

From: [Grace OBrien](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: Objection
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 2:22:58 PM
Attachments: [Bill Breakdown.pdf](#)

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OBJECTION

Christa G Obrien

Parcel: 18-28-16-20106-020-0120

September 4, 2025 Public Hearing

I would like to object to this biased increase. In addition to seeing my bill triple in the past 4 years, there is zero transparency in my bill to explain what I am paying now, or what is an assessment or not. I have attached a photo copy of my bill. As you can see, while I am able to see my bill split into water and sewer, there is no further break down of the charges to explain why my sewage is 3 times the amount of water that I use. I have asked for clarification with no success. I deserve to know what I am paying for and being increased on, regardless if they are unincorporated or not.

In addition, there is no clarification on which properties are being singled out. I would also like to point out that I am very close to a major construction zone at Curlew and Route 19, and any issues resulting in change in water runoff would have to be attributed to this, and not any change to my own property. That cost should be absorbed by the construction project that makes life difficult to live in without increased charges to its residents.

Thank you,
Christa Grace

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Advocating for Creative Pinellas" Funding
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:50:31 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:43 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Advocating for Creative Pinellas' Funding

From: Tarin Mohajeri <tmohajeri@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:32 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Advocating for Creative Pinellas' Funding

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Dear County Commissioner Scott,

In 2023, the most recent year for which data are available, **arts and culture again surpassed its annual value added to the U.S. economy with \$1.2 trillion, representing 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP** (National Endowment for the Arts). This number is not abstract—it reflects real jobs, real communities, and real impact here in Pinellas County.

Our county thrives on cultural vibrancy, with arts tourism serving as one of the strongest economic drivers in the region. Visitors come for our galleries, performances, festivals, and public art experiences—supporting local restaurants, hotels, and businesses in the process. When we invest in the arts, we invest in an economic engine that sustains thousands of jobs and enhances quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Reducing or eliminating funding, however, directly jeopardizes this ecosystem. The loss would not only hurt institutions, but also the livelihoods of **individual artists, producers, designers, filmmakers, and creative professionals** who contribute to our economy and cultural identity. Without local and national support, many will relocate to communities where the arts are recognized and valued. This would be a devastating cultural and economic blow to Pinellas County.

Beyond economics, the arts are essential to **education and child development**. Arts education—both inside and outside the classroom—helps students become well-rounded citizens. Studies consistently show that participation in the arts leads to **higher academic achievement, improved math scores, better grades overall, and increased college enrollment**. When we support the arts, we invest in the future of our children and the strength of our workforce.

Pinellas County has built a reputation as a hub for creativity and innovation. Let's continue to strengthen that legacy by maintaining robust support for the arts. These investments pay dividends economically, culturally, and educationally.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

Tarin Mohajeri, Independent Art Curator

727-642-9040

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Arts Funding Support is Vital !!!!! from Addie Rodriguez #31767640
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:29:01 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:23 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Arts Funding Support is Vital !!!!! from Addie Rodriguez #31767640

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Direction of Inquiry

- General Information
- Report a Problem
- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator
- Webmaster

Your Name

Addie Rodriguez

Subject

Arts Funding Support is Vital !!!!!

Message

In response to the county commissioner that recently stated “he frankly doesn’t see what Creative Pinellas brings to the table”, I believe he clearly hasn’t taken the time to attend any of the beneficial events offered to Pinellas County visitors and residents at no charge to the them because of the support. I think it’s ridiculous that .004% of the overall Pinellas County budget is what Creative Pinellas receives from Pinellas County and still has been able to

demonstrate many ways of improving and supporting the programs for our students and professional artists. Not sure why you all need to be reminded of this but... you are elected officials for ALL of Pinellas County, not for selected groups. Keep funding at current or better yet higher levels to show you serve all your constituents. Thank you.

Your Street Address	519 1/2 13th Ave NW
City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33770
Your Email Address	justaddie26@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas - importance of the arts to Pinellas County from Susan Bonnevie #31767366
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:41:31 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas - importance of the arts to Pinellas County from Susan Bonnevie #31767366

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Susan Bonnevie

Subject

Creative Pinellas - importance of the arts to Pinellas County

Message

Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing to express my support for Creative Pinellas, an organization that produces so much value for our community. Arts venues and activities - whether museums, or concerts, or workshops, or whatever - are a big reason that I personally and many others choose to live in Pinellas County. I am not an artist myself, but having access to the creative works of the many excellent artists in our community is very important to me.

Please maintain funding for Creative Pinellas. It's one of the best bargains you can support.

Susan Bonnevie

Your Street Address	334 2nd Ave S, apt 208
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Phone Number	7704800200
Your Email Address	susanburnore@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Daniela Uebelhart #31767535
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:03:55 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:02 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Daniela Uebelhart #31767535

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Daniela Uebelhart

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing as a concerned resident of Pinellas county to urge you to continue funding for Creative Pinellas. Ending this support would be a significant loss for our community, our schools, and our local economy.

Creative Pinellas is more than a cultural enrichment program. It provides educational opportunities for our children, fosters creativity, and supports local artists and small businesses. Studies consistently show that communities with strong arts programs experience higher

student achievement, and economic growth through tourism and local spending.

Cutting funding would mean fewer opportunities for young people to explore the arts, especially the ones who'd benefit the most.

I humbly ask that you preserve funding for Creative Pinellas and continue to invest in the future of our county through arts, culture, and education. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to serving our community.

Sincerely,
Daniela Uebelhart

Your Street Address	176 4th Ave NE
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Email Address	dabiubresser@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: creative Pinellas from Edward Hong #31767567
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:12:48 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:08 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: creative Pinellas from Edward Hong #31767567

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Edward Hong

Subject

creative Pinellas

Message

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you not to cut funding for Creative Pinellas. The program is a vital resource that enriches our community, provides opportunities for our youth, and supports local artists. We have personally benefited from it and know of many children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to be involved in an arts program.

Investing in the arts strengthens our economy, fosters education and creativity, and builds a stronger sense of community. Reducing funding would diminish these

opportunities and limit access to programs that many of us deeply value.

Thank you for your consideration and for continuing to support the arts in our county.

Sincerely,
Eddie Hong

Your Street Address	400 4th Ave S, unit 1201
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Email Address	ehong001@yahoo.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Defunding Creative Pinellas from Francine Wolf #31767400
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:47:54 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:42 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Defunding Creative Pinellas from Francine Wolf #31767400

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Francine Wolf

Subject

Defunding Creative Pinellas

Message

Dear Commissioner--

I strongly urge you to consider continuing funding for Creative Pinellas. It is a unique arts entity that brings so much to this county. The arts are very important for any society and we are very fortunate to have this wonderful place in mid-Pinellas. Not everyone can get to St. Pete for art. I have applied for an individual artist grant in the past, and what they offer is something that can't be replaced. Please do not cut off their funding.
Thank you.

Your Street Address	1219 14th Circle, SE
City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33771
Your Phone Number	813-498-9653
Your Email Address	zazuproductions@aol.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas from Michelle Friedline #31766903
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:33:31 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:31 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas from Michelle Friedline #31766903

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Michelle Friedline

Subject

DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas

Message

Hello. I am writing to urge you to CONTINUE funding Creative Pinellas, whose work makes our county more beautiful and vibrant through public art, cultural programs, and community projects.

Their support of local artists nurtures local talent and also strengthens our economy. Artists live, work, and reinvest right here in Pinellas county. Creative Pinellas already plays a direct role in promoting cultural tourism by attracting visitors to galleries and events. Cutting their funding would disrupt the important tourism benefits that Creative Pinellas is already providing.

As elected officials, your duty is first and foremost to the citizens and voters who live here, not only to visitors and those who work directly in tourism. Your continued support of Creative Pinellas will help our community thrive both culturally and economically and also enhance our reputation as a destination. I respectfully ask you to maintain and protect this essential funding.

Your Street Address	2833 Orange Tree Circle N
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34684
Your Email Address	michellefriedline@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Fund Creative Pinellas to the Utmost! from Tara Sheldon #31767374
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:40:04 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Fund Creative Pinellas to the Utmost! from Tara Sheldon #31767374

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Tara Sheldon

Subject

Fund Creative Pinellas to the Utmost!

Message

Dear Commissioner,

The arts are a vital part of this community. Creative Pinellas understands and supports artists in a way that's critically needed. As Aristotle said, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." And now, more than ever, we all need to experience that significance. Please fund Creative Pinellas. Wishing you and your family all the best.

Thank you, Tara

Your Street Address

2462 BRAZILIA DR, Apt 78

City/Unincorporated County	Clearwater
Zip Code	33763
Your Email Address	tksheld@yahoo.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Funding for Creative Pinellas from Stacie Steinke #31767634
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:22:51 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:22 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Funding for Creative Pinellas from Stacie Steinke #31767634

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Stacie Steinke

Subject

Funding for Creative Pinellas

Message

I am a vocal professional who lives in St Petersburg and chose to live here in large part because of the breadth and depth of the Arts Community in Pinellas County. It is hugely different from Hillsborough County and its impact is perceived on a broad level. I believe in and support the work of Creative Pinellas as it serves to promote the arts in a large-scale, yet personal way.

Please continue to fund Creative Pinellas at the same level. They do great work in the community to bring artists' work to broader audiences locally. The organization has also been part of engine that increased the visibility of our Arts community to national and international levels, which has

and will continue to bring people to our region.
The amount of funding provided by the County is very low relative to the amount of positive effect it provides. There appears to be no financial motivation for removing the current level of funding. So why? Reducing funding to this organization does not makes sense.

Thank you for your consideration of behalf of Creative Pinellas.

Your Street Address	131 26th Ave NE
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33704
Your Phone Number	7275999089
Your Email Address	staciesteinke@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Is this true? from julie ferri #31765475
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:17:42 PM

Budget related (Creative Pinellas 9/4/25).
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:26 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Is this true? from julie ferri #31765475

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5

Your Name

julie ferri

Subject

Is this true?

Message

As a new resident of Pinellas County I am writing to express my extreme disappointment at the idea of defunding Creative Pinellas. It contributes to the quality of life for residents, while generating significant economic and tourism benefits for our community. Creative Pinellas provides the only cultural draw to Largo.

I understand The arts and culture sector in Pinellas County generates nearly \$300 million in economic activity, supports thousands of jobs, and provides tens of millions in government revenue. This directly contributes to the fiscal health of the county.

It is wrong to take our artistic expression away. Art and music bring joy to peoples lives. No one forces anyone to view or hear anything they don't want to. No one has to attend public events if they don't coincide with their personal beliefs.

Creative Pinellas serves as a direct attraction for tourists. Its two galleries play a central role in this. The Gallery at Creative Pinellas, located alongside the Florida Botanical Gardens, provides a free, quality art experience that complements and enhances the Largo area. The economic impact of these attractions is undeniable. A significant percentage of non-local visitors report that the primary reason for their trip to Pinellas County is to attend an arts event. They are spending money on dining, lodging, and local goods. Creative Pinellas's programs and galleries are directly responsible for drawing this valued visitor to our county, bringing income to local businesses and generating tax revenue.

Thank you for reconsidering defunding the arts

Your Street Address	138th Lane
City/Unincorporated County	largo
Zip Code	33774
Your Email Address	juliefaustin@yahoo.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas from Kimberly Smith #31763314
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 2:23:51 PM

Budget related (9/4/25)
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:24 AM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas from Kimberly Smith #31763314

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Kimberly Smith

Subject

Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas

Message

Hello,

I am a lifelong resident of Pinellas county and am raising my five children here as well. I love raising my children and living in a county that truly appreciates the arts. Pinellas County is a special oasis in Florida and I am proud of how our county has embraced the arts. I recently read that the Board of Commissioners is considering defunding Creative Pinellas. I am writing to express that this would be awful to our community and am pleading with you to NOT defund Creative Pinellas.

At a time when the arts is being defunded nationwide, it is more important than ever to have organizations and resources such as Creative Pinellas for our county and our children. Creative Pinellas has been essential for me and my children. Not only have I thoroughly enjoyed the arts through the events and galleries they set up and host, I have been paid to work on large scale exhibits through Creative Pinellas, which has helped put food on the table for my children. My children have also had opportunities to attend art summer camp programs which would have otherwise been unfeasible.

So again, please do not take this away from our community and please continue to fund the arts through Creative Pinellas.

All the best,
Kimberly

Your Street Address	736 69th Ave S
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33705-6248
Your Phone Number	7272729386
Your Email Address	kimbersmithly@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Heather Rippert #31767417
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:54:07 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:44 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Heather Rippert #31767417

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Direction of Inquiry	Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
Your Name	Heather Rippert
Subject	Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner Scott,</p> <p>Firstly, as a well respected local artist who has both benefitted from Creative Pinellas through grant funding for a traffic signal box at Tampa and McMullen Booth Roads (2024), one Emerging Artist Grant (2022), and participating as a brand ambassador for the #artscoast (Pinellas County) at the Piedmont Park Arts Festival in Atlanta, GA (2022), and other projects, I must express my deep dismay, frustration and anger at the short sightedness of the proposal to defund such a vital organization that gives so much to our community.</p> <p>Secondly, as a member of the Board of the Clearwater Arts Alliance, I stand firmly with our organizations statement as follows regarding this matter;</p> <p>As the official Arts Alliance for the City of Clearwater, we strongly urge continued funding for Creative Pinellas, our</p>

County's designated arts agency. With less than 1% of the county's tourism tax and just 0.004% of the overall Pinellas County budget, Creative Pinellas delivers tremendous impact through cultural tourism and arts advocacy. Creative Pinellas also leverages state, federal, philanthropic, and contract dollars that multiply the County's investment many times over.

Their leadership supports community beautification projects including murals, art-wrapped signal boxes, and exhibitions featuring both youth and professional artists in multiple locations across the County, making our neighborhoods more vibrant and welcoming. A strong arts community also improves mental health, supports aging well, keeps young people positively engaged, and builds a more creative workforce that strengthens businesses of all kinds.

Considering that our County is recognized nationally and internationally as an arts destination, which strengthens our tourism economy, withdrawing support from Creative Pinellas would undermine—not preserve—our County's unique charm. To defund Creative Pinellas would destabilize the cultural infrastructure that sustains artists, arts and culture organizations, and residents across Pinellas County, and weaken the very foundation of the cultural tourism economy that benefits us all.

I sincerely hope that you will reevaluate this matter and turn it around. I will be in attendance at the Budget Meeting on Thursday evening.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Heather Rippert

Your Street Address	2052 Kings Hwy Apt 5
City/Unincorporated	Clearwater

County

Zip Code 33755

Your Phone Number 610-733-3429

Your Email Address hrippert@icloud.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Save Creative Pinellas from Dexter Fabian #31767484
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:01:16 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:54 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Save Creative Pinellas from Dexter Fabian #31767484

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Direction of Inquiry	Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
Your Name	Dexter Fabian
Subject	Save Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner Scott,</p> <p>I am reaching out as a resident of St. Petersburg, FL, the publisher of I Love the Burg and an advocate and supporter of the Arts especially in our beloved city. The Arts community and what it has done for the city to put it on the map are the big reasons why I and a lot of its residents and visitors love the 'Burg. It has put us on the map; it has brought thousands to move here; it has sustained livelihood for many; it has made St. Pete one of the most attractive and livable cities in this country. This is only possible with organizations like Creative Pinellas making sure that we continue to sustain and propagate the Arts, artists and a love for them through programming and funding afforded towards other local arts organizations. Let's not lose sight of this value that has made St. Pete come alive in the past decade or so or otherwise we wil see all that we've all worked for come to naught.</p>

Thank you for your time.
Dexter Fabian
Publisher, I Love the Burg

Your Street Address	430 3rd Ave. S
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Email Address	dexter@wallmediapartners.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency from Susan Castleman #31766271
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:22:13 PM

Budget related (Creative Pinellas) 09/04/25
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:10 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency from Susan Castleman #31766271

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Susan Castleman

Subject

Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency

Message

I strongly support Pinellas County's funding for Creative Pinellas, our local arts agency.

The Arts in Pinellas County supports for a our economy and a strong tourist attraction for visitors.

In 2022, Pinellas County's arts sector generated \$294.7 million in economic activity, supporting 4,528 jobs and generating \$58.9 million in tax revenue. This represents a nearly 20% increase from 2015, demonstrating significant

growth despite the pandemic. The arts sector includes both nonprofit arts organizations and audience expenditures, with audiences spending money on meals, shopping, and other services before or after events, thus contributing to local businesses and the overall economy.

The last minute discussion of cutting this spending on August 28 should require a more in depth review with constituents input before a hasty cut.

Your Street Address	7442 Drew Oak Dr
City/Unincorporated County	Seminole
Zip Code	33772
Your Phone Number	7277434631
Your Email Address	suecast71@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: The Arts Matter! from Jae Hughes #31767107
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:04:08 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: The Arts Matter! from Jae Hughes #31767107

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Jae Hughes

Subject

The Arts Matter!

Message

Hi Commissioners,

The arts are what make St Pete a special city. It's a special city full of art, love, and life. Please do not defund the arts. This city is slowly being bled dry of what makes it unique and so loved.

Your Street Address

2000 43rd St S

**City/Unincorporated
County**

St. Petersburg

Zip Code

33711

Your Email Addresssyarrajaehughes@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: We support Creative Pinellas from St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, Inc. #31766638
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:59:01 PM

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:54 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: We support Creative Pinellas from St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, Inc. #31766638

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, Inc.

Subject

We support Creative Pinellas

Message

We are writing as a society made up of 20+ small nonprofits and groups from all over the county to express our support of continued funding for Creative Pinellas. Creative Pinellas supports individual artists at all stages of a career. Creative Pinellas provides grants, education, and resources for nonprofits like SPIFFS to help better serve our community. We thrive because of Creative Pinellas. SPIFFS serves thousands of people each year through our Folk Fair and other programs. During the pandemic, Creative Pinellas's support helped keep us afloat. We can't overstate their importance to cultural, performance, educational, and youth serving nonprofits in the area. We don't think repurposing the money will have anywhere near the same impact as this highly respected, thoughtful organization does.

