



A Special Events Grant Committee Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at City Hall, 400 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida, 32801, Panther Conference Room Board Secretary, Felix Roman called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

**Members Present** Kelly Allen, Marketing & Communications Manager  
Karyn Barber, Communications Manager  
Chelsey Parrish, Special Event Coordinator

**Staff Present** Christel Brooks, Fiscal Coordinator  
Stacey Young Adams, Chief Assistant City Attorney  
Felix Roman, Board Secretary  
Molly Diaz, Fiscal Manager  
Samantha Levine, Housing and Homelessness Initiatives Manager

**Public Comment**

None

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Chelsey Parrish and seconded by Kelly Allen to approve the September 3, 2025, Special Events Grant Committee meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Round One Special Event Grant Applications**

Kelly Allen moved to authorize Molly Diaz, Fiscal Manager, to allocate funding based on the average scores from all three committee members for the eligible applicants. Funding shall be allocated in proportion to the applicant's average score, not to exceed the eligible or requested amount, or whichever is less. Karyn Barber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

- Orlando Kite Festival:** The goal of the Orlando Kite Festival is to create a vibrant and inclusive community event that fosters cultural celebration, education, family bonding, mental health, and a sense of community pride. The Orlando Kite Festival, situated in the City of Orlando Community Redevelopment Area, is a unique family-oriented event designed to build community through culture, art, and the joy of kite flying. Targeted to families with elementary-aged children, the Orlando Kite Festival welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds, continuing its commitment to inclusivity. The festival will take place in the historic Parramore Heritage District at the OCPS Academic Center of Excellence- strategically chosen to ensure accessibility for low-income families that reside in the area, all while bringing more people to experience and enjoy Downtown Orlando. The festival will be a space to promote family bonding and childhood education by blending STEM education with cultural and artistic experiences. Funding of \$4500.00 was allocated for this event.
- Pantastic- Steelpan Jamboree:** Pantastic Steelpan Jamboree 2026 will be a signature cultural event that celebrates the unique art form of steelpan music and its roots in the Caribbean. It brings together local, regional, and international steelpan performers, educators, students, and cultural enthusiasts for a day of music, education, family-friendly entertainment, and cultural pride. Set in Luminary Green Park in the heart of Downtown Orlando, this high-energy, immersive celebration will transform the space into a vibrant, rhythmic cultural experience filled with Caribbean food, music, arts, crafts, and community engagement. Funding of \$4300.00 was allocated for this event.



3. **Play-a-Thon:** The Play-a-thon Event is a day-long celebration featuring performances by all eight ensembles of Florida Symphony Youth Orchestras (FSYO). Open to the public and free of charge, the event highlights the talent and dedication of Central Florida's young musicians. In addition to the musical performances, attendees can enjoy a variety of activities, including games, food trucks, a silent auction, and more. Play-a-thon serves as the culmination of FSYO's annual peer-to-peer fundraiser, bringing together the community to support music education and appreciate both jazz and classical repertoire. Funding of \$4100.00 was allocated for this event.
4. **Historical Society of Central FL-America 250 Celebration:** On May 2, 2026, the Historical Society of Central Florida will host a public, family-friendly celebration at the Orange County Regional History Center honoring American democracy, civic identity, and shared heritage. The event will feature a live Naturalization Ceremony, a Revolutionary War-era living history commemoration (featuring reenactors like Paul Revere and his midnight ride), a lecture series from local scholars, and a teen-led panel discussion hosted by our Youth Advisory Council. Younger children will enjoy an interactive colonial themed play space, with crafts and activities tied to Revolutionary War and Founding Era themes. Funding of \$3250.00 was allocated for this event.
5. **It's Just Yoga Health & Fitness Festival:** Promote mental and physical wellness in a fun, accessible, and inclusive environment. Draw attendees from across Central Florida to Downtown Orlando, activating Lake Eola as a hub for healthy living. Support local small businesses and entrepreneurs through vendor opportunities. Raise funds and awareness for New Hope for Kids via class donations. Foster a sense of belonging and empowerment through diverse programming. Funding of \$4750.00 was allocated for this event.
6. **Las Velitas:** Las Velitas Cultural Festival is a vibrant holiday celebration rooted in the Colombian tradition of lighting candles ("velitas") to symbolize hope, unity, and the beginning of the Christmas season. Now entering its third year, the event will take place in Downtown Orlando and will include live Latin music, folkloric dance performances, artisan markets, a family friendly candle-lighting ceremony, interactive cultural activities for children, and diverse Latin American food vendors. Funding of \$3700.00 was allocated for this event.
7. **Lima Fest Orlando:** Lima Fest Orlando 2026 is a free, family-friendly cultural festival that honors the rich history and vibrant traditions of Peru, held in celebration of the founding of the capital city of Lima. The event will take place on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at Lake Eola Park's Walt Disney Amphitheater, from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM. It will feature live musical performances, traditional Peruvian dances, artisan vendors, authentic cuisine, services, and educational cultural activities designed to engage both locals and visitors. Funding of \$4100.00 was allocated for this event.
8. **Make-a-Wish:** 19th Annual Morgan and Morgan Walk for Wishes: Walk for Wishes is a family-friendly, community walk hosted by Make-A-Wish Central and Northern Florida at Lake Eola Park in downtown Orlando. This inspirational event celebrates the life-changing power of a wish and raises critical funds to support our mission of granting wishes to local children with critical illnesses. Event Description: Participants form teams and fundraise in the weeks leading up to the event, then come together for a morning filled with energy, entertainment, and impact. The event includes a walk around Lake Eola, a mission-focused opening ceremony, wish kid stories, vendor and sponsor booths, interactive zones for kids, and opportunities for attendees to engage with our mission in meaningful ways. Funding of \$1760.00 was allocated for this event.



