

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
General Affairs Committee April 05, 2022

BRIESE: Good afternoon. Welcome to the General Affairs Committee. My name is Tom Briese. I'm the senator for District 41. I'm the Chair of this committee and will be conducting today's hearing. We're here today for the purpose of conducting seven appointment hearings. If you wish to testify in person on any of the matters before us, we ask that you to fill out one of the white sheets of paper. White sheets are located on either side of the room. If you're here and you do not wish to testify, but you do wish to state your support or opposition for any of the matters before us, we ask that you fill in one of the sign-in sheets. If you do testify, we ask you to begin your testimony by stating and spelling your name for the record, which is very important for our Transcribers Office. The order of proceedings is that the appointee will be given an opportunity to open. Then we will hear the proponents, opponents, and neutral testimony. We ask that you listen very carefully to try not to be repetitive. We do use the light system in this committee. Each testifier is afforded three minutes to testify. When the yellow light comes on, you have one minute remaining. We ask that you begin concluding your remarks. When the red light comes on, your time's expired. We'll open up the committee to any questions they may have of you. At this time, I'd encourage everyone to turn off any cell phones or electronic devices, anything that makes noise. General Affairs Committee is a committee that is equipped for electronics so you may see members referencing their iPads, iPhones, or other electronic devices. I can assure you they're just researching matters before us. If you have a prepared statement and exhibit or anything you would like distributed to the committee members, we ask you to provide 12 copies to our clerk. If you don't have 12 copies, don't worry. Provide what you have to the clerk. With that, we will proceed to the introduction of members beginning on my far right.

JACOBSON: I'm Senator Mike Jacobson. I represent District 42, which includes Hooker, Thomas, McPherson, Logan, Lincoln, and a good portion of Perkins County.

ARCH: John Arch. I represent District 14, which is Papillion-La Vista in one county, Sarpy.

BREWER: Tom Brewer. I represent 43rd Legislative District, which is 11 counties of central and western Nebraska.

BRANDT: Tom Brandt, District 32: Fillmore, Thayer, Jefferson, Saline, and southwestern Lancaster Counties.

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BRIESE: Thank you. To my right is Laurie Holman, legal counsel for the committee. And to the far left is Alex DeGarmo, committee clerk. And we're going to have some call-in appointments to start with. I believe we have four call-in appointments. We'll proceed with those first and then we'll do the in-person ones after that, so I believe the first one is Amy Haddad.

ARCH: It's Hadid [PHONETIC].

BRIESE: Hadid. Is it? OK, very good, thank you for that. Good to know. We are dialing her, I assume?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Yeah, she has to call in.

BRIESE: Oh, she-- OK.

LAURIE HOLMAN: We can't call?

ARCH: Is this being broadcast?

BRIESE: Pardon?

ARCH: Is this being broadcast?

BRIESE: I don't know. I guess it is, isn't it?

LAURIE HOLMAN: I don't, I don't actually know if they--

BRIESE: Yeah.

LAURIE HOLMAN: --are doing it.

BRIESE: Not sure. What time was she supposed to dial in?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: I just sent her a text [INAUDIBLE]--

BRIESE: OK.

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: --call in, so.

BRIESE: Perfect. We're going to skip over the call-ins. We'll do the in-person ones while we're waiting on that and we have Alec Gorynski. Please come forward. Good afternoon and welcome.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Afternoon.

BRIESE: Did I pronounce that right? Grinski [PHONETIC]?

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ALEC GORYNSKI: Gorynski. You did, thank you, Senator.

