

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: April 5, 2016

Date Submitted: March 22, 2016

To: Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Board

From: Robert M. Presnell, County Administrator

Subject: Request for Capital Funding for Gadsden Arts Center Expansion Project

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item is presented to the Board for approval of one-time capital funding in the amount of \$25,000 in support of the Gadsden Arts Center's Community Connections expansion project, which has raised 70% of its \$600,000 goal to date through private contributions. Funding will contribute toward achieving the project fundraising goal and will be leveraged as part of a 1:1 match in a request for \$150,000 through a State of Florida Cultural Facilities Grant. This request is in addition to annual program funding requested by Gadsden Arts and provided through the county's nonprofit grant program.

Background:

This item was initially presented to the Board on February 16, 2016 at its regular meeting. The item was tabled and Ms. Robinson was requested to request funding from the City of Quincy and Quincy CRA and then return to the County Commission to revisit the funding request. The City of Quincy voted to fund \$25,000 and the Quincy CRA agreed to fund \$9,500 from this year's budget for the project.

The Gadsden Arts Center serves many roles in support of larger Gadsden County revitalization, quality of life, tourism, and economic development. It provides art education for community children through adults, cultural enrichment, and social opportunities for residents; avenues for area philanthropists to invest money in the community through Gadsden Arts; establishes a positive image for Gadsden County through the Gadsden Arts Center's reputation as the leading visual arts organization in a broad, multi-state region and across the state of Florida; attracts tourists into Gadsden County who buy fuel and food and leave with a positive impression; and helps to attract new visitors to the area. In 2015, Gadsden Arts recorded 18,915 participants.

The Community Connections Renovation and Expansion project will aid the Gadsden Arts Center's impacts for people and the economy. It will:

- Transform an empty building into a walk-in art-making studio. Any resident or visitor will be able to come and learn to make a variety of types of art during all hours that the Gadsden Arts Center is open. This will provide immediate access to art for families -

there is presently no art in public elementary or middle schools, families need more positive/recreational opportunities here, and families from outside of Gadsden County will also come, as there is no offering like that in Tallahassee.

- Create a children’s studio and gallery with magnetic walls, allowing children from the larger community to exhibit art at Gadsden Arts on an ongoing basis, making them feel more welcome and more a part of the Center.
- Add a gallery for local artists, craftspeople, advanced art students, and community art groups to have their own exhibitions at the Gadsden Arts Center, further representing and engaging the local community and area colleges and universities;
- Expand the permanent collection gallery to allow Gadsden Arts to share more of its African-American Vernacular Art Collection with the public;
- Double the size of the gallery shop, allowing more local artists and craftspeople to sell art while further attracting shoppers into Gadsden County;
- Expand art collections storage, increasing capacity for the Gadsden Arts Center to conserve and share art that is important in the history of our Southeastern and more local American culture.

The project is anticipated to attract 1/3 more participants to the Gadsden Arts Center, bringing annual participation from 18,000 to 24,000. The return on investment of public funds in the arts is 8:1 – based on that statistic, the impact of this \$25,000 request will be \$200,000. The average dollar impact of a cultural tourist is \$34 per person, translating into an additional \$204,000 impact in the county economy each year with new visitors. The project itself will cost \$600,000 - \$420,000 in construction costs, and \$180,000 in program funding over the first five years of expanded operations. The Gadsden Arts Center aims to use local contractors and vendors whenever possible, investing these funds and annual organizational costs of \$340,000 into our local economy. Finally, the project will attract an additional \$150,000 in state funding into Gadsden County through the matching grant.

In summary, the renovation and expansion project furthers the Gadsden Arts Center’s positive impacts in Gadsden County: improved quality of life for residents, tourism and economic development, direct and indirect economic impacts, art education for children, and positive community reputation in the larger state and region.

Analysis:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

\$25,000

Options:

1. Approve the request for \$25,000 in funding.
2. Do not approve.
3. Board direction.

County Administrator’s Recommendation:

Option 1