



PUEBLO COUNTY

C O L O R A D O BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Epimenio Griego
District 1

Garrison M. Ortiz
District 2

Chris Wiseman
District 3

February 16, 2022

Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center
Board of Directors
210 N. Santa Fe Ave
Pueblo, CO 81003

Dear Board of Directors,

The Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center (Arts Center) has played a paramount role in our community throughout the years boasting many programs, activities, and learning opportunities that enrich Pueblo’s culture. In fact, the Arts Center has become one of the most cherished centers of art and culture in Southeastern Colorado. The Board of Pueblo County Commissioners (BOCC) has been steadfast and loyal supporters of the Arts Center since its inception. Great accomplishments are often born out of great partnerships.

However, it is the partnership between the Board of County Commissioner (BOCC) and the CEO of the Arts Center that is currently in need of repair. The lack of gratitude, and quite frankly entitlement by the CEO, makes revisiting the financial contributions over the past several years worthwhile.

Per the chart below, Pueblo County has made significant investments in the vision and mission of the Arts Center from 2011 to 2021. Over this decade, the County’s support has increased by 167% from \$331,772 to \$884,676 annually. Examining just the County’s direct funding contribution from 2018 to 2021, there has been an increase of \$121,425. One should also note, the County has budgeted to expend over \$1m in support of the Arts Center for fiscal year 2022. These numbers do not even begin to include support to secure additional grants/donations, in-kind donations, or capital campaign contributions to the Arts Center.

	2011	2018	2019	2021	2022
<i>Direct Funding</i>	\$151,800	\$500,000	\$553,575	\$675,000	\$675,000
<i>Utilities</i>	\$128,125	\$146,439	\$150,405	\$153,270	\$200,000
<i>Children’s Museum Utilities</i>	\$40,272	\$33,672	\$33,996	\$28,556	
<i>Building Improvements</i>	\$9,488		\$73,040		
<i>Sponsorship / Rents</i>	\$2,087	\$2,000	\$2675	\$1,750	
<i>*Misc.</i>		\$94,577 (*CSAC)		\$26,100 (*CARES)	\$169,5000 (*Contract Pending Approval)
TOTAL	\$331,772	\$776,688	\$813,691	\$884,676	\$1,044,500

Most recently, Pueblo County is set to expend over \$125,000, out of budget, to repair a significant water main break with no communication of thanks from the CEO whatsoever. Yet, upon approval of the 2022 budget, the CEO expressed his “disappointment” in not receiving an additional \$25,000 in direct funding from Pueblo County this fiscal year. The \$1m plus in financial support budgeted for this year, which is the highest funding level ever, was not mentioned.

In addition to the year-over-year increases in the direct funding to the Arts Center over the past decade, Pueblo County made a commitment to provide \$2 million towards the Arts Center’s capital campaign in 2021. To do even more, the Board of Commissioners had been diligently working to develop a plan to donate \$10 million, in total, over the course of the next four years to the capital campaign. The response we received from the CEO to this proposal was, “This was not the \$20m requested, we will make do.” This is not a partnership.

The past annual “Rent Day” celebration between the Arts Center and Pueblo County is another prime example of this issue. Upon hearing the County would not provide the entire requested amount to sponsor the event, we were told the event would no longer take place. This is not a partnership.

The CEO of the Arts Center no longer serves as a constructive partner to Pueblo County government. He lacks the ability to listen to opinions that differ from his own, compromise, or build partnerships. He takes excessive vacation time and treats our administrative staff poorly by demanding meetings with Commissioners and other staff upon his immediate return. It has also been brought to our attention that some of the financial reports provided to Pueblo County were falsified by the CEO to secure more funding from the County. This is not a partnership.

The Board of County Commissioners would like to repair and return to a spirit of partnership and two-way collaboration; however, it will not be contributing \$10m towards the Arts Center’s capital plan. In hearing recently that the total plan is actually closer to \$70m, we feel the plan needs to be revisited and evaluated for feasibility before moving forward any further. To be clear, the capital plan will not move forward until the partnership between Pueblo County and Arts Center is restored.

The BOCC wants the Arts Center Board to know that our discontent is solely with the CEO of the organization, not with the board or other employees of the organization. We appreciate the support and understanding of the board during this time and appreciate your service to bettering arts and culture in the Pueblo community.

Sincerely,

Board of Pueblo County Commissioners



Garrison M. Ortiz
Chair



Chris Wiseman
Chair Pro Tem



Eppie Griego
Commissioner

cc. Cynthia Mitchell, County Attorney
Sabina Genesisio, County Manager