BRIESE: You bet. Welcome to the General Affairs Committee and tell us what you'd like to relate to the committee about your appointment.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Sure. It's a reappointment. I've had the pleasure of serving on the Nebraska Arts Council for a number of years now. I've been doing philanthropy for my entire career. Currently, I serve as the president of the Lincoln Community Foundation just right down the street here and have represented other institutions or individuals to advise and manage grant making on their behalf for the entirety of my career and it's been a privilege. And that really reflects the work of the Nebraska Arts Council. A lot of their work is done through grant making; education grants, operating grants, events grants, things of that nature to support the delivery of arts to communities throughout the state of Nebraska. Throughout that time, I've had the privilege of serving on their grant-making committees. I'm treasurer of the board. Finance is another skill set that I have, I've worked in banking for a time, philanthropy on behalf of banking. So all that comes to head really nicely through my service on the Arts Council, which I've enjoyed. I appreciate the role of arts in the development of our local economies and look forward to continuing to do it again.

BRIESE: Very good. Thank you. Any questions? Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, so crazy last couple of years. How bad has that affected the council with COVID and all the limitations?

ALEC GORYNSKI: Yeah, the council has, as an organization, fared OK. It's been allocated a number of pretty good resources to be able to support organizations who have not fared that well, small arts organizations delivering education programming or having to shift and do traditional arts events virtually. And so it's the small arts organizations in places like Grand Island that have suffered the most. The Arts Council has-- and under the direction of Suzanne Wise, our executive director who is retiring at the end of this year, has done pretty well navigating the resources that have been made available to them and ensuring that those resources make it to the organizations that have truly been impacted. So I think it's the smaller organizations that have truly been hit hard and I'm glad that the state's been here to support those organizations.

BREWER: Well, I've got a lot of emails and letters expressing that same thing, that they survived only because of some of the generosity that came so thanks for your work.

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ALEC GORYNSKI: Yeah, appreciate it.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you for being here. Thank you for your willingness to serve once again.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Absolutely. Am I excused after this or do I need to stick around?

BRIESE: You can-- you're excused.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Thank you.

BRIESE: We'll open it up to proponents, opponents, but likely none and will close the hearing once we do that.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Thank you.

BRIESE: You bet. thank you.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Enemy for my high school days or something--

BREWER: Perfect.

ALEC GORYNSKI: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thanks again. With that, we'd open up to any proponent testifiers. Seeing none, opponent testifiers? Seeing none, any neutral testifiers? Seeing none, that will conclude the hearing on the reappointment of Mr. Alec Gorynski to the Arts Council. And with that, we'll open up the hearing on the appointment of Walter Seiler to the Arts Council.

LAURIE HOLMAN: I think he's [INAUDIBLE].

BRIESE: OK, so it's up here then?

LAURIE HOLMAN: Yeah, yes.

BRIESE: We do not have him with us today. And with that, we will open up the hearing to Mr. Clark Roush. Yeah. Good afternoon and welcome. Is that the correct pronunciation of your name?

CLARK ROUSH: Shockingly, yes, sir.

BRIESE: Oh.

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CLARK ROUSH: Well done.

BRIESE: Thank you. Go ahead and state/spell your name for the record and tell us what you'd like to know-- or what you'd like us to know about--

CLARK ROUSH: All right.

BRIESE: --yourself.

CLARK ROUSH: First name is C-l-a-r-k. My last name is R-o-u-s-h. I, I've written grants for-- received grants I've written from the Arts Council for the Chamber of Commerce of York, where I live, several times and I'm familiar with them of that. And then several years ago, I came in here with my wife because Governor Heineman had appointed her and she served until she died in January of 2020 and I was so impressed that Suzanne and three other members came all the way to York for her service. And I was just kind of looking for honestly just something else to do with my time as a single man. I got a lot more time and I have such a passion for the arts and for helping people keep alive the things that I believe make us really humane and things that are beautiful. And so I called Suzanne and I just said, hey, you know, what, what's the deal? She told me the process and I'd even forgotten I filled that thing out when I got this letter, you know, from-- when Governor Heineman got around to it and then I went and had my orientation with-- in Omaha and got the letter for this. And I just have a real passion for getting beauty and art to all places in Nebraska, especially ones that don't have as much inherent art already in it. Some of our bigger cities, some of the big university towns, you know, they have a lot already, but there's-- just by the demographics and the geography of our state, there's a lot of places that just don't. And I just have a real passion for using my time to help the citizens of Nebraska have art and beauty in their life that they may not have otherwise.