Thank you for your time reading this.

Your Street Address	2335 22nd Ave S, STE 14
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33712
Your Phone Number	7272893744
Your Email Address	internationalfolkfair@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:09:12 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas

From: Randi Hilleso <randihilleso@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 10:27 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner Scott,

It is with great concern that I have learned of the Pinellas County Commission's consideration to eliminate funding for Creative Pinellas.

For more than a decade, I have worked with Creative Pinellas both directly and indirectly. Six of those years I served as Associate Director of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance with John Collins. In many funding opportunities, we relied on Creative Pinellas as the official Local Arts Agency for the County. Throughout its history, Creative Pinellas has provided leadership to the arts community, helping to create Pinellas County as a serious arts destination.

The County Statute 265.32 "County Fine Arts Council" clearly outlines the responsibilities of such an agency. These include:

- (a) Stimulating greater governmental and public awareness and appreciation of the importance of the arts to the people of Florida.
- (b) Encouraging and facilitating greater and more efficient use of governmental and private resources for the development and support of the arts.
- (c) Encouraging and facilitating opportunities for Florida residents to participate in artistic activities.
- (d) Promoting the development of Florida artists, arts institutions, community organizations sponsoring arts activities, and audiences.

- (e) Surveying and assessing the needs of the arts, artists, arts institutions, community organizations sponsoring arts activities, and people of this state relating to the arts.
- (f) Supporting and facilitating the preservation and growth of the state's artistic resources.
- (g) Contracting for artistic services, performances, and exhibits.
- (h) Developing a center or complex of physical facilities for the use of the arts.
- (i) Providing financial and technical assistance to artists, arts institutions, and audiences.
- (j) Otherwise serving the citizens of the county and state in the realm of the arts.

Creative Pinellas has lived up to its responsibilities to the County in numerous ways including:

- Maintaining the Gallery (a Pinellas Parks Department property), with a current \$200,000 privately funded upgrade underway
- Partnering with the County on Graffiti Abatement through murals and signal box projects
- Opening and managing the art gallery at PIE Airport and its art collection (funded by the airport)
- Securing a 5 year contract with the Lealman CRA with annual deliverables
- Partnering with Pinellas County Schools on Youth Art Month, middle school and high school exhibitions, with plans for further expansion..
- Completing an inventory of the County's public art collection.
- Partnering with VSPC to showcase local artists at national events such as the Piedmont Park Fine Arts Festival and regional IPW travel show.

Recognizing the economic importance of tourism, Creative Pinellas has also shifted to strengthen its alignment with visitor engagement:

- Hiring a Curatorial Director with arts and tourism marketing expertise.
- Bringing on as Managing Editor of *Arts Coast Magazine*, a former Tampa Bay Times writer and contributor to VSPC's *Gulf to Bay* destination magazine, with a focus on long-range calendars, artist spotlights and visitor-centered stories.
- Recruiting VSPC Kylie Kiaz as a grants panelist to enhance tourism partnerships
- Refocusing Individual Artist Grants into "Making Waves", a program with strong tourism connections.

The arts contribute significantly to our local economy and to our community vitality. Visitors are essential, but so is a strong cultural fabric that makes Pinellas County an inspiring place to live, work, and create. Creative Pinellas is indispensable to both goals.

I strongly urge you to reconsider any proposal to defund Creative Pinellas. The organization has proven its ability to deliver a strong return on investment for the County, adapt to evolving priorities, and foster the kind of cultural excellence that makes Pinellas thrive.

Sincerely,

Randi Hillesø

Ms. Randi Hillesø

Non-Profit Advisor, Pinellas County

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:30:26 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:30 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas

From: vyolette hastings <hastings.vyolette@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:22 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Creative Pinellas

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Hello Mr. Scott,

It has come to my attention that the organization Creative Pinellas is at risk of being defunded. Therefore, I wanted to take a minute to express the great concern this brings not only me but the arts community here in Pinellas County. While I have never personally received one of their art grants, I have continually had the opportunity to apply and be considered. One artist, Jennifer Chandley, received one of these grants a couple of years ago and I got to attend an artist talk where she went in depth about how her art was a vessel of healing through her life experiences.

Being a part of the community here in pinellas county, even outside of being an artist, I feel that art beautifies our community to a great degree. It helps unify us, when one artist starts a conversation through their work or about their work, it opens up the opportunity for the rest of us to weigh in. This connection is something I find unique to the arts, it's almost like both an icebreaker and something tangible that serves to deepen one another's connection. Often, art or the meaning of art is not something singularly understood; For example, the artist Jennifer Chandley opened up about her personal life, but that just brought more people into the conversation about their own personal lives. In addition, the

interpretation of our feelings has a range far beyond one person's definition of a particular subject or realm of focus.

While some people may hold the opinion that feelings and art are insignificant in the larger scope of things, on the contrary, it is a navigational tool built on inclusivity. Even just thinking of our history, when we think of centuries ago, it feels so separate from our today. But art is a written record that shows our innate human sensibilities evolving through time, bridging the past to the present, and posing the question of what our future has in store. That implores you and the other commissioners to envision what our community's future has in store: Will we be a community that ignores the humanistic need to connect and evolve through art by defunding our arts organizations, or will we uplift the voices that serve to educate, inform, and further develop our culture?

Thank you,
Vyolette Hastings

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas: A concerned citizen - Please Reconsider Defunding Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:50:20 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:43 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas: A concerned citizen - Please Reconsider Defunding Creative Pinellas

From: Brianna Cook <bricookdesigns@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:21 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Creative Pinellas: A concerned citizen - Please Reconsider Defunding Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner Scott,

My name is Brianna Cook, and I'm a proud resident of St. Petersburg.

I'm writing to respectfully urge you to reconsider your proposal to defund Creative Pinellas. While I understand the need to re-evaluate budgets and ensure a strong return on public investment, eliminating support for Creative Pinellas would be a major loss to our community. The arts are not only culturally enriching, they are a vital driver of tourism, economic growth, and civic identity in Pinellas County.

Before moving here, I lived in Orlando and would frequently drive to St. Pete just to experience its vibrant arts scene and support its local businesses. That deep connection to the culture and creativity of this city ultimately led me to purchase a home here this year. I'm now an active member of several local art studios and regularly participate in community events centered around the arts.

Creative Pinellas has played an essential role in cultivating and sustaining the arts community that makes this region so special. Rather than eliminating its funding altogether, I urge you and the Commission to explore a path of restructuring—one that strengthens oversight and effectiveness without dismantling the very infrastructure that supports local artists.

The idea of redirecting funds to tourism-specific grants through VSPC may have merit, but it shouldn't come at the expense of the very artists and creative efforts that make St. Pete a

cultural destination in the first place. Tourists come here *because* of the art created by our local talent. We need solutions that build on that strength, not erase it.

There is room for collaboration. The county, Creative Pinellas, and Visit St. Pete/Clearwater could work together to align their goals and develop programs that both support artists and drive tourism. With creativity and cooperation, we can find a solution that preserves the identity of our community while meeting financial objectives. I ask you kindly, do not give up right away - try to find a way to restructure and build. Show our community that you are willing to collaborate, hear our concerns, and work with us.

Where there's a will, there's a way. I hope you'll choose to work *with* our local artists rather than defund them, because without them, St. Pete wouldn't be the place that so many of us, and so many visitors, fall in love with.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,
Brianna Cook

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of Support for Creative Pinellas From Bill Leavengood
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:05:48 PM

From: William Leavengood <21stcenturyplayhouse@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:46 PM
To: Scherer, Chris <cscherer@pinellas.gov>; Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>; Nowicki, Vince <vnowicki@pinellas.gov>; Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>; Latvala, Christopher <clatvala@pinellas.gov>; Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Letter of Support for Creative Pinellas From Bill Leavengood

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Dear County Commissioners,

I was distressed to hear that you are considering eliminating all funding for Creative Pinellas. I feel like St. Petersburg has been on the rise as a community recognized for performing arts, visual arts and culture, and Creative Pinellas has been a champion helping artists to create and present so many works and performances for our community-- including supporting me with grants that helped me bring a concert version of Webb's City: The Musical to the Palladium in 2017 and Florida Man: The Musical to the St. Petersburg Museum of History and The Beach Theatre in 2025. I used my small grants to pay actors and directors something for their time and talent, to create marketing materials and to rent rehearsal space. No luxury yachts were acquired.

I hope you will vote to keep Creative Pinellass alive and well. Meanwhile, I am interested to know who is crusading to have the organization eliminated and why.

Sincerely,

--

Bill Leavengood
21st Century Playhouse, LLC

(727) 422-1645

21stCenturyPlayhouse@gmail.com

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:46:11 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:42 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas

From: Jazzy Erickson <jazzy.erickson@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:06 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to urge you to continue funding **Creative Pinellas**. The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas.

Creative Pinellas is not only the designated arts agency for our county—it is an engine of **economic growth, tourism, and community connection**. The arts generate more than **\$241 million annually** in economic activity across Pinellas County, supporting thousands of jobs, drawing visitors, and strengthening local businesses. For every public dollar invested in the arts, our community sees multiple dollars returned in tax revenue, tourism spending, and job creation.

But the value of Creative Pinellas goes beyond numbers. This organization ensures that the arts are accessible to everyone—creating opportunities for local artists, inspiring young people, and building a sense of belonging and pride in our diverse community. When neighbors come together at a mural, a gallery, or a performance, we create bonds that strengthen the fabric of our county.

To lose this support would be devastating—not only for our artists, but for our economy, our businesses, and the shared cultural life that makes Pinellas County a place we are proud to call home.

I ask that you continue to invest in Creative Pinellas and protect the future of the arts in our

community.
With gratitude,
J Erickson

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Proposed defunding of Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:30:33 PM

From: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:30 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen <cchaney@pinellas.gov>
Subject: FW: Proposed defunding of Creative Pinellas

From: christa fairbrother <christa_fairbrother@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:12 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Proposed defunding of Creative Pinellas

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Chairman Scott -

As one of your constituents, I am appalled that the commission is considering defunding Creative Pinellas, our countywide arts agency.

Pinellas County is well-known for its arts, and an essential part of that is having a healthy arts agency. Defunding the County's arts agency would minimize the importance of cultural tourism in our area just as Creative Pinellas has been further providing a vibrant arts environment for our visitors. Defunding Creative Pinellas would also hurt hundreds of small businesses, educators, and nonprofits that rely on arts-related spending. The nonprofit arts and culture sector in Pinellas County supports almost five-thousand jobs. Defunding would result in lost economic momentum and could undermine millions in public and private investments already made.

As an active Artist, I know that the Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses. Did you know that Cultural tourism in Pinellas County generates \$350 million annually through ticket sales, lodging, food, and other local spending, directly tied to organizations like Creative Pinellas? For every \$1 invested in the arts, communities see a \$7–\$9 return through local spending and economic activity. The 4.1 million annual attendees at Pinellas County's nonprofit arts and culture events spend an average of almost \$36 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission – on items such as meals, parking, and lodging. 34% of the attendees live outside of

Pinellas County; they average about \$46 in event-related spending per person per event. Arts tourists are ideal visitors, staying longer and spending more than non-Arts tourists.

The arts is what make our community unique. I don't want to live in a cookie-cutter corporate town that looks like any other. They've been instrumental in the development of the murals around town, which give our town so much character.

My property taxes are not going down, only up, and so are everyone else's. The county has the funds to continue Creative Pinellas. This proposal is short-sighted deinvestment in a vital part of our community. Don't do it, Christa Fairbrother

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:44:22 PM

Topic	In support of Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	Noelle Topa
Phone	+17275604912
Email	noelletopa@gmail.com
Address	1744 Bayhill Drive FL 34677
Comments	<p>I moved to Tampa from Pennsylvania 10 years ago and I love going around Pinellas county because of the murals, galleries, and events supported by Creative Pinellas. They make the area exciting for people like me who love seeing art and creativity in a community that I get the delight to witness all the time, and cutting their funding would take away so much of what makes this community special.</p>
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:12:49 PM

Topic	Budget Hearing for Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	
Citizen Name	Jesse Switek
Phone	
Email	jpswitek@gmail.com
Address	34695
Comments	I oppose cutting the budget for Creative Pinellas because funding for the arts is a positive public service - Creative Pinellas funds summer art programs for children, youth art programs, supporting our local art community in all of Pinellas, not just one or two cities. I further, and specifically oppose redirecting the funds to Visit Clearwater and St. Pete because this is too specific and does not benefit all residents of Pinellas the way Creative Pinellas does.
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:08:32 PM

Topic Budget Hearing for Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number

Citizen Name Sarah Urriste

Phone

Email sdufs@duck.com

Address 34695

Comments

I oppose cutting the budget for Creative Pinellas because funding for the arts is a positive public service - Creative Pinellas funds summer artv programs for children, youth art programs, supporting our local art community in all of Pinellas, not just one or two cities. I further, and specifically oppose redirecting the funds to Visit Clearwater and St. Pete because this is too specific and does not benefit all residents of Pinellas the way Creative Pinellas does. Further, basing the defunding on someone's feelings, is an inappropriate and subjective way to conduct county business.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:02:16 PM

Topic	Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	Grace Knauff
Phone	+17272804043
Email	graceanneknauff@gmail.com
Address	530 Severs Landing Palm Harbor, FL 34683
Comments	Having lived in Pinellas my whole life, I've seen how Creative Pinellas brings our community to life through murals, public art, and cultural programs. These projects make the county more engaging and enjoyable for everyone, and losing this funding would be a big loss for both residents and visitors.
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:33:31 PM

Topic In Supprt of Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number 25-1144A
Citizen Name Abigail Knauff
Phone +117278518212
Email aknau13@gmail.com
Address 530 Severs Landing
Palm Harbor, FLORIDA 34683

Comments

Dear Commissioners, I am writing to share what Creative Pinellas has meant to me personally, as both a lifelong resident and an emerging artist in Pinellas County. Murals along the Pinellas Trail, at Belcher and Alderman Roads in Palm Harbor, and the signal box projects are all examples of how Creative Pinellas has made our community more beautiful and inspiring. These projects support tourism by turning our public spaces into cultural landmarks. Last year, I received an Ignite grant from Creative Pinellas. While the grant itself was small (\$500), the impact was immense. I used the funds to build a public zine stand at the Palm Harbor Library, which now features over 200 zines from nearly 100 different artists. Zines are small, self-published works that provide raw and honest perspectives from people of all backgrounds. This project is especially meaningful because very few libraries across the country have public zine collections, making it a unique cultural feature that both residents and visitors can enjoy. Zines capture the voices of a community —offering a cultural record of ideas, stories, and creativity that is diverse, unfiltered, and accessible. Visitors who encounter this collection not only discover something unexpected and memorable, but also gain insight into the cultural life of Pinellas County. This is just one example of how Creative Pinellas empowers residents to make a difference in their own communities. What Commissioner Scott described as “grant programs that they’re giving money for artists to buy easels and cameras and things like that. And it’s not going to tourism at all.” doesn’t capture the full story. These grants are not handouts—they are investments that yield real cultural, educational, and economic returns for the county. Creative Pinellas actively engages with tourism, directly addressing one of the main concerns

raised about continuing their funding. They recently debuted a new art gallery, Sightline, at St. Pete–Clearwater International Airport (PIE), designed to connect travelers with the vibrant arts community of Pinellas County. Their upcoming Making Waves program is another strong example of how Creative Pinellas promotes cultural tourism. In April–May 2026, Making Waves will bring together our vibrant cultural community through a series of exhibitions, performances, and arts experiences that highlight the natural beauty of our county. This series of events invites visitors to not only vacation here, but to be immersed in the creativity and culture of Pinellas County. Myself and many other artists already applied for this grant — by cutting funding for Creative Pinellas, you’re discarding fully developed projects that artists have spent weeks putting together. This is an organization with proven momentum, and taking that away without a stronger alternative in place would be a huge loss for both artists and the community. Defunding Creative Pinellas would mean losing not just support for artists, but a vital force that enriches our neighborhoods, supports local businesses through cultural tourism, and strengthens Pinellas County’s identity as a vibrant, creative place to live and visit. I urge you to continue funding Creative Pinellas, not just for the benefit of artists like me, but for the benefit of our entire community and the many visitors who come here to experience something special. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Abby Knauff, Palm Harbor FL.

Your Stand on the Issue

Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:33:19 PM

Topic Creative Pinellas Budget Cuts

BCC Agenda Date 9-2-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Daniil Meluzov

Phone +17276861637

Email Danmeluzov@gmail.com

Address 11511 113th
Largo, Fl 33778

Comments I oppose the idea of budget cutting the program due to opportunities it brings to people of Pinellas County. The money that supports this organization brings the attention that is needed in our county since it's already seen as an Artistic Area of Florida and taking art opportunities away destroys the image of the county. I think the approach to budget costs are in the wrong direction, instead of taking away, it should be spent on marketing and showcasing the art.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:28:41 PM

Topic	Fund Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	John Savaria
Phone	+17277353869
Email	165cheryl@gmail.com
Address	960 Starkey Rd, #8203 Largo, FL 33771
Comments	Please continue to support Creative Pinellas. Once arts organizations are cut, are the parks next? Or student athletics? We need ARTS, PARKS, and SPORTS.
Your Stand on the Issue	Support

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:20:10 PM

Topic	Fund Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	Cheryl Savaria
Phone	
Email	165cheryl@gmail.com
Address	960 Starkey Rd, #8203 Largo, FL 33771
Comments	<p>Please continue funding Creative Pinellas. Once an organization is defunded, it generally takes more than 10 years to get it back. An entire generation of children will be affected negatively. The arts are worth the investment, especially at a cost of less than a penny per resident. Great communities have ARTS, parks, and sports. It is necessary for the health and well-being for our community.</p>
Your Stand on the Issue	Support

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:20:03 PM

Topic Fund Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Cheryl Savaria

Phone +17272128832

Email 165cheryl@gmail.com

Address 960 Starkey Rd, #8203
Largo, FL 33771

Comments Please continue funding Creative Pinellas. Once an organization is defunded, it generally takes more than 10 years to get it back. An entire generation of children will be affected negatively. The arts are worth the investment, especially at a cost of less than a penny per resident. Great communities have ARTS, parks, and sports. It is necessary for the health and well-being for our community.