9. **Orlando Martin Luther King Parade:** The Orlando Jaycees Parade is a signature community engagement event hosted annually by the Southwest Orlando Jaycees, a leadership development organization focused on empowering young professionals through service. This festive and inclusive event celebrates civic pride, cultural diversity, and the spirit of volunteerism in the Orlando area. The parade typically features local marching bands, community organizations, schools, businesses, civic leaders, and performance groups. It is held in collaboration with city officials and local sponsors to create a safe, vibrant, and family-friendly atmosphere. Funding of \$4500.00 was allocated for this event.
10. **Orlando Sports Foundation March 2 Cure:** The Cure Bowl is an annual college football bowl game held in Orlando, Florida. This event not only provides thrilling sports entertainment but also focuses on raising awareness and funds for cancer research. The game is played at the Camping World Stadium, a premier venue in Downtown Orlando, and is attended by thousands of fans from across the country and around the world. Funding of \$2700.00 was allocated for this event.
11. **Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando Paws in the Park:** Now in its 31st year, Paws in the Park continues to unite pet lovers from across Central Florida at Lake Eola in support of Pet Alliance's mission. This dog-friendly festival features food, games, shopping, entertainment, adoptable pets, and community-driven fundraising and awareness. Funding of \$20,000.00 was allocated for this event.
12. **Central Florida Earth Day:** Central Florida Earth Day ([www.cfearthday.org](http://www.cfearthday.org)) is the largest Earth Day event in central Florida. The event is promoted in numerous publications. Funding of \$3500.00 was allocated for this event.
13. **UCF Celebrates the Arts:** UCF Celebrates the Arts is a multi-disciplinary annual festival presented at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts in Orlando, acting as a bridge between the activities of arts-making at the university and the greater Orlando community. This grant request will support the 18+ FREE events in the festival only. No funds will go to support paid events. The festival includes music and theatre performances, lectures, educational events, visual arts exhibits, performance art, and film. Our goal is to make UCF arts accessible to the Central Florida region and to ignite a passion in younger audiences through interactive experiences that are inclusive and accessible. It is our primary objective for UCF students and faculty arts makers to intersect with the greater Orlando region in the city's state-of-the-art performing arts center through the mutual experience of music, visual arts, theatre, lectures, and youth activities, and to ensure those activities are free or affordable for the residents of our region. Funding of \$18,600.00 was allocated for this event.

**Date of Next Meeting**

- a. TBD

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Special Events Grant Committee Meeting, Board Secretary Felix Roman adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

  
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Molly Diaz  
Fiscal Manager

  
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Felix Roman  
Board Secretary