BRIESE: OK, very good. Thank you for that. Any questions for Mr. Roush? Seeing none, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your willingness to serve and appreciate you stopping here and thanks again.

CLARK ROUSH: Thank you all very much.

BRIESE: With that, we'll open up to any proponent testifiers. Seeing none, any opponent testifiers? Seeing none, any neutral testifiers?

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Seeing none, that will conclude our hearing on the appointment of Mr. Clark Roush to the Nebraska Arts Council. Thanks again.

CLARK ROUSH: Thank you, Senator.

BRIESE: Now do we have call-ins ready? Good afternoon, Ms. Haddad.

AMY HADDAD: Hello.

BRIESE: Yes, this is Tom Briese. I'm Chair of the General Affairs Committee. I'm sitting here with most of my fellow committee members. Good afternoon and we'd like to have you tell us about what you-- state and spell your name and then tell us what you'd like us to know about your reappointment to the Nebraska Arts Council, please.

AMY HADDAD: Sure. My name is Amy Haddad, A-m-y H-a-d-d-a-d, and I've been thinking about the Nebraska Arts Council for a term. And during that time, I have sat in several of the grant review committee. First as an observer and then was a member of the review committees. And I'll just say if I'm approved to serve again on the Arts Council, I slotted to be the facilitator of one of the education grant review committees.

BRIESE: OK, very, very good. Thank you for sharing that with us and I'm going to open it up to questions from my fellow committee members if there are any. Senator Arch.

ARCH: Hi, Amy. This is John Arch.

AMY HADDAD: Hi.

ARCH: Hey, I've got a question for you on-- I see that you're on the board of trustees of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

AMY HADDAD: Yes.

ARCH: I'm not familiar with that compared to the Nebraska Arts Council. Could you, could you educate us on that?

AMY HADDAD: Absolutely. I'd be very proud to do so. I'm the secretary of the board now on the cultural endowment. And if you think of it as a big bucket at the top of a chart, it is managed from private sources and from the state, from public sources that is matched by the state. And so our job as board members of the cultural endowment is to raise money so that we get to that match number with the state and then all of those resources get distributed through the Nebraska Arts Council

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and Humanities Nebraska. So what's important about that is that the cultural endowment and the state has this public-private partnership and [INAUDIBLE] organizations to make sure that they fund the arts fairly across the state and that it's a source of funds that can be relied upon till the end of the year so that-- to manage those grants and arts programs across the state can thrive and develop. And so that's the job of the cultural endowment and its coming up on 23rd anniversary and we're doing a good job of raising the funds for that. It's always a challenge, but we're up to it and I'd be happy to answer additional questions. That's kind of a long elevator message, but--

ARCH: OK, thank you. So what's, what's the approximate mix of public and private with the endowment?

AMY HADDAD: It's a 100 percent match.

ARCH: OK, So it's--

AMY HADDAD: [INAUDIBLE]

ARCH: So it's 50/50. It's, it's--

AMY HADDAD: Yes, sorry.

ARCH: OK. All right. Great. Thanks, Amy.

AMY HADDAD: Uh-huh.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Arch. Next we have Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Amy, thank you for joining us. I just want you to know I think my wife, Julie, knows you. She used to be chairman of Nebraska Arts Council several years ago, was appointed by Governor Heineman at the time and she made it pretty clear to me I need to vote yes, so.

AMY HADDAD: Good.

BRIESE: Very good. Thank you, Senator Jacobson. Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thank you for calling in today, Ms. Haddad, and appreciate your willingness to serve, your continued willingness to serve. Thanks again. And with that, I will open it up to any proponent testifiers. Seeing none, any opponent testifiers? Seeing none, any neutral testifiers? Seeing none and that will conclude today's hearing on the reappointment of Ms. Amy Haddad to the Nebraska Arts Council. Thanks again.