Your Stand on the Issue Support

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:44:36 PM

Topic Keep Creative Pinellas Funded

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Rebecca Wilson

Phone +112025496040

Email rswkop@gmail.com

Address 215 18th Ave NE
St Petersburg, FL 33704

Comments

One of the things Pinellas County is known for is the arts. For that we need a healthy arts agency. Defunding Creative Pinellas would minimize the importance of cultural tourism in our area. Not the message we want to send. Let's keep our vibrant arts environment. Note that defunding Creative Pinellas would also hurt hundreds of small businesses, educators, and nonprofits that rely on arts-related spending. The nonprofit arts and culture sector in Pinellas County supports about 5000 jobs. Defunding would result in lost economic momentum and could undermine millions of dollars in public and private investments already made. Let's keep Creative Pinellas fully funded. Rebecca Wilson

Your Stand on the Issue

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:35:41 PM

Topic Save Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Leanne Giles

Phone +17277102035

Email lgiles919@gmail.com

Address 10100 W Bay Street
Seminole, fl 33776

Comments I oppose defunding Creative Pinellas. The arts add enrichment to citizens of a community. Murals on buildings and exhibits they help to support are a way to enhance the drive through St Petersburg and other cities. The grants they provide to local artists allows my neighbors to contribute to the enhanced view for citizens and tourists. A couple cents per citizen is a small price to pay for the beautification of our county that Creative Pinellas helps to fund. Please don't defund this worthwhile use of my tax dollars.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:31:30 PM

Topic Citizens to be heard - public comments funding

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 4 - Citizens to be Heard, public commen

Citizen Name Kurt Loft

Phone +118137277129

Email loftkurt@gmail.com

Address 10851 Mangrove Cay Ln NE
FL 33716

Comments Dear Board, I would like to ask the board to reconsider ending funding for Creative Pinellas, which in October debuts a new arts magazine aimed at tourists and visitors in Pinellas County. The stories included each quarter will be essential in giving local non-profit groups the coverage they need to draw attendance, enlighten and educate their audiences, and help maintain our county as a vibrant cultural part of Florida. The arts are essential to our economy, standard of living, and the future of our children. Thank you for your consideration. Kurt Loft

Your Stand on the Issue Support

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:19:06 PM

Topic Defunding Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date 9-04-2025
Agenda Item Number 25-1144A
Citizen Name William Frappier
Phone +117272380439
Email bfrappier2@gmail.com
Address 10220 GOLDEN EAGLE DR
FL 33778

Comments

Dear Pinellas County Commision, I am writing to express my opposition to the defunding of Creative Pinellas. I believe it is a known fact that art enhances and strengthens our society for a multitude of reasons including cultural enrichment, encouraging creativity, community building, etc. It seems to me for a society to truly aspire to greatness it must provide venues for these expressions of beauty and insight. Creative Pinellas is such a venue. I have experienced art there that is both beautiful and thought provoking. Many created by local artists expressing locally oriented themes unique to Pinellas County. Considering the relatively miniscule cost, I feel the value far exceeds that cost. I know that Mr. Ingoglio from the state DOGE effort stated: "I believe that if taxpayers fully understood what local governments are spending their money on, they would have an issue with it." But I do not recall any Pinellas County taxpayer voting for Mr. Ingoglio as a determiner of how we spend our local tax dollar. If local taxpayers are upset about a small museum in Pinellas County making an effort to raise the cultural environment then they can express that in the next local election. As I plan to do if Creative Pinellas is defunded.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Michelle DeForrest #31761386
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:30:49 PM

Correspondence related to budget (9/4)
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 4:55 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Michelle DeForrest #31761386

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Michelle DeForrest

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

Dear County Commissioners.
I am interior designer, mother of school aged children and wife of a professional artist.

My husband and I decided to move to St Petersburg in 2013 for a number of reason. It is a beautiful place, a good place to raise a family and a gem of a city with a strong reputation for supporting the arts.

As a professional designer i can not expresses my disappointment in the statements made by Chair Brian Scott about creative Pinellas. His statement “Honestly, I

don't think they're bringing a lot to the table, other than having grant programs."

I question if he has spoken to any of the artist that received the grant. I question if he has attended any of the events at Creative Pinellas. If he hasn't seen the value I don't believe he has opened his eyes or spoken to the community.

Tourist come to St Pete to go to the world class Art Museums, galleries and Studios. Artist and designers move here, to participate in the community.

Please vote in the support of funding Creative Pinellas they support many citizens and make the county a better place to live.

Sincerely
Michelle DeForrest Hackenwerth

Your Street Address	224 9th ave N
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Phone Number	7184505094
Your Email Address	mdeforrest@hotmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Concern Regarding Proposal to Shift Creative Pinellas Funding
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:31:20 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)


Correspondence related to budget (9/4/25)

Coleen Chaney

From: Scott, Brian
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 11:39 AM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: FW: Concern Regarding Proposal to Shift Creative Pinellas Funding

From: Desmond Clark <desmond@stcate.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 31, 2025 5:25 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Concern Regarding Proposal to Shift Creative Pinellas Funding

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Dear Chair Scott,

I am reaching out as a St. Petersburg resident who cares deeply about the health of our arts and cultural community. I am concerned about the proposal to redirect Creative Pinellas's funding into Visit St. Pete/Clearwater.

Creative Pinellas serves as our county's Local Arts Agency, with a mission to nurture artists, support cultural development, and connect communities. This role is distinct from that of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, which is structured for marketing and tourism promotion. Both agencies are valuable, but their strengths are not interchangeable.

By shifting funding away from Creative Pinellas, the county risks weakening the infrastructure that allows the arts to thrive. If the concern is impact and accountability, the solution should be to refocus and strengthen Creative Pinellas, not to eliminate or diminish it. A clear partnership with VSPC would deliver far greater return than folding arts into tourism marketing.

I respectfully ask that you reconsider this approach, and instead support measures that preserve Creative Pinellas's role while enhancing collaboration between these two important agencies.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this perspective.

Sincerely,

Desmond Clark, Principal

Desmond@StCate.com

+1-727-235-1414



www.StCate.com

IG: Instagram.com/StCateFineArts

FB: Facebook.com/StCateFineArts

Tw: Twitter.com/StCateFineArts

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Kate Cummins #31761065
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:31:51 PM

Correspondence related to budget (9/4/25).
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 2:23 PM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Kate Cummins #31761065

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3

Your Name

Kate Cummins

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

I am opposed to the proposed defunding Creative Pinellas. I am a grant recipient. What followed was a solo exhibition, a residency and 1st prize win in an international juried show. The opportunity it opened up financially is just one aspect. The opportunity to meet other artists and the Pinellas community at large is also important. I am not alone, 100's of local artists have similar stories. 10s of thousands of people have benefited from Creative Pinellas as a resource including kids summer camp. As well as showing art from local artists Creative Pinellas exhibits and reaches out to international artists. Which in itself is just one of many touristic features of Creative Pinellas. Chair Brian Scott recently spoke from a place of unfortunate misunderstanding . He does not grasp how the arts is a vibrant driver of tourism here and beyond but sadly it's not always quantifiable. Stating "I don't really see that there's a lot of return on that investment, I really don't." What a remarkably ignorant thing to confess to.

Going on to say... “Honestly, I don’t think they’re bringing a lot to the table, other than having grant programs that they’re giving money for artists to buy easels and cameras and things like that...and it’s not going to tourism at all.” Mr. Scott clearly has no idea what he's talking about nor does he have a clear understanding of the facts. Perhaps you could ask him revisit a few studies to educate himself of how important the arts supported by Creative Pinellas is to tourism. Here’s just one

<https://dos.fl.gov/cultural/info-and-opportunities/resources-by-topic/economic-impact-of-the-arts/>

The position Mr. Scott has taken is an extraordinary insult to the brilliance of local artists. I suggest Scott should apologize for his irresponsible statement and step down from his position. Or at the very least visit Creative Pinellas at least once maybe meet an artist and read up before he opens his mouth again. It is my hope you do not share his views and vote to continue supporting Creative Pinellas.

Thank you for your time

Kate Cummins

Your Street Address	5500 55th St N
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33709
Your Email Address	katemc44@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas funding from Holly Bird #31762146
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:34:21 PM

Budget related (9/4/25)
Coleen Chaney

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:17 AM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas funding from Holly Bird #31762146

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Holly Bird

Subject

Creative Pinellas funding

Message

Greetings to the Pinellas County BOCC —

I am a past, two-term, county-appointed director on the PHCSA board (2013-2017) and am currently serving my second term on the Dunedin Fine Art Center board of directors. I am also a long-time member of the faculty there as the head of DFAC's printmaking program and studio.

My contractor husband and I have lived in Pinellas County since 1983 and my entire professional life as an artist was spent here in Pinellas. I was a designer and art director in advertising and magazine publishing; a storyboard artist in


the feature film business in FL and in television news as a senior broadcast designer. I am well aware of the importance of the arts as a driver of creative industry in this area, and after leaving corporate work at FOX13 in 1998, I started teaching at USF and DFAC. [T T T T]
[SEP SEP]


Teaching is the thing I have enjoyed most in the latter part of my art career, and in 2017 and 2018, I was asked to formally serve as a mentor to two artists in Creative Pinellas's Emerging Artist Grant Program. This program pairs artists either starting their careers or moving them into a more professional phase later in their lives with experienced, well-connected working professionals like myself.

[T T T T]
[SEP SEP] It irritates me to see statements from members of the BOCC that CP's grant programs are just "giving money for artists to buy easels and cameras and things like that." This shows a clear misunderstanding about what professional practice mentorships do and what CP's grant program is for, which is career advancement. The candidates are all fully vetted; only a few in each year's class makes the cut. The program requires a detailed plan and strict goal benchmarks leading up to the annual exhibit and beyond, including what they're going to use the grant money for — and why. [T T T T]
[SEP SEP]

Both of my mentees excelled in the program. One of them, for example: Brandie D., is an accomplished printmaker, photographer and former student of mine. She is a Coast Guard veteran and a former Florida State Park ranger. She successfully completed the program under my mentorship, using her grant money to purchase a 19" Richeson etching press that would've been out of reach on her modest state salary. She used the press and goals made with the mentorship to create, illustrate and enhance programs as a regional director of volunteer services in both the Florida State Park system and later in the Florida Trail Association. She is especially interested in veteran's programs that use

wilderness as a means of coping with PTSD and so she was one of the three veterans profiled in and selected for the video journey on Florida's waterways and trails in the 2024 documentary shown on WEDU, "O2O: Path To Connection". Her printmaking skills and that etching press were used in the making of the graphics and animation for the film. She has just started grad school in her mid-thirties, working on her printmaking MFA in order to begin teaching and to continue working with veterans in this next phase of her life. I wrote one of her letters of recommendation and I continue to stay in contact, advising her and critiquing her work in her studies.

 I wish there had been a similar mentorship program to what Creative Pinellas offers when I was a UF graduate, right out of school, trying to cobble together a career in illustration and graphic design in Pinellas County in the 1980s during a recession. I didn't know anyone here and didn't know how to connect with anyone in my field.

Let me address another criticism made of Creative Pinellas, that its funding is supposed to drive tourism. That's just one aspect of its programs and value to Pinellas. Retaining CP is also a quality-of-life issue. Are the county's wonderful parks and beaches also being forced to monetize or are they meant to be enjoyed as part of the county's attractiveness to residents? 

Pinellas County is known as an arts destination. We have excellent performing arts theaters. We have a symphony. We have a collection of superb, world-class art museums, attracting national and international visitors, but none would exist unless they were supported by full and part time county resident memberships. They know their demographic or they wouldn't have built them here. DFAC is one of the largest community art centers in the country, with top-notch faculty, studios and programs, but we would not exist without the interest by the local community. The arts are an attractor for permanent and

seasonal residence in this county by the affluent and non-affluent alike, supporting our year-round tax base. [L T L T]
[SEP SEP]

Pinellas County is known as a beach and sports tourism destination. The parks are visited by tourists, of course, but they are mainly used year-round by locals. Tourists come here for the beaches, but so do our residents in choosing to move and raise their families and stay here. Recreation is an attractor for permanent and seasonal residence in this county by the affluent and non-affluent alike, supporting our year-round tax base. [L T L T]
[SEP SEP]

The arts, like our beaches, boating, parks and sports are what make Pinellas County not only a great place for tourists, but most especially for us: residents and their families.

Personally, beaches and baseball are not my jam, but the arts and sailing definitely are and both have kept me here long after I expected to leave after the end of my professional corporate design career and my husband's retirement from construction management.

[L T L T]
[SEP SEP] know our arts donors in this county, and so do you. There's a lot of overlap.

Creative Pinellas isn't a club for hobbyists handing out taxpayer money for art supplies; it's a serious organization wholly interconnected with artists, programs, schools, museums and other institutions throughout the entire community. Creative Pinellas is helping them to adapt to a creative job field in flux. Not only for the artists hitting career headwinds now, but for future working professionals and educators later.

Respectfully, I hope you will all consider the impact of what losing Creative Pinellas would mean for them. [L T L T]
[SEP SEP]

Sincerely, [L T L T]
[SEP SEP]

Holly Bird
Palm Harbor, FL

Your Street Address	544 11th St.
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34683
Your Phone Number	727-488-8291
Your Email Address	holly.bird@gmail.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Shame on you defunding Creative Pinellas!
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:23:39 PM

Budget Related (9/4/25) Creative Pinellas.
Coleen Chaney

From: Erika Yeomans
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 2:28 PM
To: Scott, Brian
Subject: Shame on you defunding Creative Pinellas!

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We moved to this area from NYC for its vibrant arts scene; especially the mural art which is now being targetted and removed by people that do not understand the role of art in a city. You cannot quantify how the monies given to Creative Pinellas do not help with tourism??? Perhaps find a better way to measure the immeasurable.

Have you polled every tourist?

Every day I think we made a miatake coming here. It is only condo building and GOP nonsense.

The money given is a small piece of the budget pie and art matters. Despite DeSantis' war on culture.

I want my tax dollars to go to the arts.

Do better.

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [Clerk Board Records](#)
Subject: FW: Thank you.
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:35:39 PM

Correspondence related to budget (9/4/25)
Coleen Chaney

From: Scott, Brian
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:53 AM
To: Chaney, Coleen
Subject: FW: Thank you.

From: jason hackenwerth <jason@jasonhackenwerth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 10:28 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Thank you.

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You have not previously corresponded with this sender.

Dear Chairman Scott,

I recently watched your conversation with other commissioners about the funding for Creative Pinellas. Your comment, “They give money to artists to buy cameras and easels”. Mr. Scott, I am a professional artist who received a grant from Creative Pinellas and I did use the money to purchase a good camera. That camera allowed me to capture quality images and catalog my work, allowing me to grow my business exponentially. My social media following went from 4,000 to over 80,000. And since that grant and my show at Creative Pinellas, I have been able to open an art center that provides studios to several other artists. This year I’ll be taking out an SBA loan for a million dollars to purchase a building so that my company can bring over two hundred thousand dollars a year in revenue for the county by way of workshops for artists who will travel to our county from all over the world. We will also be promoting local artists whose work will bring in tens of thousands of dollars from outside of our county and be re-invested here. And my story is only one of dozens like it, of artists whose practice has thrived since receiving the support that you help to provide through Creative Pinellas. So thank you for that.

If you truly don’t know what Creative Pinellas is “Bringing to the table”, I would hope that you’d take the time to visit Creative Pinellas and see first-hand the important cultural resource they are providing and maybe even meet an artist. It may seem like the most important aspect of our area for attracting tourists are our beaches, but I think we both know that the thousands of creative people and institutions here are a close second. And after all, you get to take credit for helping to build this vibrant community.

