexcused absences are documented, at which time that commission member will be removed from the Commission.

## **C. Officers.**

### 1. Election of Officers.

The officers of the Commission shall be elected by nomination as soon as practicable after annual appointments and shall serve until their successors have been duly elected. The officers of the Commission shall be elected by a majority vote of the voting members present. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive one-year terms in a particular office.

### 2. Duties of the Officers.

Chair. The Chair of the Commission shall preside at the meeting of the Commission, and shall perform the other duties ordinarily performed by the officer. Chair may vote on any motion presented to the Commission.

Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair during the Chair's absence.

- In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the Commission shall elect a Chair pro-tem who shall perform the duties of the Chair of the Commission.

## **D. Committees.**

1. Ad-hoc Committees as needed shall be appointed by the Chair of the Commission and serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, or committee's work is completed. Ad-hoc committees shall be made up of Commission members and other individuals for resource and advisory purposes. It is recommended that the city department heads be consulted by committees.

2. A record of the action of each committee shall be kept by a member of said committee and reported to the Commission at its next meeting for action by the Commission if the Commission so desires.

**E. Meetings**

The annual organizational meeting of this commission shall be held as soon as practicable by majority consensus after annual appointments.

The order of business at the annual meeting shall include: Reading of the roll call, minutes of the previous meeting, officer’s reports, establish time and frequency of regular meetings.

The chair or majority of the commission may call special meetings of the commission with at least 72 hours written notice. The call shall state the subject matter to be considered at the meeting and considerations shall be limited thereto.

**F. General Rules.**

1. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with general parliamentary rules, as given in Robert’s Rules of Order, as modified by rules and regulations of the Commission shall be observed in conducting meetings of the Commission.
2. The presence of a majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
3. All recommendations of the Commission to the City Council shall be in the form of a resolution duly adopted by said Commission.
4. All recommendations to the City Council must be approved by a majority of the voting members present at any properly called meeting.
5. The Commission may, from time to time transmit data, findings, the results of studies, surveys, etc., to the City Council without recommendation.
6. Additions to the agenda, as prepared by the Chair, may be made by a majority vote of the Commission at any meeting.

**G. Amendment of by-laws.**

These by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a majority vote of the Commission, providing further that the amendment is part of the agenda for the meeting and the membership has been notified in writing.

Adopted this 21<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2013, as required by the Bemidji City Code.

Reviewed on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2023 with no additions, deletions or revisions.

---

Chair, Public Arts Commission

ATTEST:

---

City Clerk