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AMY HADDAD: Sure. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

BRIESE: You bet.

AMY HADDAD: All right, bye.

BRIESE: You told me the pronunciation, John, and I goofed up quite a bit. This is John-- Jana Goranson? They're calling now? She's calling now?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: I wonder if her packet is not the right number. So we'll pass over to the next one.

BREWER: I will tell you that she is amazing. She's good.

BRIESE: Can we get her the right number or not really?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: I'll [INAUDIBLE] at the email to see if she sent a different one.

BRIESE: OK.

LAURIE HOLMAN: Oh, her number isn't the right number.

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Her number is not the right number.

BRIESE: Oh.

LAURIE HOLMAN: OK.

BRIESE: Ouch. OK, Ellen Hornady then?

BREWER: Not from Grand Island, is she? There was a time when the city of Grand Island decided they were going to annex Hornady's plant. Well, Joyce Hornady made an agreement clear back in 1948 that they wouldn't do that. And so Steve Hornady went and told them that, you know, a deal's a deal. And they pretty much told him that, well, you may not have as much influence as you think. So he gave a \$500 bonus to all of his employees and paid them in \$2 bills and said, go into Grand Island and spend this and they saw the impact of what Hornady potentially could do, so they decided that they would not annex the plant.

JACOBSON: And look at how much it's grown since.

BRIESE: Yeah.

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JACOBSON: We'd love to have them in North Platte if they're unhappy in Grand Island.

BREWER: Well, they, they've moved some of their facility to a little town just outside of there. It is Alda, A-l-d-a.

JACOBSON: Alda, just, just west of Grand Island.

BREWER: Yeah, they moved a bunch of their stuff out there for-- far, far easier for them to access trucks and so--

JACOBSON: Yeah.

BREWER: They can get in and get out because their production and they're trying to push a million rounds a day.

JACOBSON: Yeah and still not-- they can, they can probably do double that.

BREWER: Oh yeah, they just can't find the people.

BRIESE: They on their way or is she on her way here?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Texted her. She didn't pick up her phone, so. [INAUDIBLE] send me the correct phone number so I'm going to have her call it.

BRIESE: OK.

BREWER: This will be Jana?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Yes.

BREWER: OK.

BRIESE: OK. Does Hornady also have to call in by chance?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Sent her the message for calling in--

BRIESE: OK.

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: --tried to call--

BRIESE: Hello. Who am I speaking to?

JANA GORANSON: Hello, this is Jana Goranson.

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BREWER: Perfect, Jana. Thank you for calling in. I'm Tom Briese, Chair of the General Affairs Committee. I'm sitting here with my fellow committee members to conduct a hearing on your appointment to the Nebraska Arts Council. So I guess we'd like to have you state and spell your name for the record and share with us what you would like us to know about yourself and why you'd like-- why you should be appointed to the Arts Council. Go ahead.

JANA GORANSON: All right. My name is Jana Goranson. You spell that J-a-n-a G-o-r-a-n-s-o-n and one reason-- or the main reason I would-- am interested in being on the Arts Council is I've always had a passion for music since I was very young. I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in music education and taught for quite a few years and then went back and got my master's degree in guidance counseling and have recently retired and wanted to just kind of give back to the state. I feel like being from rural Nebraska, I have some unique insights that might benefit the council and I've been involved in a lot of civic organizations that center around music and also have been very active in my church as choir director for the last 25 years. So it just seems like my whole life has revolved around music and I want to bring that enjoyment to others.

BRIESE: OK, very good. Thank you for sharing that. At this point, I'll open it up to any questions from my fellow committee members. And first up, I see Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Jana, how are you doing?

JANA GORANSON: I'm good, Tom. How are you?