Respectfully,

Jason Hackenwerth

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 11:51 AM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic	Continue Funding of Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	Mary Lefferson
Phone	+117275039996
Email	mleff@pobox.com
Address	5262 28th Ave N St Petersburg, FL 33710
Comments	I support the continued funding of Creative Pinellas, and all the current work they do to increase tourism and engage with professional and developing artists.
Your Stand on the Issue	Undecided

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 4:34 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic Budget hearing

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Kate Cummins

Phone +17276677323

Email katemc44@gmail.com

Address 5500 55th Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33709

Comments Before blaming Creative Pinellas and local artists for relying on grants and shifting funds to tourism here are some studies that show removing outlets such as Creative Pinellas will do the exact opposite for the community and the financial prosperity of Pinellas county. Tourists aren't afraid of artists. They're afraid of ICE. They're afraid of governments that paint over street art they're afraid of book banning.
<https://stpeteartsalliance.org/aep6> <https://pinellas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CCRS.pdf> <https://dos.fl.gov/cultural/info-and-opportunities/resources-by-topic/economic-impact-of-the-arts/>
<https://stpeteartsalliance.org/artwalk-history>

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:24 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic Funding Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Wendy Bruce

Phone +17277441698

Email wbruceartist@hotmail.com

Address 960 Starkey Rd, #8202
Largo , FL 33771

Comments

First of all, I would like to thank you for your service to our community. I am a volunteer and Gallery Host at Creative Pinellas. IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO THE GALLERY, LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU WOULD LIKE TO VISIT. I will meet you there. I am one of the people who interact daily with tourists and residents. The Gallery is the former Gulf Coast Museum of Art, located in the Botanical Gardens in Largo. The devastating news is that it was defunded during the recession, I think around 2008. The buildings went into rapid decline. Since that time, Creative Pinellas has restored the museum to its original beauty. We had over 20,000 visitors last year; 19,000 so far this year. With regards to tourism, nearly 1 out of 3 visitors are from another county, state, or country. Although they might not come to our county for the explicit purpose of visiting the Gallery at Creative Pinellas, the experience they have there leaves them with an even more favorable memory of our county. They say they want to return again soon. Families and other visitors can only stay at the beach for so many days before they need a respite, and this is the one place in Largo they can go. With regard to our residents, I have to ask, if Creative Pinellas is defunded: What about the veterans who cross 113 St in their wheelchairs to visit the gallery each week? What about the new mothers and their children who come to create in our gallery's art room? What about the home-schoolers? What about the hundreds of children who have had their art displayed at the gallery each year? What about the Adults with Disabilities group that visits our exhibitions each month? What about the Memory care group from a local Assisted Living who visit our gallery? When they visited last month, a gentleman with Alzheimer's said to me: "Thank you for letting us visit. Somebody finally got to see us." What about people in Addiction Recovery? Creative Pinellas hosted an exhibition of their work in collaboration with Drug Court. What about the everyday people who visit the park and enter the gallery to find some

peace of mind? I would like to suggest the county rethink how Creative Pinellas is funded and consider awarding additional funds to the county's arts organization. On the campus, there are studios and workshop spaces where the public used to take arts classes. Because, ON A DAILY BASIS, visitors to gallery ask "When will the studio spaces open back up?" Being on the front lines, I see what this place means to not only the tourists, but to our community. Creative Pinellas makes Pinellas better. We're better than the other counties in Florida. People (and tourists!!) say that when they visit the gallery. And the tourists come back. We help make that happen. And the community needs Creative Pinellas.

Your Stand on the Issue

Support

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:30 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic Potential De-funding of Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number

Citizen Name Julianne Perez

Phone +117272787895

Email julianne.scott.perez@gmail.com

Address 3892 50th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33711

Comments I strongly oppose the potential defunding of Creative Pinellas. Creative Pinellas is an incredible asset in our community that supports the arts in so many ways. I have personally attended several events hosted by or in partnership with Creative Pinellas and have always enjoyed those events and they were always very well-attended (art exhibits, festivals in collaboration with botanical gardens and heritage village, grants for local artists, ribbon cuttings for new murals, etc.). Individuals of all ages and across our County, as well as visitors benefit from Creative Pinellas programs and events. Defunding them at the end of this fiscal year, just weeks away, would be a tragedy and huge loss for our community. Arts organizations, including Creative Pinellas, provide joy, learning, and are the heart and soul of our community. I saw a Commissioner comment / suggestion to re-allocate the funding to Visit St. Pete Clearwater. I do not think that makes sense as VPC is a very different organization. Creative Pinellas supports emerging artists, local artists, youth through summer camps/events/scholarships/programs, and individuals of all ages and walks of life. The team members at Creative Pinellas are dedicated individuals that have a passion for their work and providing quality services to the community. Please do not defund this gem of an organization. And if anyone doesn't see the benefits or return on investment, I suggest they attend more events or talk to the people who do attend them. One of my favorite exhibits at Creative Pinellas featured youth artists from Pinellas County Schools. Please reconsider and please support this incredible organization.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:43 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic Funding of Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Larry Bruce

Phone +17277443607

Email larrybruce98@gmail.com

Address 960 Starkey Rd, #8202
Largo, FL 33771

Comments

First of all, thank you for your service to our community. Please consider fully funding Creative Pinellas. I volunteer at the Gallery at Creative Pinellas and I have first hand knowledge of how tourists leave with an increased appreciation for the beautiful county in which we live. They are really impressed and say they will return when they come back to vacation in Pinellas next year. Beyond that, Creative Pinellas does so much for our community. I've attended the children's events for several years now and see hundreds of people in attendance. I know of the help Creative Pinellas provided to artists who lost everything in the hurricanes. When I visit, I see people from all walks of life...veterans, children who are home-schooled, the elderly, and the people with different abilities. Please do not take this away from our community. The building is a landmark. We should be doing more to see the campus grow to what it was before it was defunded in 2008. WE have a world class museum located in the heart of of Pinellas County and we should be capitalizing on its potential. I would encourage additional funding to support revitalizing this campus and the park. It really is Pinellas' hidden jewel.

Your Stand on the Issue Support

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Sunday, August 31, 2025 5:59 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Categories: DOWNLOADED

Topic	Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	8-06-2025
Agenda Item Number	1639309
Citizen Name	Heidi Hutcherson
Phone	+17276874377
Email	Hutcherson.heidi@gmail.com
Address	3962 1st Avenue North St. Petersburg, FL 33713
Comments	I support Creative Pinellas and continuing their funding.
Your Stand on the Issue	Support

Hooey, Docia A

From: Pinellas County Clerk of Court <noreply@mypinellasclerk.gov>
Sent: Sunday, August 31, 2025 2:06 PM
To: BCC Agenda Comments
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT

Topic Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 8-04-2025

Agenda Item Number 1639309

Citizen Name Allen Loyd

Phone +17275997624

Email Allenloyd@earthlink.net

Address 151 20th Ave S
St. Petersburg , Florida 33705

Comments Please don't cut or reduce the funding for Creative Pinellas. They provide valuable services to our county and its citizens as well as adding to our economy. They help make Pinellas County a great place to live and to visit. Thanks

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [cdelmonte52 at gmail.com](mailto:cdelmonte52@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas Funding from Carolynn DelMonte #31767225
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:15:15 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Carolynn DelMonte

Subject

Creative Pinellas Funding

Message

Please do not eliminate funding for Creative Pinellas. The county finally has a productive tenant who contributes much to the community. I would ask you to research the history of the property and buildings, if you are not familiar with it. From the initial ill-fated Gulf Coast Museum of Art to the infamous “fish museum”, the county has been taken for a ride on that property. Trust me, I worked briefly at the “fish museum” for that shyster, who sued the county, and the county spent \$\$\$ to settle with him.

The arts and artists are incredibly important to the county and this facility, nestled within the complex housing the Botanical Gardens and Heritage Village, is perfect for what it’s being used for.

Please don’t let the current climate of disrespect for the arts and humanities trickle down to Pinellas County.

Thank you.

Your Street Address

3034 8th St N

City/Unincorporated

St Petersburg

County

Zip Code 33704

Your Email Address cdelmonte52@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of mdeforrest@hotmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Michelle DeForrest #31761386
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 4:54:54 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Michelle DeForrest
Subject	Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear County Commissioners.</p> <p>I am interior designer, mother of school aged children and wife of a professional artist.</p> <p>My husband and I decided to move to St Petersburg in 2013 for a number of reason. It is a beautiful place, a good place to raise a family and a gem of a city with a strong reputation for supporting the arts.</p> <p>As a professional designer i can not expresses my disappointment in the statements made by Chair Brian Scott about creative Pinellas. His statement “Honestly, I don’t think they’re bringing a lot to the table, other than having grant programs.”</p> <p>I question if he has spoken to any of the artist that received the grant. I question if he has attended any of the events at Creative Pinellas. If he hasn’t seen the value I don’t believe he has opened his eyes or spoken to the community.</p> <p>Tourist come to St Pete to go to the world class Art Museums,</p>

galleries and Studios. Artist and designers move here, to participate in the community.

Please vote in the support of funding Creative Pinellas they support many citizens and make the county a better place to live.

Sincerely
Michelle DeForrest Hackenwerth

Your Street Address	224 9th ave N
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Phone Number	7184505094
Your Email Address	mdeforrest@hotmail.com

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From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Keep Funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:14:54 AM

From: Joyce Curvin <jkcurvin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:44 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Keep Funding for Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner Scott,

I was very disappointed to hear discussion in your last workshop about possibly defunding Creative Pinellas. This would be a poor decision for Pinellas County.

I would argue that Creative Pinellas (who receives only about .004% of the county budget) is a good steward of the funds they receive. Their projects with artist and organizational grants, public art, tourism, and community connection add to the experience not just for visitors but also for those of us who live and work here. Shouldn't this be about residents, too?

Commissioner, you reported that your staff members said it would "be a lift" for them to create an alternative grant program for arts and tourism. Do those staff members really have time to put together and administer a program that equals the fine work Creative Pinellas is doing? I can't imagine that they would!

I urge you to keep the funding for Creative Pinellas. Let them continue their work in making Pinellas County an arts and cultural destination for visitors and residents.

Thank you,

Joyce Curvin

Fun Art - Fun Life

www.JoyceCurvinArt.com

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of holly.bird@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas funding from Holly Bird #31762146
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:16:46 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Holly Bird
Subject	Creative Pinellas funding
Message	<p>Greetings to the Pinellas County BOCC —</p> <p>I am a past, two-term, county-appointed director on the PHCSA board (2013-2017) and am currently serving my second term on the Dunedin Fine Art Center board of directors. I am also a long-time member of the faculty there as the head of DFAC's printmaking program and studio.</p> <p>My contractor husband and I have lived in Pinellas County since 1983 and my entire professional life as an artist was spent here in Pinellas. I was a designer and art director in advertising and magazine publishing; a storyboard artist in the feature film business in FL and in television news as a senior broadcast designer. I am well aware of the importance of the arts as a driver of creative industry in this area, and after leaving corporate work at FOX13 in 1998, I started teaching at USF and DFAC. [11:11] [SEP] [SEP]</p> <p>Teaching is the thing I have enjoyed most in the latter part of my art career, and in 2017 and 2018, I was asked to formally serve as a mentor to two artists in Creative Pinellas's</p>

Emerging Artist Grant Program. This program pairs artists either starting their careers or moving them into a more professional phase later in their lives with experienced, well-connected working professionals like myself.

^[L T L]_[SEP SEP]It irritates me to see statements from members of the BOCC that CP's grant programs are just "giving money for artists to buy easels and cameras and things like that." This shows a clear misunderstanding about what professional practice mentorships do and what CP's grant program is for, which is career advancement. The candidates are all fully vetted; only a few in each year's class makes the cut. The program requires a detailed plan and strict goal benchmarks leading up to the annual exhibit and beyond, including what they're going to use the grant money for — and why.^[L T L]_[SEP SEP]

Both of my mentees excelled in the program. One of them, for example: Brandie D., is an accomplished printmaker, photographer and former student of mine. She is a Coast Guard veteran and a former Florida State Park ranger. She successfully completed the program under my mentorship, using her grant money to purchase a 19" Richeson etching press that would've been out of reach on her modest state salary. She used the press and goals made with the mentorship to create, illustrate and enhance programs as a regional director of volunteer services in both the Florida State Park system and later in the Florida Trail Association. She is especially interested in veteran's programs that use wilderness as a means of coping with PTSD and so she was one of the three veterans profiled in and selected for the video journey on Florida's waterways and trails in the 2024 documentary shown on WEDU, "O2O: Path To Connection". Her printmaking skills and that etching press were used in the making of the graphics and animation for the film. She has just started grad school in her mid-thirties, working on her printmaking MFA in order to begin teaching and to continue working with veterans in this next phase of her life. I wrote one of her letters of recommendation and I continue to stay in contact, advising her and critiquing her work in her studies.

^[L T L]_[SEP SEP]I wish there had been a similar mentorship program to what Creative Pinellas offers when I was a UF graduate, right out of school, trying to cobble together a career in illustration and graphic design in Pinellas County in the 1980s during a recession. I didn't know anyone here and didn't know how to connect with anyone in my field.

Let me address another criticism made of Creative Pinellas, that its funding is supposed to drive tourism. That's just one aspect of its programs and value to Pinellas. Retaining CP is

also a quality-of-life issue. Are the county's wonderful parks and beaches also being forced to monetize or are they meant to be enjoyed as part of the county's attractiveness to residents?

[L T L]
[SEP SEP]

Pinellas County is known as an arts destination. We have excellent performing arts theaters. We have a symphony. We have a collection of superb, world-class art museums, attracting national and international visitors, but none would exist unless they were supported by full and part time county resident memberships. They know their demographic or they wouldn't have built them here. DFAC is one of the largest community art centers in the country, with top-notch faculty, studios and programs, but we would not exist without the interest by the local community. The arts are an attractor for permanent and seasonal residence in this county by the affluent and non-affluent alike, supporting our year-round tax base.

[L T L]
[SEP SEP]

Pinellas County is known as a beach and sports tourism destination. The parks are visited by tourists, of course, but they are mainly used year-round by locals. Tourists come here for the beaches, but so do our residents in choosing to move and raise their families and stay here. Recreation is an attractor for permanent and seasonal residence in this county by the affluent and non-affluent alike, supporting our year-round tax base.

[L T L]
[SEP SEP]

The arts, like our beaches, boating, parks and sports are what make Pinellas County not only a great place for tourists, but most especially for us: residents and their families.

Personally, beaches and baseball are not my jam, but the arts and sailing definitely are and both have kept me here long after I expected to leave after the end of my professional corporate design career and my husband's retirement from construction management.

[L T L]
[SEP SEP] I know our arts donors in this county, and so do you. There's a lot of overlap.

Creative Pinellas isn't a club for hobbyists handing out taxpayer money for art supplies; it's a serious organization wholly interconnected with artists, programs, schools, museums and other institutions throughout the entire community. Creative Pinellas is helping them to adapt to a creative job field in flux. Not only for the artists hitting career headwinds now, but for future working professionals and educators later.

Respectfully, I hope you will all consider the impact of what losing Creative Pinellas would mean for them.

Sincerely,

Holly Bird
Palm Harbor, FL

Your Street Address	544 11th St.
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34683
Your Phone Number	727-488-8291
Your Email Address	holly.bird@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of susanburnore@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas - importance of the arts to Pinellas County from Susan Bonnevie #31767366
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:36:58 PM

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- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Susan Bonnevie

Subject

Creative Pinellas - importance of the arts to Pinellas County

Message

Dear Commissioners,
I'm writing to express my support for Creative Pinellas, an organization that produces so much value for our community. Arts venues and activities - whether museums, or concerts, or workshops, or whatever - are a big reason that I personally and many others choose to live in Pinellas County. I am not an artist myself, but having access to the creative works of the many excellent artists in our community is very important to me.

Please maintain funding for Creative Pinellas. It's one of the best bargains you can support.

Susan Bonnevie

Your Street Address

334 2nd Ave S, apt 208

**City/Unincorporated
County**

St. Petersburg

Zip Code 33701

Your Phone Number 7704800200

Your Email Address susanburnore@gmail.com

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From: [Wendy Bruce](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Please continue funding Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:59:52 PM

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Hi Mr. Eggers!

First of all, I would like to thank you for your service to our community.

I am a retired Pinellas Educator. My career spanned 35 years and I was a Pinellas Teacher of the Year FINALIST in 2016.

I am also an artist. My work has been in many national exhibitions.

And, I am a volunteer and Gallery Host at Creative Pinellas.

So, I am on the front lines so to speak.

As I understand it, the funding of Creative Pinellas, our county's arts organization, is about tourism dollars.

The Gallery is the former Gulf Coast Museum of Art, located in the Botanical Gardens in Largo. It is the beautiful building designed and constructed many years ago for the explicit purpose of exhibiting the art of Florida artists. On the campus, there is also an auditorium, offices, and studios and workshop spaces where the public could take arts classes. It was the jewel of the community for many years.

Nearly every day, visitors to gallery ask "When will the studio spaces open back up?"

The devastating news is that it was closed during the recession, I think around 2008. The buildings went into rapid decline. The community lost its beautiful place.

Since that time, Creative Pinellas has restored the Gallery to its original beauty.

I would like to suggest the county consider awarding additional funds to the county's arts organization so that it can continue to bring the campus back to life.

With regards to **tourists**, nearly 1out of 3 visitors that I interact with are from another county, state, or country. Although they might not come to Pinellas for the explicit purpose of visiting the Gallery at Creative Pinellas, the experience they have at the museum/gallery leaves them

with an even more favorable memory of our county.

THEY WANT TO RETURN TO PINELLAS AND VISIT AGAIN.

(Families and other visitors can only stay at the beach for so many days before they need a respite, and this is the one place in Largo they can go.)

At the same time, our **residents** need Creative Pinellas.

If you haven't been to the gallery, I would love to meet you there. I would share some stories with you, such as stories about the veterans who travel to the gallery each week in their wheelchairs from the trailer homes and they cross 113th St to get to the gallery.

I would like to tell you about the new mothers who visit each week with their children (and the home-schoolers) to create in our gallery's art room.

There are hundreds of children who have had their art displayed at the gallery over the years.

I would tell you about the Adults with Disabilities group that visits our exhibitions each month and about the Memory care group from a local ALF who visit our gallery. The last time they visited, a gentleman with Alzheimer's said to me: "Thank you for letting us visit. Somebody finally got to see us."

I would share stories of Creative Pinellas' collaboration with Drug Court. When we exhibited their work, I remember one person saying they would never have thought they could have their art seen in an art museum. This experience positively impacted their lives.

I would also tell you about the everyday people who visit the park and enter the gallery to find some peace of mind.

Being on the front lines, I see what this place means to not only the tourists, but to our community. Creative Pinellas makes Pinellas better.

We're better than the other counties in Florida. People (and tourists!!) say that when they visit the gallery.

Thank you for your time!

Wendy Bruce
960 Starkey Rd, #8202

Largo, FL 33771
(727) 744-1698

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Protect St. Pete's Identity re: Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:15:11 AM
Attachments: [Dear Commissioner Scott,.pages](#)

From: Hilary Adorno <hilary@hilaryadorno.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:54 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Protect St. Pete's Identity re: Creative Pinellas

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Commissioner Scott,

I hope you'll take a few minutes to read my attached letter explaining why defunding Creative Pinellas would be a step backward for both residents and tourism in Pinellas County.

Hilary Adorno

801 Jennings Ave N - owner

2121 6th Ave N - rental

St Petersburg, FL

860-478-3175

Hilary@hilaryadorno.com

From: [O'Donnell, Stacy](#)
To: suecast71@gmail.com
Cc: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: RE: Contact Form: Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency from Susan Castleman #31766271
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:11:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Susan:

On behalf of Pinellas County Commissioner Dave Eggers' office, I wanted to acknowledge and thank you for emailing our office to share your feelings, comments, and concerns about Creative Pinellas. Please know Commissioner Eggers has read your email.

We appreciate you contacting our office and continue to encourage citizens to share their feelings and opinions with us on all matters important to them. Thank you.



Stacy O'Donnell
Executive Aide, Commissioner Dave Eggers
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 33756
sodonnell@pinellas.gov
Office (727) 464-3276

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:10 PM
To: Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency from Susan Castleman #31766271

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Susan Castleman

Subject

Support for Creative Pinellas Local Arts Agency

Message

I strongly support Pinellas County's funding for Creative Pinellas, our local arts agency.

The Arts in Pinellas County supports for a our economy and a strong tourist attraction for visitors.

In 2022, Pinellas County's arts sector generated \$294.7 million in economic activity, supporting 4,528 jobs and generating \$58.9 million in tax revenue. This represents a nearly 20% increase from 2015, demonstrating significant growth despite the pandemic. The arts sector includes both nonprofit arts organizations and audience expenditures, with audiences spending money on meals, shopping, and other services before or after events, thus contributing to local businesses and the overall economy.

The last minute discussion of cutting this spending on August 28 should require a more in depth review with constituents input before a hasty cut.

Your Street Address	7442 Drew Oak Dr
City/Unincorporated County	Seminole
Zip Code	33772
Your Phone Number	7277434631
Your Email Address	suecast71@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of sc4482_at_columbia.edu
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas from Sophie Capshaw-Mack #31767322
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:30:22 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- General Information
- Report a Problem
- Request a Service
- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator
- Webmaster

Your Name	Sophie Capshaw-Mack
Subject	Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear County Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing as a Pinellas County resident, artist, and community member to strongly urge you to continue funding Creative Pinellas, our County's designated Local Arts Agency. Eliminating this funding would be devastating to our local arts ecosystem and to the many residents and visitors who benefit from the cultural, educational, and economic impact of the arts in our community.</p> <p>Creative Pinellas has been instrumental in supporting artists like myself and countless others, providing opportunities that elevate our work and strengthen Pinellas County as a vibrant cultural destination. Their programs drive tourism, spark innovation, and connect our community through creativity.</p>

The ROI for the arts is clear: every dollar invested brings economic growth, educational enrichment, and quality of life improvements that make Pinellas County a better place to live, work, and visit.

I am an independent voter. For any board members who vote to support Creative Pinellas (a mere 0.004% of the county's operating budget), I will rally behind you and use my art and advocacy to support your campaign for reelection. For any who vote to defund this vital arts organization, I will create an artistic campaign to actively oppose your reelection. Choose wisely.

Please do not let this vital resource disappear. I urge you to vote to preserve funding for Creative Pinellas so that our community can continue to thrive culturally and economically. Thank you for your service to our county and for considering this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Sophie Gentle Capshaw-Mack
sc4482@columbia.edu

Your Street Address	11117 91st Avenue
City/Unincorporated County	Seminole
Zip Code	33772
Your Phone Number	3366246994
Your Email Address	sc4482@columbia.edu

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From: [Lashonda Curry](#)
To: [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Subject: Creative Pinellas is Vital
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 12:40:05 PM

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Dear Pinellas County Board of Commissioners,

I was thrilled to be appointed to the Creative Pinellas Board of Directors this summer to be a part of such a vital and vibrant organization doing impactful work in our community and for our residents and visitors. I was disheartened to hear at the budget work session that defunding Creative Pinellas was proposed as part of budget cuts. The work that Creative Pinellas does goes beyond giving grants to artists. Creative Pinellas is a unique and important resource that fuels our reputation as an arts and culture destination, impacting our business, our tourists, our residents and our youth. The artists, art exhibitions and programs it supports shines a light on the beauty and spirit of our community, which enriches the lives of people who call Pinellas County home and enhances our efforts to attract visitors who embrace and care about the arts. I am hopeful that as a board, you will find the value and importance of scheduling a public workshop to learn about the many facets of Creative Pinellas, its countywide impact and its future plans and initiatives before the budget is passed.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Lashonda Curry

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Pinellas County's Lifeblood - Agent of the Arts CREATIVE PINELLAS
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:16:02 AM

From: Maureen <rteest888@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:57 AM
To: Scherer, Chris <cscherer@pinellas.gov>; Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>; Nowicki, Vince <vnowicki@pinellas.gov>; Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>; Latvala, Christopher <clatvala@pinellas.gov>; Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Pinellas County's Lifeblood - Agent of the Arts CREATIVE PINELLAS

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Dear Chairman Scott, Vice Chair Eggers and Pinellas County Commissioners

PINELLAS COUNTY FLORIDA has had a long and vibrant history with the ARTS. What was the Pinellas County Arts Council - over the past decades saw the metamorphosis into the beautiful and vital **CREATIVE PINELLAS** - continuing to safeguard the legacy of our County's spirit. It is critical to keep, enhance and support the primary catalyst of Arts in Pinellas County!

No county in our country is without its primary agent of the arts - driving economic growth, supporting its residents and the history of our Pinellas County Gulf region.

Please do not cut funding to this important organization. Consider increasing funding! No other agency in our county gives so much back to the children, residents, business community and visitors to Pinellas County.

We are counting on YOU. Thank you for your vote to support the Arts!
Maureen Kellick

Seminole Artist and Resident

Maureen Kellick
rteest888@aol.com
716 525-6721
MaureenKellickGallery.com

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of syarrajaehughes@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: The Arts Matter! from Jae Hughes #31767107
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:59:31 PM

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- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Jae Hughes
Subject	The Arts Matter!
Message	<p>Hi Commissioners,</p> <p>The arts are what make St Pete a special city. It's a special city full of art, love, and life. Please do not defund the arts. This city is slowly being bled dry of what makes it unique and so loved.</p>
Your Street Address	2000 43rd St S
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33711
Your Email Address	syarrajaehughes@gmail.com

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From: [Randi Hilleso](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Continue Funding Creative Pinellas
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 10:29:00 PM

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Dear Commissioner Eggers,

It is with great concern that I have learned of the Pinellas County Commission's consideration to eliminate funding for Creative Pinellas.

For more than a decade, I have worked with Creative Pinellas both directly and indirectly. Six of those years I served as Associate Director of the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance with John Collins. In many funding opportunities, we relied on Creative Pinellas as the official Local Arts Agency for the County. Throughout its history, Creative Pinellas has provided leadership to the arts community, helping to create Pinellas County as a serious arts destination.

The County Statute 265.32 "County Fine Arts Council" clearly outlines the responsibilities of such an agency. These include:

- (a) Stimulating greater governmental and public awareness and appreciation of the importance of the arts to the people of Florida.
- (b) Encouraging and facilitating greater and more efficient use of governmental and private resources for the development and support of the arts.
- (c) Encouraging and facilitating opportunities for Florida residents to participate in artistic activities.
- (d) Promoting the development of Florida artists, arts institutions, community organizations sponsoring arts activities, and audiences.
- (e) Surveying and assessing the needs of the arts, artists, arts institutions, community organizations sponsoring arts activities, and people of this state relating to the arts.
- (f) Supporting and facilitating the preservation and growth of the state's artistic resources.
- (g) Contracting for artistic services, performances, and exhibits.
- (h) Developing a center or complex of physical facilities for the use of the arts.
- (i) Providing financial and technical assistance to artists, arts institutions, and audiences.
- (j) Otherwise serving the citizens of the county and state in the realm of the arts.

Creative Pinellas has lived up to its responsibilities to the County in numerous ways including:

- Maintaining the Gallery (a Pinellas Parks Department property), with a current \$200,000 privately funded upgrade underway
- Partnering with the County on Graffiti Abatement through murals and signal box projects
- Opening and managing the art gallery at PIE Airport and its art collection (funded by the airport)

- Securing a 5 year contract with the Lealman CRA with annual deliverables
- Partnering with Pinellas County Schools on Youth Art Month, middle school and high school exhibitions, with plans for further expansion..
- Completing an inventory of the County's public art collection.
- Partnering with VSPC to showcase local artists at national events such as the Piedmont Park Fine Arts Festival and regional IPW travel show.

Recognizing the economic importance of tourism, Creative Pinellas has also shifted to strengthen its alignment with visitor engagement:

- Hiring a Curatorial Director with arts and tourism marketing expertise.
- Bringing on as Managing Editor of *Arts Coast Magazine*, a former Tampa Bay Times writer and contributor to VSPC's *Gulf to Bay* destination magazine, with a focus on long-range calendars, artist spotlights and visitor-centered stories.
- Recruiting VSPC Kylie Kiaz as a grants panelist to enhance tourism partnerships
- Refocusing Individual Artist Grants into "Making Waves", a program with strong tourism connections.

The arts contribute significantly to our local economy and to our community vitality. Visitors are essential, but so is a strong cultural fabric that makes Pinellas County an inspiring place to live, work, and create. Creative Pinellas is indispensable to both goals.

I strongly urge you to reconsider any proposal to defund Creative Pinellas. The organization has proven its ability to deliver a strong return on investment for the County, adapt to evolving priorities, and foster the kind of cultural excellence that makes Pinellas thrive.

Sincerely,

Randi Hillesø

Ms. Randi Hillesø

Non-Profit Advisor, Pinellas County

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [ehong001 at yahoo.com](mailto:ehong001@yahoo.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: creative Pinellas from Edward Hong #31767567
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:08:06 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Edward Hong
Subject	creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing to urge you not to cut funding for Creative Pinellas. The program is a vital resource that enriches our community, provides opportunities for our youth, and supports local artists. We have personally benefited from it and know of many children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to be involved in an arts program.</p> <p>Investing in the arts strengthens our economy, fosters education and creativity, and builds a stronger sense of community. Reducing funding would diminish these opportunities and limit access to programs that many of us deeply value.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and for continuing to support the arts in our county.</p> <p>Sincerely, Eddie Hong</p>

Your Street Address	400 4th Ave S, unit 1201
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Email Address	ehong001@yahoo.com

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From: [Jazzy Erickson](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Please Protect Funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:07:10 PM

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Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to urge you to continue funding **Creative Pinellas**. The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas.

Creative Pinellas is not only the designated arts agency for our county—it is an engine of **economic growth, tourism, and community connection**. The arts generate more than **\$241 million annually** in economic activity across Pinellas County, supporting thousands of jobs, drawing visitors, and strengthening local businesses. For every public dollar invested in the arts, our community sees multiple dollars returned in tax revenue, tourism spending, and job creation.

But the value of Creative Pinellas goes beyond numbers. This organization ensures that the arts are accessible to everyone—creating opportunities for local artists, inspiring young people, and building a sense of belonging and pride in our diverse community. When neighbors come together at a mural, a gallery, or a performance, we create bonds that strengthen the fabric of our county.

To lose this support would be devastating—not only for our artists, but for our economy, our businesses, and the shared cultural life that makes Pinellas County a place we are proud to call home.

I ask that you continue to invest in Creative Pinellas and protect the future of the arts in our community.

With gratitude,

J Erickson

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of dexter_at_wallmediapartners.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Save Creative Pinellas from Dexter Fabian #31767501
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:56:39 PM

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Direction of Inquiry	Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
Your Name	Dexter Fabian
Subject	Save Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner Eggers,</p> <p>I am reaching out as a resident of St. Petersburg, FL, the publisher of I Love the Burg and an advocate and supporter of the Arts especially in our beloved city. The Arts community and what it has done for the city to put it on the map are the big reasons why I and a lot of its residents and visitors love the 'Burg. It has put us on the map; it has brought thousands to move here; it has sustained livelihood for many; it has made St. Pete one of the most attractive and livable cities in this country. This is only possible with organizations like Creative Pinellas making sure that we continue to sustain and propagate the Arts, artists and a love for them through programming and funding afforded towards other local arts organizations. Let's not lose sight of this value that has made St. Pete come alive in the past decade or so or otherwise we wil see all that we've all worked for come to naught.</p> <p>Thank you for your time. Dexter Fabian Publisher, I Love the Burg</p>
Your Street Address	430 3rd Ave. S
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33701

Your Email Address

dexter@wallmediapartners.com

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From: [jason.hackenwerth](#)
To: [Scott, Brian](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); dlatvala@pinellas.gov; [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Cc: rkimball@sheratonsandkey.com; bruce.rector@myclearwater.com; phil@starlitecruises.com; [Doreen Moore](#); chuck@thebirchwood.com; trisha@clearwaterferry.com; capthubbard@hubbardsmarina.com; gm@bilmarneachresort.com; copley.gerdes@stpete.org; [Dave Gattis](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you.
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:10:47 AM

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Dear Chairman Scott and County Commissioners,

I recently watched your conversation with other commissioners about the funding for Creative Pinellas. Your comment, “They give money to artists to buy cameras and easels”. Mr. Scott, I am a professional artist who received a grant from Creative Pinellas and I *did* use the money to purchase a good camera. That camera allowed me to capture quality images and catalog my work. My business grew exponentially. My social media following went from 4,000 to over 80,000. For that, I thank you. And since that grant and my show at Creative Pinellas, I have been able to open an art center that provides studios to several other artists. This year I’ll be taking out an SBA loan for a million dollars to purchase a building so that my company can grow and bring over two hundred thousand dollars a year in revenue for the county by way of workshops for artists who will travel to our county from all over the world. We will also be promoting and paying local artists who’s work will bring in tens of thousands of dollars from outside of our county and be re-invested here. And my story is only one of dozens like it, of artists who’s practice has thrived since receiving the support that you and the county commission help to provide through Creative Pinellas.

If you truly don’t know what Creative Pinellas is “Bringing to the table”, I would hope that you and other commissioners would take the time to visit Creative Pinellas and see first-hand the important cultural resource they are providing and maybe even meet an artist.

It may seem like the most important aspect of our area for attracting tourists are our beaches, but I think we all know that the thousands of creative people and institutions here are a close second. And after all, you and the commissioners get to take credit for helping to build this vibrant community.

With this note, I hope that you will reconsider your thoughts on subverting funds for Creative Pinellas and recommit to funding this important institution.

Respectfully,

Jason Hackenwerth

Fmr Creative Pinellas Board President

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas is ESSENTIAL to this city
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:15:39 AM

From: Keaton Fox <keatonemelia@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:54 AM
To: Csherer@pinellas.gov; Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>; Nowicki, Vince <vnowicki@pinellas.gov>; Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>; Latvala, Christopher <clatvala@pinellas.gov>; Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Creative Pinellas is ESSENTIAL to this city

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Hello, my name is Keaton Fox, and I'm an artist living and working in St. Petersburg. Creative Pinellas has been essential to my career—not just as a source of grants, but as a community where I've met mentors, collaborators, and friends who have shaped my work and my life.

St. Petersburg's arts scene is a huge reason why people come here and why our city is unique. Losing Creative Pinellas would harm individual artists like me and weaken the cultural heart of our city. Supporting this organization isn't optional—it's essential to keeping St. Pete vibrant, thriving, and special.

--

KEATON FOX
[VIDEO & ART](#)



From: [christa fairbrother](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Defunding Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:12:54 PM

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Vice-Chair Eggers - As one of your constituents, I am appalled that the commission is considering defunding Creative Pinellas, our countywide arts agency.

Pinellas County is well-known for its arts, and an essential part of that is having a healthy arts agency. Defunding the County's arts agency would minimize the importance of cultural tourism in our area just as Creative Pinellas has been further providing a vibrant arts environment for our visitors. Defunding Creative Pinellas would also hurt hundreds of small businesses, educators, and nonprofits that rely on arts-related spending. The nonprofit arts and culture sector in Pinellas County supports almost five-thousand jobs. Defunding would result in lost economic momentum and could undermine millions in public and private investments already made.

As an active Artist, I know that the Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses. Did you know that Cultural tourism in Pinellas County generates \$350 million annually through ticket sales, lodging, food, and other local spending, directly tied to organizations like Creative Pinellas? For every \$1 invested in the arts, communities see a \$7–\$9 return through local spending and economic activity. The 4.1 million annual attendees at Pinellas County's nonprofit arts and culture events spend an average of almost \$36 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission – on items such as meals, parking, and lodging. 34% of the attendees live outside of Pinellas County; they average about \$46 in event-related spending per person per event. Arts tourists are ideal visitors, staying longer and spending more than non-Arts tourists.

The arts is what make our community unique. I don't want to live in a cookie-cutter corporate town that looks like any other. They've been instrumental in the development of the murals around town, which give our town so much character.

My property taxes are not going down, only up, and so are everyone else's. The county has the funds to continue Creative Pinellas. This proposal is short-sighted deinvestment in a vital part of our community. Don't do it, Christa Fairbrother

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of alyssa.at.alyssamariEGallery.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Please keep Creative Pinellas Funded from Alyssa Dunlap #31767564
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:07:30 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator
- Webmaster

Your Name

Alyssa Dunlap

Subject

Please keep Creative Pinellas Funded

Message

My name is Alyssa Marie. I am a local oil painter and muralist in St. Pete. I have been fortunate enough to create a thriving business as a full time artist and adore passing my knowledge and expertise on to others around me to inspire the youth and their parents to pursue a path in art.