BREWER: Good. Well, first I wanted to thank you for applying. I will share with the committee that I think you'd be an outstanding choice. And while I got you on the horn, how is Joe doing?

JANA GORANSON: He's doing well. Thank you. Busy calving.

BREWER: All right. Well, thanks again for applying and we're anticipating a strong wind coming from out west. Is it there yet?

JANA GORANSON: It is here. Yes, it is.

BREWER: OK, thank you.

JANA GORANSON: Thank you, Tom.

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BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Any other questions? Seeing no other questions, thank you again for calling in today and thank you for your willingness to serve, Ms. Goranson.

JANA GORANSON: Thank you for your time.

BRIESE: You bet, you bet. And with that, we'll open up to any proponent testifier. Seeing none, any opponent testifier? Seeing none, any neutral testifier? Seeing none and that will conclude the hearing on the appointment of Ms. Jana Goranson to the Nebraska Arts Council. Thank you again.

JANA GORANSON: Thank you for allowing me to call in.

BRIESE: You bet, you bet.

JANA GORANSON: Bye-bye.

BRIESE: Have a good day.

JANA GORANSON: Thank you. You too. Bye.

BRIESE: Thank you.

BREWER: Yeah, I just made the 950-mile round trip. That'd be a long drive for a--

BRIESE: Yes, very true.

JACOBSON: You'd have to [INAUDIBLE].

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Sarah Peetz.

BRIESE: OK, did we give up on Hornady?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: I'll try again.

BRIESE: OK, do Peetz. OK, perfect. Sarah Peetz. Hello, hello. Ms. Peetz?

SARAH PEETZ: Yes.

BRIESE: Yes.

SARAH PEETZ: This is Sarah Peetz. Good morning.

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BRIESE: You bet. Good afternoon. This is Tom Briese, Chair of the General Affairs Committee. I'm sitting here with fellow members of the General Affairs Committee for the hearing on your appointment to the Nebraska Arts Council. I guess at this point, I'd like to have you state and spell your name for the record and share with us anything you would like us to know.

SARAH PEETZ: Thank you, Senator Briese, and good afternoon. Sarah Peetz is my name. it is spelled S-a-r-a-h P-e-e-t-z and I'm actually able to watch this broadcast via internet so I can see all of you at the hearing and thank you for the opportunity to, to join the hearing via phone. I have served on the Nebraska Arts Council since 2018 and I'm honored to be considered for reappointment to the organization. I currently reside in Lincoln, Nebraska. However, I grew up in Newman Grove, Nebraska, and have also lived in Sidney and Columbus. I began my career in private law practice in Sidney and through the years, more recently retired as vice president from the Lincoln Community Foundation. At the community foundation, I directed grant distributions, implemented community initiatives, and worked with many nonprofit organizations, including arts organizations within Lancaster County. I feel this experience has given me a valuable perspective in serving on the Arts Council. The Arts Council continues to be a great catalyst for promoting the arts throughout our state and assisting our groups in developing financial viability and definitely contributing to the economic development of each individual community. So I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

BRIESE: OK, very, very good. Thank you for that. And at this point, I'll open it up to any questions of-- from my fellow committee members. Seeing no questions, thank you again for calling in and thank you for your willingness to serve once again. And with that, I will open it up to any proponent, opponent, or neutral testifiers. And seeing none, that will conclude the hearing on the reappointment of Ms. Sarah Peetz to the Nebraska Arts Council. Thank you again, Ms. Peetz.

SARAH PEETZ: Thank you for your time.

BRIESE: You bet. OK. You got Ellen Hornady? Nothing? You texted her and no answer?

ALEXANDER DeGARMO: Just sent her another one.

BRIESE: You didn't get an answer to the first one? OK. We'll give her another minute or two and-- yeah, I think we'll wrap up the hearing

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then and I think we'll conclude. With that, we'll conclude our day's hearing on appointments to the Nebraska Arts Council.