I have been on the panel of a few muralist selection processes and have seen the incredible opportunities that Creative Pinellas has given to art inspired individuals for years. A city can't really breathe without art. It inspires, connects and uplifts - and I'm proud to be a part of an economy that supports the arts to the immense capacity that it does. Please please consider keeping Creative Pinellas funded. The work they do has touched so many lives way beyond the art and the artist themselves.

Respectfully,
Alyssa

Your Street Address	5843 116th Ave
City/Unincorporated County	Pinellas Park
Zip Code	33782
Your Phone Number	7203651682
Your Email Address	alyssa@alyssamariegallery.com

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From: [Summer Elisabeth](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: speaking up
Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025 2:02:23 PM

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Hello Mr. Eggers,

I'm a teaching artist at Creative Clay, and I know firsthand what it feels like when funding is cut. As both an artist and a teacher, I see every day how art impacts this town and countless others. That's why it's heartbreaking to hear discussions about defunding Creative Pinellas.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and please know how much we need — and appreciate — advocacy like yours.

Summer Elisabeth Kluytman
Teaching Artist



1846 1st Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712
Office: 727-825-0515

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of lora_at_magriffproductions.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Lora Magnani #31767202
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:12:51 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Lora Magnani

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

It has come to my attention that the commission is considering ending funding for Creative Pinellas. Please do not do this. I am a Pinellas County resident and you guys should realize CP is a vibrant part of our community. The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas. As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, they drive economic growth, support artists, and strengthen our region as an arts and cultural destination. Losing this support would have a devastating impact on our community.
Thank you for your consideration.

Your Street Address

526 Bay Street

**City/Unincorporated
County**

Dunedin

Zip Code

34698

Your Phone Number (813) 361-7376

Your Email Address lora@magriffproductions.com

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From: [margaret.murray](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Creative Pinellas
Date: Friday, August 29, 2025 4:37:17 PM

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Dear Commissioner Eggers,

Regarding yesterday's suggestion to defund Creative Pinellas, I think you might be pleasantly surprised to learn of the significant changes we have made to our operations. I too, have shared some of these same concerns that were made yesterday, and have made it my mission as CEO to fulfill our responsibility to the County.

We have launched two major cultural tourism initiatives at no additional expense to the County:

1. Earlier this summer, we completely revamped our grant program. We are now using our TDT funds on Making Waves, a funding program to create arts experiences for visitors in the places they gather - beaches, museums, and in the outdoor spaces Pinellas County is known for. Making Waves will inject nearly \$120,000 into our tourism facing communities.

2. We are showcasing cultural events specifically to visitors through Current|Culture our new online magazine that launches Oct. 4th. This magazine is designed to help visitors plan their vacations around the many events, festivals, and arts activities we are known for.

3. We have strategically hired a senior leadership team experienced in arts + tourism:

-**Allison McCarthy, Curatorial Director:** 10 years at The Dalí Museum; former Executive Director of the Clearwater Arts Alliance; arts consultant to the Florida Department of State.

-**Maggie Duffy, Editor:** Former Tampa Bay Times arts writer, Bay Magazine columnist, and annual contributor to VSPC's *Gulf to Bay* destination magazine.

4. I also wanted to take a moment to walk through our budget to illustrate exactly how we are using County funds and supplement your support with outside funding. We work diligently to secure funding from outside sources for non-tourism related initiatives, and will continue to do so. This includes:

\$150,000 from the State Department of Cultural Affairs to pay for our gallery staff.

These **non-County funds** pay the salaries of our gallery staff.

We have become the County's public art partner, with the following long and short-term contracts in place to support beautification and wayfinding initiatives:

- \$250,000 five-year contract with Lealman CRA (\$50,000 annually)
- \$20,000 annual contract with St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport to curate and manage their new Sightline Gallery, as well as maintain and care for the public art held at the airport.
- Tax Collectors office murals: \$10,000
- National Endowment for the Arts: \$40,000
- Foundation for a Healthy St. Pete recently awarded us \$31,6000 to support County health initiatives through the arts.

In short, we are leveraging County dollars with ***hundreds of thousands of additional contracted work and non-County funds*** each year.

5. The share of our budget that derives from TDT and County funds is actually shrinking and is at a historic low. We accomplish our incredible work (including distributing nearly

\$225,000 in grants last year) with what is, relatively speaking, a very small percentage of the County and TDT funds:

Our \$861,000 TDT line item amounts to less than 1% of the \$94million in TDT funds collected in 2024

The \$156,600 we receive from the County general fund amounts to less than .001% of the County's budget.

Everything we have implemented and accomplished during my tenure as CEO is designed to ensure that we remain trustworthy county partners and that the County does see a solid ROI on your investment in the arts.

In light of this shared information, I respectfully request the opportunity to work with you and your colleagues at a public workshop to assess our strengths as the designated Local Arts Agency for Pinellas County and how we might continue to move forward supporting your initiatives.

With warm appreciation for your time, and a deep understanding of the formidable task you have at hand,

Margaret Murray

CEO, Creative Pinellas

727.582.2172 (o)

727.385.1336 (c)



From: [margaret.murray](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Good afternoon from Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:13:08 PM

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Dear Mr. Eggers,

As you may be aware, there is a proposal underway to de-fund Creative Pinellas, the County's designated local arts agency since 2011.

Given that Creative Pinellas and Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) have been steadily building a partnership that strategically utilizes the arts as a driver to the destination, this ninth-hour proposal, which I wasn't aware of, was a shocking moment for all of us here at Creative Pinellas.

Recent work with Brian and his team includes:

- A collaborative activation with artist Angela Warren at IPW
- A collaborative visit to the Piedmont Park Fine Art Festival with three Pinellas County artists
- A co-branded Still Shining exhibition featuring local artists

I have been working in good faith with VSPC's team to identify their needs and develop cultural tourism programs that support the County's tourism initiatives, and am proud of the shifts we have made to better align ourselves with these goals. In fact, we are working toward a system where our two teams begin sharing visitor engagement data to better understand how cultural tourism impacts visitor attendance, spending, and satisfaction with the destination.

Our roles are **complementary, not interchangeable**, and removing or reducing Creative Pinellas weakens the foundation on which cultural tourism depends. We are known as an arts destination in large part because of our work to create a thriving cultural community, and we will continue to grow and refine our efforts in the coming months and years - with continued support.

To that end, based on suggestions from VSPC on how we can best serve as a visitation attendance driver, here are three major Creative Pinellas initiatives in place or launching shortly:

[Making Waves](#), our bold new competitive arts grant, which brings together our vibrant cultural community and the breathtaking natural beauty of Pinellas County to create a countywide gallery of exhibitions, performances, and arts experiences. Our guiding message in this: ***A vacation isn't just about where you go—it's about***

what you discover. Running from April 1 - May 30, 2026 Making Waves will **bring art to visitors** to create something truly unforgettable.

CURRENT | CULTURE, our new visitor-specific online magazine, is a traveler's guide to local culture - launching Oct. 4th. **Current | Culture** highlights the unique experiences that make our community a must-visit destination - exactly what data shows cultural visitors, younger audiences, and families are seeking. The magazine is built around high/low and shoulder seasons, with information designed to reach visitors in the 59-65 day period when they begin planning their visits.

Sightline Gallery at PIE: Reaching over 2million visitors per year, this is the perfect site for arts engagement messaging. We are planning a joint exhibition with Heritage Village and Florida Botanical Gardens for sprint 2026, leveraging visibility at the airport to draw visitors to Pinewood Park.

Our Current Funding Reality: Low Draw/High Results

- Of the \$94 million in bed tax revenue generated in 2024, Creative Pinellas receives less than 1%
- From the County Operating Budget, Creative Pinellas receives only 0.004% of the total budget.

These modest investments sustain the entire Pinellas County cultural infrastructure, which in turn fuels cultural tourism and economic growth. We also leverage County funds to raise our own funding.

- We are in the midst of a \$200,000 upgrade to our facilities - using non-county funds raised through grants. This will enhance our draw as a cultural destination.
- Our gallery staff are paid for by a Florida Department of State grant - no County funds are currently being used to support our gallery team.

I respectfully ask for your support in strengthening Creative Pinellas in partnership with VSPC. A different path forward would allow for greater sharing of resources, such as increased strategic arts marketing and visitor traffic analytics, to measure engagement with the cultural community. This approach delivers far greater impact than shifting arts funding into tourism marketing alone. Maintaining mindful funding for Creative Pinellas will continue to yield exponential returns in economic impact, visitor engagement, and increased visibility with these changes in focus and resource allocation. We are poised and ready to move forward, working closely with both our tourism partners, as well as the larger County team.

I thank you for your time,

Margaret Murray
CEO, Creative Pinellas

727.582.2172 (o)

727.385.1336 (c)



From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of lisaj_lombardi@hotmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas funding from Lisa Lombardi #31767276
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:23:32 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Lisa Lombardi
Subject	Creative Pinellas funding
Message	Please please keep creative pinellas funded! They are a vital part of the community that keeps the art community alive in pinellas county and a great visitor and resident attraction. This is vital to living and working in the area.. please keep them funded
Your Street Address	11700 Parkview lane
City/Unincorporated County	Seminole
Zip Code	33772
Your Phone Number	727 331 3487
Your Email Address	lisaj_lombardi@hotmail.com

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From: [Tarin Mohajeri](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Advocating for Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:37:51 PM

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Dear County Commissioner Eggers,

In 2023, the most recent year for which data are available, **arts and culture again surpassed its annual value added to the U.S. economy with \$1.2 trillion, representing 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP** (National Endowment for the Arts). This number is not abstract—it reflects real jobs, real communities, and real impact here in Pinellas County.

Our county thrives on cultural vibrancy, with arts tourism serving as one of the strongest economic drivers in the region. Visitors come for our galleries, performances, festivals, and public art experiences—supporting local restaurants, hotels, and businesses in the process. When we invest in the arts, we invest in an economic engine that sustains thousands of jobs and enhances quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Eliminating funding to Creative Pinellas, however, directly jeopardizes this ecosystem. The loss would not only hurt institutions, but also the livelihoods of **individual artists, producers, designers, filmmakers, and creative professionals** who contribute to our economy and cultural identity. Without local and national support, many will relocate to communities where the arts are recognized and valued. This would be a devastating cultural and economic blow to Pinellas County.

Beyond economics, the arts are essential to **education and child development**. Arts education—both inside and outside the classroom—helps students become well-rounded citizens. Studies consistently show that participation in the arts leads to **higher academic achievement, improved math scores, better grades overall, and increased college enrollment**. When we support the arts, we invest in the future of our children and the strength of our workforce.

Pinellas County has built a reputation as a hub for creativity and innovation, with Creative Pinellas at the center. Let's continue to strengthen that legacy by maintaining robust support for the arts. These investments pay dividends economically, culturally, and educationally.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

Tarin Mohajeri, Independent Art Curator

727-642-9040

From: [O'Hara, Shane](#)
To: [Scott, Brian](#)
Cc: [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [margaret.murray](#)
Subject: Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 1:16:08 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[9.2.25 Creative Pinellas Letter.pdf](#)

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****SIGNED LETTER ALSO ATTACHED****

September 2, 2025

Commissioner Brian Scott
Chair, Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Commissioner Scott,

As an owner of a local financial planning and investment management firm, and a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional who helps steward the assets of families across Pinellas County, I view every investment through the same lens: Does it provide measurable value, leverage resources efficiently and create long-term benefits? By that standard, I believe Creative Pinellas continues to be a sound investment for the County and one that generates a strong return for our residents, visitors and economy.

Creative Pinellas receives less than one percent of the \$94 million in bed tax revenue collected in 2024, and only 0.004 percent of the County's operating budget. With this modest allocation, the organization unlocks more than \$300,000 annually from state, federal and philanthropic partners. Those outside dollars amplify the County's investment, fund staff whose work drives cultural tourism and enhance County-owned assets — such as the Gallery, auditorium, and courtyard — at no additional cost to taxpayers.

The economic return is visible in the County's tourism brand. Programs like *Making Waves*, which brings arts experiences to our beaches and cultural hubs, and *Current | Culture*, a new online magazine that helps visitors plan their stays, directly align with our tourism priorities. These efforts encourage longer visits, generate hotel nights and increase spending in our restaurants and local businesses. Creative Pinellas is not duplicating Visit St. Pete/Clearwater's (VSPC) work. It is building and sustaining the cultural foundation that VSPC

markets to the world. The two are complementary, not interchangeable.

Countless studies show that the arts are not a luxury but a vital part of a thriving community. They drive economic growth, strengthen social connections, deepen cultural understanding, enhance education and even improve public health. VSPC does an excellent job of bringing people here, and Creative Pinellas helps give them reasons to come back. These roles are complementary and should remain aligned.

Creative Pinellas's return on investment also extends to our children and families. Through partnerships with Pinellas County Schools, Creative Pinellas provides scholarships for summer arts camps, countywide exhibitions and recognition programs that serve hundreds of students annually. These initiatives strengthen education, support working families and ensure that our next generation sees Pinellas as a place where creativity is nurtured.

As someone entrusted with people's livelihoods and money, I know the importance of disciplined, transparent and ROI-driven financial stewardship. Creative Pinellas demonstrates those same principles. It stretches each County dollar, attracts significant outside resources and delivers programs that strengthen Pinellas County's economy, brand and quality of life.

I respectfully urge the Commission to maintain its investment in Creative Pinellas. Reducing or eliminating support would weaken not just one nonprofit, but the cultural ecosystem that draws visitors, supports small businesses and enhances our community's identity.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to making decisions that balance fiscal responsibility with the long-term vitality of our County.

Sincerely,

Shane D. O'Hara, CFP®, CPWA®

Board President, Creative Pinellas

Principal, Executive Vice President, CCO, ProVise Management Group, LLC

611 Druid Rd. E., STE 105, Clearwater, FL 33756

CC: Dave Eggers, Chris Scherer, Vince Nowicki, Rene Flowers, Chris Latvala, Kathleen Peters, Margaret Murray



Shane D. O'Hara, CFP®, CPWA®

Principal, Executive Vice President,
CCO

(727) 441-9022 ext. 212

ohara@provisemgmt.com

611 Druid Road E., Suite 105

Clearwater, FL 33756

Provisemgmt.com



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September 2, 2025

Commissioner Brian Scott
Chair, Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Commissioner Scott,

As an owner of a local financial planning and investment management firm, and a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional who helps steward the assets of families across Pinellas County, I view every investment through the same lens: Does it provide measurable value, leverage resources efficiently and create long-term benefits? By that standard, I believe Creative Pinellas continues to be a sound investment for the County and one that generates a strong return for our residents, visitors and economy.

Creative Pinellas receives less than one percent of the \$94 million in bed tax revenue collected in 2024, and only 0.004 percent of the County's operating budget. With this modest allocation, the organization unlocks more than \$300,000 annually from state, federal and philanthropic partners. Those outside dollars amplify the County's investment, fund staff whose work drives cultural tourism and enhance County-owned assets — such as the Gallery, auditorium, and courtyard — at no additional cost to taxpayers.

The economic return is visible in the County's tourism brand. Programs like *Making Waves*, which brings arts experiences to our beaches and cultural hubs, and *Current | Culture*, a new online magazine that helps visitors plan their stays, directly align with our tourism priorities. These efforts encourage longer visits, generate hotel nights and increase spending in our restaurants and local businesses. Creative Pinellas is not duplicating Visit St. Pete/Clearwater's (VSPC) work. It is building and sustaining the cultural foundation that VSPC markets to the world. The two are complementary, not interchangeable.

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principles. It stretches each County dollar, attracts significant outside resources and delivers programs that strengthen Pinellas County's economy, brand and quality of life.

I respectfully urge the Commission to maintain its investment in Creative Pinellas. Reducing or eliminating support would weaken not just one nonprofit, but the cultural ecosystem that draws visitors, supports small businesses and enhances our community's identity.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to making decisions that balance fiscal responsibility with the long-term vitality of our County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane D. O'Hara', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shane D. O'Hara, CFP®, CPWA®

Board President, Creative Pinellas

Principal, Executive Vice President, CCO, ProVise Management Group, LLC

611 Druid Rd. E., STE 105, Clearwater, FL 33756

CC: Dave Eggers, Chris Scherer, Vince Nowicki, Rene Flowers, Chris Latvala, Kathleen Peters, Margaret Murray

From: [William Leavengood](#)
To: [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for Creative Pinellas From Bill Leavengood
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:46:36 PM

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Dear County Commissioners,

I was distressed to hear that you are considering eliminating all funding for Creative Pinellas. I feel like St. Petersburg has been on the rise as a community recognized for performing arts, visual arts and culture, and Creative Pinellas has been a champion helping artists to create and present so many works and performances for our community-- including supporting me with grants that helped me bring a concert version of Webb's City: The Musical to the Palladium in 2017 and Florida Man: The Musical to the St. Petersburg Museum of History and The Beach Theatre in 2025. I used my small grants to pay actors and directors something for their time and talent, to create marketing materials and to rent rehearsal space. No luxury yachts were acquired.

I hope you will vote to keep Creative Pinelass alive and well. Meanwhile, I am interested to know who is crusading to have the organization eliminated and why.

Sincerely,

--

Bill Leavengood
21st Century Playhouse, LLC
(727) 422-1645
21stCenturyPlayhouse@gmail.com

From: [DAVID WARNER](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Thank you for your support
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:35:35 AM

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Dear Commissioner Eggers,

As a past president of Creative Pinellas, I want to thank you for your support of CP at last week's work session.

I appreciated your remarks about the significance of what the agency does for the County's ambience and its artists, both of which are appealing to tourists and residents. I also want to thank you for suggesting that defunding CP is a big enough change that it deserves to be workshopped, with the affected communities represented at the workshop.

On that note, you said at the meeting that you hadn't heard anything from the arts community about this proposed change. That's because we learned about it at the same time you did — when Commissioner Scott brought it up at the meeting.

I would also like you to know, as a past Mayor of Dunedin and the District 4 Commissioner, that CP has made a concerted effort to broaden our board of directors in recent years to include wider representation from North County, including members from Dunedin, Clearwater, Tarpon Springs and Safety Harbor. I suspect many of these folks and other County residents will be voicing their support for continued funding of the agency at the budget hearing on Thursday.

I know that you will listen carefully to their testimonies.

With thanks for all you do,

David Warner

Creative Pinellas Board President, 2021-23; Board Member, 2018-present

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [hilaura2014 at gmail.com](mailto:hilaura2014@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas Funding from Laura Vetro #31760250
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 8:32:46 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Laura Vetro
Subject	Creative Pinellas Funding
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>As a resident of unincorporated Pinellas County and a constituent of Commissioners Scott and Peters in particular, I am writing to express my strong disappointment at the idea of defunding Creative Pinellas. This is a very worthy organization! Not only does it contribute to the quality of life for county residents, Creative Pinellas generates significant economic and tourism benefits for our community. It is not merely a provider of grants.</p> <p>The arts and culture sector in Pinellas County generates hundreds of millions in economic activity annually. According to recent data from the Arts and Economic Prosperity study, this sector generates nearly \$300 million in economic activity, supports thousands of jobs, and provides tens of millions in government revenue. This directly contributes to the fiscal health of the county.</p> <p>Creative Pinellas serves as a direct attraction for tourists. Its two galleries play a central role in this. The Gallery at Creative</p>

Pinellas, located within the Pinewood Cultural Park alongside the Florida Botanical Gardens, provides a free, high-quality arts experience that complements and enhances the other world-class attractions in the Largo area. This creates a powerful cultural cluster, encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more. Furthermore, the Sightline Gallery at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport offers a direct and welcoming introduction to our county's arts scene, engaging travelers the moment they arrive.

The economic impact of these attractions is undeniable. A significant percentage of non-local visitors report that the primary reason for their trip to Pinellas County is to attend an arts event. These arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more on dining, lodging, and local goods. Creative Pinellas's programs and galleries are directly responsible for drawing this high-value visitor to our county, bringing income to local businesses and generating tax revenue.

In a community that prides itself on being an "arts coast," defunding Creative Pinellas would be a major step backward. Continuing to support this organization is a proven investment in our local economy, our vibrant tourism industry, and the unique cultural identity that makes Pinellas County such a special place to live and visit.

Respectfully,
Laura Vetro

Your Street Address	13602 Serena Drive
City/Unincorporated County	Unincorporated Pinellas
Zip Code	33774
Your Phone Number	4697739007
Your Email Address	hilaura2014@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of kimbersmithly@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas from Kimberly Smith #31763314
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:23:52 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Kimberly Smith
Subject	Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am a lifelong resident of Pinellas county and am raising my five children here as well. I love raising my children and living in a county that truly appreciates the arts. Pinellas County is a special oasis in Florida and I am proud of how our county has embraced the arts. I recently read that the Board of Commissioners is considering defunding Creative Pinellas. I am writing to express that this would be awful to our community and am pleading with you to NOT defund Creative Pinellas.</p> <p>At a time when the arts is being defunded nationwide, it is more important than ever to have organizations and resources such as Creative Pinellas for our county and our children. Creative Pinellas has been essential for me and my children. Not only have I thoroughly enjoyed the arts through the events and galleries they set up and host, I have been paid to work on large scale exhibits through Creative Pinellas, which has helped put food on the table for my children. My children have also had opportunities to attend art summer camp programs</p>

which would have otherwise been unfeasible.

So again, please do not take this away from our community and please continue to fund the arts through Creative Pinellas.

All the best,
Kimberly

Your Street Address	736 69th Ave S
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33705-6248
Your Phone Number	7272729386
Your Email Address	kimbersmithly@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of tksheld@yahoo.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Fund Creative Pinellas to the Utmost! from Tara Sheldon #31767374
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:37:29 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Tara Sheldon
Subject	Fund Creative Pinellas to the Utmost!
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner,</p> <p>The arts are a vital part of this community. Creative Pinellas understands and supports artists in a way that's critically needed. As Aristotle said, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." And now, more than ever, we all need to experience that significance. Please fund Creative Pinellas. Wishing you and your family all the best.</p> <p>Thank you, Tara</p>
Your Street Address	2462 BRAZILIA DR, Apt 78
City/Unincorporated County	Clearwater
Zip Code	33763
Your Email Address	tksheld@yahoo.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of dabiubresser@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Daniela Uebelhart #31767535
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:01:43 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Daniela Uebelhart
Subject	Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing as a concerned resident of Pinellas county to urge you to continue funding for Creative Pinellas. Ending this support would be a significant loss for our community, our schools, and our local economy.</p> <p>Creative Pinellas is more than a cultural enrichment program. It provides educational opportunities for our children, fosters creativity, and supports local artists and small businesses. Studies consistently show that communities with strong arts programs experience higher student achievement, and economic growth through tourism and local spending.</p> <p>Cutting funding would mean fewer opportunities for young people to explore the arts, especially the ones who'd benefit the most.</p> <p>I humbly ask that you preserve funding for Creative Pinellas and continue to invest in the future of our county through arts, culture, and education. Thank you for your time, your</p>

leadership, and your commitment to serving our community.

Sincerely,
Daniela Uebelhart

Your Street Address	176 4th Ave NE
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33701
Your Email Address	dabiubresser@gmail.com

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From: [Jackie Takach](#)
To: [Scott, Brenda D](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: #25-1144A
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:51:05 PM

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To: Brian Scott
Rene Flowers
Dave Eggers
Chris Scherer
Vince Nowicki
Chris Latvala
Kathleen Peters

RE: Agenda Item: #25-1144A

Dear Sirs and Madam:

I am a resident of Pinellas county and am opposed to the proposed budget cut to Creative Pinellas, our cultural arts program. The art community as well as the business community value this program and its significant contributions to local tourism. The timing and impact of this proposal are also short sighted as the program's leadership has not been offered the opportunity to address the County Commissions concerns prior to your vote on September 4th, with the cuts effective October 1st.

You have a responsibility to the citizens of Pinellas county and to Creative Pinellas, an organization that you have funded since 2011. Not to DOGE.

Thank you.

Jacqueline Takach
8217 Lapin Ct.
Seminole, FL. 33777
Jtakach52@gmail.com
216-905-6248

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [NoGoodDeedsArt at gmail.com](mailto:NoGoodDeedsArt@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Keep Creative Pinellas Funded from Jenee Priebe #31767214
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:14:28 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Jenee Priebe
Subject	Keep Creative Pinellas Funded
Message	<p>I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed defunding of Creative Pinellas. As a vital steward of the arts in our region, Creative Pinellas plays an indispensable role not only for artists but for the broader business and tourism ecosystem.</p> <p>Creative Pinellas is an economic engine. According to the 2022 Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study, Pinellas County's nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$294.7 million in economic activity—comprised of \$126.8 million in organizational spending and an additional \$167.9 million in audience-related expenditures. This investment supported 4,528 jobs, contributed \$185.3 million in personal income, and generated \$58.9 million in tax revenue—all within our community.</p> <p>The creative sector is a major employer and industry. It employs over 53,000 people locally, fuels \$3.6 billion in industry earnings, and includes more than</p>

\$80 million in nonprofit revenues. Moreover, arts and culture account for nearly 5.8% of all local businesses, generating \$1.96 billion annually and nearly 4.3% of regional GDP.

Arts tourism is key to Pinellas' identity and prosperity. Nearly 34% of arts attendees come from outside the county, spending an average of \$46 per visit—not for beaches, but for cultural experiences. In St. Petersburg alone, nonprofit arts generated \$132.5 million in economic activity, supporting 2,121 jobs and contributing \$26.5 million in tax revenues.

Creative Pinellas also leads critical community initiatives—public art programs, environmental projects, arts access in reinvestment zones, gallery spaces like Sightline at PIE, graffiti-abatement programs, summer camp scholarships for kids and more. Defunding this agency would jeopardize our ability to sustain this artistic infrastructure and destabilize the arts ecosystem prevalent throughout Pinellas County.

While Visit St. Pete-Clearwater plays an important role in our region's tourism, Creative Pinellas fills a unique and essential need—creating culture, connecting arts, economic development, equity, environmental advocacy, and community cohesion in ways commercial tourism cannot.

I urge you to keep Creative Pinellas' funding to maintain our region's creative spirit, support thousands of jobs, bolster tourism, enhance civic pride, and preserve Pinellas County's reputation as an arts destination.

On a personal level, I have been employed by Creative Pinellas in 2019 and again earlier this year helping to establish the county's mural program and assisting Lealman with the implementation of public works of art. I know first hand this organization is vital to Pinellas County. It may not seem obvious if you're not looking to recognize the value of the arts, but its woven into nearly every aspect of life here. Education, outdoor recreation, small business, big business, tourism, transportation-- you name it, the arts have impacted these areas and help to support these essential aspects of life here. Creative Pinellas' impact is far reaching in so many directions that would surely feel the loss of revenue and quality of life should it be defunded.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this critical matter.

Your Street Address	4047 24th Ave N
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33713
Your Phone Number	8134264305
Your Email Address	NoGoodDeedsArt@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of hrippert@icloud.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Heather Rippert #31767429
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:45:29 PM

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Direction of Inquiry	Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
Your Name	Heather Rippert
Subject	Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner Eggers,</p> <p>Firstly, as a well respected local artist who has both benefitted from Creative Pinellas through grant funding for a traffic signal box at Tampa and McMullen Booth Roads (2024), one Emerging Artist Grant (2022), and participating as a brand ambassador for the #artscoast (Pinellas County) at the Piedmont Park Arts Festival in Atlanta, GA (2022), and other projects, I must express my deep dismay, frustration and anger at the short sightedness of the proposal to defund such a vital organization that gives so much to our community.</p> <p>Secondly, as a member of the Board of the Clearwater Arts Alliance, I stand firmly with our organizations statement as follows regarding this matter;</p> <p>As the official Arts Alliance for the City of Clearwater, we strongly urge continued funding for Creative Pinellas, our County's designated arts agency. With less than 1% of the county's tourism tax and just 0.004% of the overall Pinellas County budget, Creative Pinellas delivers tremendous impact through cultural tourism and arts advocacy. Creative Pinellas also leverages state, federal, philanthropic, and contract dollars that multiply the County's investment many times over.</p> <p>Their leadership supports community beautification projects including murals, art-wrapped signal boxes, and exhibitions featuring both youth and professional artists in multiple</p>

locations across the County, making our neighborhoods more vibrant and welcoming. A strong arts community also improves mental health, supports aging well, keeps young people positively engaged, and builds a more creative workforce that strengthens businesses of all kinds.

Considering that our County is recognized nationally and internationally as an arts destination, which strengthens our tourism economy, withdrawing support from Creative Pinellas would undermine—not preserve—our County’s unique charm. To defund Creative Pinellas would destabilize the cultural infrastructure that sustains artists, arts and culture organizations, and residents across Pinellas County, and weaken the very foundation of the cultural tourism economy that benefits us all.

I sincerely hope that you will reevaluate this matter and turn it around. I will be in attendance at the Budget Meeting on Thursday evening.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Heather Rippert

Your Street Address	2052 Kings Hwy Apt 5
City/Unincorporated County	Clearwater
Zip Code	33755
Your Phone Number	610-733-3429
Your Email Address	hrippert@icloud.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of pete_at_magriffproductions.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Peter Magnani #31767192
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:10:25 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Peter Magnani

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

It has come to my attention that the commission is considering ending funding for Creative Pinellas. Please do not do this. I am a Pinellas County resident and you guys should realize CP is a vibrant part of our community. The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas. As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, they drive economic growth, support artists, and strengthen our region as an arts and cultural destination. Losing this support would have a devastating impact on our community.
Thank you for your consideration.

Your Street Address

526 Bay Street

**City/Unincorporated
County**

Dunedin

Zip Code

34698

Your Phone Number (813) 239-6862

Your Email Address pete@magriffproductions.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of director@shamc.org
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Stop the Proposal to De-Fund Creative Pineallas from Autumn Pearson #31757590
Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025 6:13:01 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Autumn Pearson
Subject	Stop the Proposal to De-Fund Creative Pineallas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>On behalf of the Safety Harbor Art and Music Center (SHAMc) and our extended arts community, I am writing to express deep concern regarding the recent proposal to de-fund Creative Pinellas at the close of this fiscal year.</p> <p>This proposal came as a shock to many of us, given how effectively Creative Pinellas leverages its resources. With less than 1% of Tourist Development Tax Funds and less than .001% of the County budget, Creative Pinellas supports an extraordinary range of cultural initiatives, including grants, murals, workshops, public art care, and gallery exhibitions. The impact of this small but mighty investment in our arts ecosystem cannot be overstated.</p> <p>For years, Creative Pinellas has provided crucial opportunities for local artists, educators, and organizations to thrive. Their programs foster community engagement, bring cultural tourism into our county, and uplift the voices of artists whose work strengthens our shared identity. To remove this support</p>

would be a devastating loss to our cultural landscape and the many communities it serves.

We urge you to reconsider this proposal and continue funding Creative Pinellas. The arts are not a luxury — they are a vital driver of education, economic growth, and community well-being. By sustaining Creative Pinellas, you affirm the County’s commitment to preserving and celebrating the vibrant cultural fabric that makes Pinellas so unique.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to a positive resolution that protects and uplifts our arts community.

Respectfully,
Autumn Pearson, SHAMc Director

Your Street Address	244 4th Ave. N
City/Unincorporated County	Safety Harbor
Zip Code	34695
Your Phone Number	7275067566
Your Email Address	director@shamc.org

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [zazuproductions at aol.com](mailto:zazuproductions@aol.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Defunding Creative Pinellas from Francine Wolf #31767400
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 5:42:28 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Francine Wolf
Subject	Defunding Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner--</p> <p>I strongly urge you to consider continuing funding for Creative Pinellas. It is a unique arts entity that brings so much to this county. The arts are very important for any society and we are very fortunate to have this wonderful place in mid-Pinellas. Not everyone can get to St. Pete for art. I have applied for an individual artist grant in the past, and what they offer is something that can't be replaced. Please do not cut off their funding.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Your Street Address	1219 14th Circle, SE
City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33771

Your Phone Number 813-498-9653

Your Email Address zazuproductions@aol.com

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From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:22:53 AM

Topic	Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	David Westenberg
Phone	+16146687959
Email	dmwestenberg@gmail.com
Address	135 21st Ave Se St Petersburg, FL 33705
Comments	I oppose cutting funding for Creative Pinellas. The arts are struggling right now, yet they're a major driver of tourism, new residents, and our local economy. Investing in the arts keeps Pinellas County vibrant and competitive — cutting this support would set us back when we need it most.
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: [Brandice Palmer](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Fwd: It's the wrong time for Pinellas County to take aim at eliminating its arts agency
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 4:46:05 PM

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Dear Dave:

As we approach the anniversary of the two hurricanes that punched the daylights out of our county last year leaving many community members still reeling, news coverage reveals county-wide erasure of multiple public murals celebrating Pride and Black History, reporting on one local pastor being taken away in handcuffs while protesting the elimination of public art.

If the County Commission votes now to eliminate funding for its arts agency, Creative Pinellas, it sends the wrong message, one that will resonate with community members and area visitors in discouraging ways. It's simply bad timing.

Tasked with preserving this community and its resources, this commission has a tough job to do in September. As a longtime Pinellas County resident and advocate for the arts and local business, I urge you to preserve funding for the organization that helps shine a spotlight on the arts that engage tourists and visitors from all over the planet, buoying businesses in a battered community hit hard by Helene and Milton.

I thank you for your consideration and for all you do for our community.

Sincerely,

Bran Palmer
Candidate for PhD
Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts
727-278-4470

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of atbm@usa.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Ann Brigati-Mongelli #31768275
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:45:03 PM

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- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Ann Brigati-Mongelli
Subject	Creative Pinellas
Message	Please do not withhold funding to Creative Pinellas! As a Floridian and Pinellas County resident, I know that embracing the arts is an important aspect of this county that makes it stand above the rest. Art is a beautiful expressive part of our culture as human beings and should be encouraged! Thank you
Your Street Address	Hetrick Circle
City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33774
Your Email Address	atbm@usa.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of fbonnevie@aol.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: The County's arts agency, Creative Pinellas from Frank Bonnevie #31767974
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:34:51 PM

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- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Frank Bonnevie

Subject

The County's arts agency, Creative Pinellas

Message

I just heard you are about to cut the funding for the County's arts agency, Creative Pinellas. How do you think this will make the county and state a better place to live? You're taking away what attracts people like me to move and now stay in Florida. For the few dollars it costs. Why don't you just tax one person in the one percent richest category? Show us you care about us instead of the super-rich at the expense of everyone else.
Thank you for your time
Frank Bonnevie

Your Street Address

6060 shore Blvd south Buckingham Ph10

City/Unincorporated County

Gulfport Florida Pinellas County

Zip Code

33707

Your Phone Number

413 841 5732

Your Email Address

fbonnevie@aol.com

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From: [Natalie Moss Bond](#)
To: [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Subject: Please don't ruin the arts for us.
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:27:03 PM

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Creative Pinellas is so essential to our community.

Please don't let this horrible thing happen. I am so sick to death of people not understanding how important the arts are to all of us. Reading books, listening to music, and visiting art museums. Creative Pinellas is so wonderful. I hope you have visited it before you make a bad decision.

You all know that the whole country is out of sorts right now. It's awful. I hate that everyone is having their rights taken away, while the wealthy go untouched.

I am an artist who has worked most of my life trying to make something out of nothing.

I have struggled and starved and nearly had my home taken from me....I have worked very hard to achieve something with my art...and now I feel like the rug is being pulled out from under me, little by little.

Please keep Creative Pinellas.

Love, Natty

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [Tbrommboesen at gmail.com](mailto:Tbrommboesen@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: We need your support in the Arts Community! from Theresa E Bromm Boesen #31767904
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:14:58 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Theresa E Bromm Boesen

Subject

We need your support in the Arts Community!

Message

Dear Commissioners,
It is more important than ever to support the Arts in Pinellas County! We're counting on you to do the right thing with Arts Funding!

The Arts are a vital component of our communities and culture! Imagine our communities without the Arts... it would render our communities colorless and creatively bankrupt!

Think about murals, public art installations, theater, dance, musical concerts, museums and private galleries, which all members of our community enjoy for beauty and education...and you will see how we are impacted daily by the Arts in our communities!

People come to Pinellas County with the understanding that we live in a beautiful place.
The variety of the Creative Arts Organizations here such as Creative Pinellas, among others, make Pinellas County strong!

Please value & support the Arts and the artists who help bring

economic vitality to our neighborhoods & help create our beautiful cities in Pinellas County!

Sincerely,
Theresa Bromm Boesen & Peter Boesen
Tbrommboesen@gmail.com

Your Street Address	2612 Pearce Dr 210
City/Unincorporated County	Clearwater
Zip Code	33764
Your Phone Number	5039974957
Your Email Address	Tbrommboesen@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of catherinebergmann@mac.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Catherine Bergmann #31767741
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:40:17 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Catherine Bergmann
Subject	Proposed Defunding of Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>The alarming news of the potential defunding of Creative Pinellas came just prior to a magnificent evening of creative JOY + Community-building (with over 300 citizens in attendance)—demonstrating all the more clearly, the vital resource Creative Pinellas IS for artists and arts organizations in Pinellas County.</p> <p>As curatorial director of the Dunedin Fine Art Center (2000-2025), I am reminded of the history of arts funding in Pinellas County. After serving our arts community for 30 years, the Pinellas County Arts Council ceased to exist in 2006—being ‘absorbed’ into the newly named Pinellas County Cultural Affairs Department. That entity ‘closed’ in 2010 which led to the establishment of Creative Pinellas in 2011—as a new iteration of what was once our vital Arts Council.</p> <p>Since then, Creative Pinellas has more than fulfilled its mission of magnifying the arts across our county to the economic + cultural benefit of all.</p>

Pinellas County’s artists, art centers and cultural institutions rely upon the unified resource that is Creative Pinellas—it is our county’s ‘Arts Council’—already lost once before—may its generative role be maintained.

As a sound and continuing investment in our county’s prosperity, we ask that you acknowledge the proven value of Creative Pinellas by preserving it and funding it.

Thank You,
Catherine Bergmann

Your Street Address	1530 San Helen Drive
City/Unincorporated County	Dunedin
Zip Code	34698
Your Phone Number	727.735.3994
Your Email Address	catherinebergmann@mac.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [edit4food at verizon.net](mailto:edit4food@verizon.net)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas - Do NOT Defund! from Nancy Armitage #31768678
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:00:39 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Nancy Armitage
Subject	Creative Pinellas - Do NOT Defund!
Message	<p>Please DO NOT ELIMINATE FUNDING for Creative Pinellas! Such an ill-conceived move would be devastating for artists, organizations, and the culture of our community! Creative Pinellas accomplishes a LOT with very tiny piece of the budget: artist grants, professional development, public art care, community workshops, educational programs, gallery exhibitions uplifting local talent, and more! It promotes community connection, draws cultural tourism to our county, and strengthens our community identity.</p> <p>The ARTS MATTER - they are NOT a luxury!</p>
Your Street Address	308 Lake Placid Ct
City/Unincorporated County	Oldsmar
Zip Code	34677
Your Email Address	edit4food@verizon.net

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of formsc.at.aol.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Please do not de-fund the arts in Pinellas County - Creative Pinellas is important from Courtnay Campbell #31769911
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:15:16 AM

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Your Name	Courtnay Campbell
Subject	Please do not de-fund the arts in Pinellas County - Creative Pinellas is important
Message	The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas. As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, we drive economic growth, support artists, and strengthen our region as an arts and cultural destination. Losing this support would have a devastating impact on our community. Overall, the funds to keep our arts community strong are small compared to the impact a vibrant arts organization provides for our County residents and visitors.
Your Street Address	700 Starkey Road Unit 1144
City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33771
Your Phone Number	7274302731

Your Email Address formsc@aol.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of debcarsonwrites@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: I Strongly Oppose Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Deb Carson #31767761
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:45:01 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Deb Carson
Subject	I Strongly Oppose Defunding of Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>To all Pinellas County commissioners and county administrator...</p> <p>RE: Oppose defunding of cultural gem and county economic driver, Creative Pinellas</p> <p>1. Arts as a Core Economic Driver</p> <p>Creative Pinellas is uniquely positioned to elevate St. Petersburg and Pinellas County as a true arts destination, not just a beach destination. While VSPC excels at promoting sand, sun, and hospitality, it does not carry the artistic credibility to speak to collectors, cultural tourists, and arts patrons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts tourism attracts higher-spending, longer-staying visitors than beach-only travelers.• Cities that have leaned into cultural identity—like Asheville, Austin, and Santa Fe—have proven that investing in the arts creates long-term, resilient tourism economies.

2. Authentic Community Roots

Creative Pinellas is deeply embedded in the local creative community: from public art initiatives, to artist residencies, to grants that nurture local talent.

- Visitors who travel for culture want an authentic experience, not a repackaged marketing campaign.
- Creative Pinellas provides that authenticity, giving our local artists visibility and giving visitors a real sense of place.
- By contrast, VSPC is a marketing agency, not a creator or cultivator of art. It doesn't commission, curate, or sustain creative work.

3. National & International Recognition

Creative Pinellas has built relationships with museums, galleries, and international arts organizations that give Pinellas County credibility on the global stage.

- This type of arts diplomacy can't be outsourced to a tourism bureau.
- It requires trust, curatorial expertise, and a proven track record—something VSPC does not have.

4. The Multiplier Effect

Funding for Creative Pinellas doesn't just support artists—it multiplies across the economy.

- Local artists spend money locally, hire local assistants, rent local studios, and contribute to the fabric of neighborhoods.
- Arts programs directly feed into hospitality, retail, and dining—creating a more holistic tourism experience.
- Investment in the arts enhances quality of life, which in turn attracts business, relocations, and talent far beyond the arts sector.

5. Division of Strengths

This is not an “either/or”—it's about letting each organization play to its strengths.

- Visit St. Pete Clearwater is excellent at broad tourism marketing: beaches, resorts, family travel.
- Creative Pinellas has the artistic pedigree, cultural networks, and credibility to make St. Pete/Pinellas a recognized arts hub. Redirecting arts funding to VSPC dilutes impact, because it

tries to make a marketing agency do something it is not designed or respected to do.

—

Closing Point

If we want St. Pete and Pinellas to compete with world-renowned arts destinations, we must fund the entity that actually produces, supports, and elevates the arts—Creative Pinellas. To shift that funding into a general tourism bureau would be a step backward, weakening our credibility in the arts world and undermining a proven driver of economic and cultural vitality.

Your Street Address	105 Shoals Circle
City/Unincorporated County	North Redington Beach
Zip Code	33708
Your Phone Number	7272549250
Your Email Address	debcarsonwrites@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of christine.curbelo@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Funding from Christine curbelo #31767611
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:17:56 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Christine curbelo
Subject	Funding
Message	The arts matter, it is many forms of intelligence. Support what brings so many people together in a world that feels so many are apart
Your Street Address	2714 89th Street Circle E
City/Unincorporated County	Palmetto
Zip Code	34221
Your Phone Number	6102077924
Your Email Address	christine.curbelo@gmail.com

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From: [Joyce Curvin](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Keep funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:33:55 PM

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Commissioner Eggers,

I was very disappointed to hear discussion in your last workshop about possibly defunding Creative Pinellas. This would be a poor decision for Pinellas County.

I would argue that Creative Pinellas (who receives only about .004% of the county budget) is a good steward of the funds they receive. Their projects with artist and organizational grants, public art, tourism, and community connection add to the experience not just for visitors but also for those of us who live and work here. Shouldn't this be about residents, too?

Commissioner Cross reported that your staff members said it would "be a lift" for them to create an alternative grant program for arts and tourism. Do those staff members really have time to put together and administer a program that equals the fine work Creative Pinellas is doing? I can't imagine that they would!

I urge you to keep the funding for Creative Pinellas. Let them continue their work in making Pinellas County an arts and cultural destination for visitors and residents.

Joyce Curvin
4875 Blue Jay Cir, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Fun Art - Fun Life
www.JoyceCurvinArt.com

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of phoebebrown@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Support Creative Pinellas from Phoebe Brown #31768048
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:51:39 PM

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- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6

Your Name	Phoebe Brown
Subject	Support Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Good Evening Ms. Flowers,</p> <p>My name is Phoebe Brown. I am a homeowner, a taxpayer, and a creative professional in your district. Part of what drew me to move here and purchase a home is the vibrant arts community and the sense that this county values and invests in creativity.</p> <p>That's why I am deeply alarmed by this effort to defund Creative Pinellas. This is not just a budgetary decision — it is an act of harm. It undermines the very community that makes Saint Petersburg and the surrounding Pinellas County towns such a desirable and thriving place to live. It risks dismantling years of work that have built a nationally recognized arts scene, and it sends a message that politics matter more than people. To strip away its funding is short-sighted and destructive. It will hurt not only artists, but restaurants, shops, and neighborhoods that benefit from the energy and dollars the arts bring in. The pennies it costs residents to fund this program more than pays for itself in free arts events and workshops open to all.</p>

As a taxpayer and a homeowner, I expect my dollars to strengthen this community — not to weaken it. Defunding Creative Pinellas would be a betrayal of the values that drew me here and that keep so many people proud to call Pinellas home.

I urge you to reject this harmful, politically motivated move and stand firmly for the arts, for our economy, and for the people you were elected to represent.

Thank you.

--
Phoebe Brown
Pinellas County Resident
Board Member Ruth's List Florida

Your Street Address	3318 52nd St N
City/Unincorporated County	SAINT PETERSBURG
Zip Code	33710
Your Phone Number	4044411639
Your Email Address	phoebebrown@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [ncosta0505 at icloud.com](mailto:ncosta0505@icloud.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Defunding of Creative Pinellas from Nancy Costa #31770075
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:40:10 AM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Nancy Costa

Subject

Defunding of Creative Pinellas

Message

I am a full-time resident and property owner in Indian Rocks Beach and also a Board Member of the Beach Art Center. Creative Pinellas provides much needed funding to many different areas in Pinellas County, and certainly not just to provide easels and paint as one commissioner suggested. It is much more than that. As we all continue to rebuild our communities from last year's horrific hurricane damage, the various forms of art provided has become a peaceful means to get through the difficult times - funding to families to give their children an opportunity they otherwise would not have to attend a summer camp - interact with other children - use their creativity to express how they are feeling. Creative Pinellas provides so much to all our communities - a sense of calm - a reminder of what we had and what we can rebuild. Please do not take away the funding you have provided since they were established in 2011. They give us all a sense of hope - a reminder of what we had and what we can bring back to all our communities through art. Visitors love our art centers - our programs - the beauty that has been created. Please do not take that away from everyone who not only lives here, but visits Pinellas County - a beautiful way to see everything Pinellas

County offers, and Creative Pinellas is a conduit to bringing all that to the forefront. Thank you -

Your Street Address	1 Windrush Boulevard
City/Unincorporated County	INDIAN ROCKS BEACH
Zip Code	33785
Your Phone Number	6094962855
Your Email Address	ncosta0505@icloud.com

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From: richard.loganstudio.com
To: [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Subject: Pinellas County Commission Meeting September 4, 2025
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:36:58 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

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Pinellas County Commission Meeting September 4, 2025
Agenda Item 25-1144A

I am writing about the proposed budget cuts to Creative Pinellas. I heard a comment made by Brian Scott questioning Creative Pinellas' value and suggestion that half of their total budget be wiped away and the other half to be used to create a competitive artist grant program. Does Mr. Scott not realize that a large part of what Creative Pinellas does is manage a competitive artist grant program?

According to the Florida Department of State, Florida's arts and cultural industry generated \$5.8 billion of economic activity, including \$2.9 billion by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations (of which Creative Pinellas is one).

Studies have found that in Pinellas County, the arts sector consistently generates greater economic activity and a higher number of jobs than sports. In addition, the nonprofit arts and culture sector's annual economic impact surpasses that of sports in the Tampa Bay area.

Funding Creative Pinellas is a very small amount compared to the entire county budget but the support for art is so important at this time so please do not cut their funding.

RICHARD LOGAN

www.loganstudio.com

727-460-9471

richard@loganstudio.com

studio

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:44:49 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

From: Cammie Lumpkin <cammie@safetyharborchamber.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:41 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner Scott,

As a Chamber CEO and a Pinellas County resident with three school aged children, I am deeply saddened and concerned by the possibility of Creative Pinellas being defunded. As a board member to the organization, I have witnessed incredible growth and leadership with CEO Margaret Murray at the helm. Creative Pinellas has done an excellent job of shifting priorities to align with Pinellas County, a shift that many other nonprofits would struggle to pull off. Through their partnership with VSPC and their new Making Waves program, Creative Pinellas has prioritized tourism while strengthening the arts culture in our county.

Of the \$94 million in bed tax revenue generated in 2024, Creative Pinellas received just 0.8% (less than 1%). From the County Operating Budget, Creative Pinellas receives only 0.004% of the total budget. These modest investments sustain the entire countywide cultural infrastructure, which in turn fuels cultural tourism and economic growth.

To maximize the return on county investment, we should strengthen Creative Pinellas in partnership with VSPC, allowing for greater sharing of resources, such as increased strategic arts marketing and visitor traffic analytics, to measure engagement with the cultural community and. This approach delivers far greater impact than shifting arts funding into tourism marketing alone. Creative Pinellas builds and sustains the arts ecosystem—supporting artists, cultural organizations, and community development. VSPC markets cultural assets to global audiences, bringing visitors who stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and spend in local businesses.

Their roles are complementary, not interchangeable. Removing or reducing Creative Pinellas weakens the foundation on which cultural tourism depends. Maintaining mindful funding for Creative Pinellas will yield exponential returns in economic impact, visitor engagement, and increased visibility with these vetted changes in focus and resource allocation.

In light of this shared information, I respectfully request that there be a public workshop to assess the strengths of Creative Pinellas as the designated Local Arts Agency for Pinellas County and how the organization might continue to move forward supporting county initiatives.

Gratefully,



Cammie Lumpkin

President & CEO

Safety Harbor Chamber of Commerce

(727) 726-2890

www.safetyharborchamber.com

MEMBERS: Sign up to receive text notifications of events by texting 'notify shchamber' to (218) 229-8880.

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [emjoy37 at yahoo.com](mailto:emjoy37@yahoo.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Keep Creative Pinellas Funding from Emily Kapes #31767767
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:46:34 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Emily Kapes
Subject	Keep Creative Pinellas Funding
Message	Hello, Creative Pinellas is vital to our community. Please continue their funding to support artists. St. Petersburg is a true destination for the arts.
Your Street Address	2324 7th Street North
City/Unincorporated County	St. Pete
Zip Code	33704
Your Email Address	emjoy37@yahoo.com

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From: [Lynda](#)
To: [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#)
Subject: FUNDING FOR CREATIVE PINELLAS
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:37:20 PM

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Good evening Mr Scherer, Mr Scott, Mr. Nowicki,
Mr. Eggers, Ms Peters and Ms Flowers,

As a member of the art community in Pinellas County I am writing to simply say do not cut the funding for Creative Pinellas. The impact on the entire art community will be enormous. It is not just about their individual organization. Their programs and support have a far reaching impact on small art centers and individual artists. Children's artwork is regularly featured in a setting that they could only imagine!

Grants are made available for art organizations, art groups and individual artis.
Scholarships are made available for children who might not be able to afford to attend summer art camps.

Creative Pinellas drives economic growth, strength as the region as an art and cultural destination. The programs and gallery exhibits bring in tourists' dollars. Putting Creative Pinellas under Visiting St Pete-Clearwater will bury its vital impact.

I will say it again ...PLEASE do not cut this critical funding.

Respectfully,
Lynda Hamlett
President, Board of Directors
Gulf Beach Art Center,
Indian Rocks Beach, FlBe

From: [violette.hastings](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Creative Pinellas
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:33:58 PM

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Hello Mr. Eggers,

It has come to my attention that the organization Creative Pinellas is at risk of being defunded. Therefore, I wanted to take a minute to express the great concern this brings not only me but the arts community here in Pinellas County. While I have never personally received one of their art grants, I have continually had the opportunity to apply and be considered. One artist, Jennifer Chandley, received one of these grants a couple of years ago and I got to attend an artist talk where she went in depth about how her art was a vessel of healing through her life experiences.

Being a part of the community here in pinellas county, even outside of being an artist, I feel that art beautifies our community to a great degree. It helps unify us, when one artist starts a conversation through their work or about their work, it opens up the opportunity for the rest of us to weigh in. This connection is something I find unique to the arts, it's almost like both an icebreaker and something tangible that serves to deepen one anothers connection. Often, art or the meaning of art is not something singularly understood; For example, the artist Jennifer Chandley opened up about her personal life, but that just brought more people into the conversation about their own personal lives. In addition, the interpretation of our feelings has a range far beyond one person's definition of a particular subject or realm of focus.

While some people may hold the opinion that feelings and art are insignificant in the larger scope of things, on the contrary, it is a navigational tool built on inclusivity. Even just thinking of our history, when we think of centuries ago, it feels so separate from our today. But art is a written record that shows our innate human sensibilities evolving through time, bridging the past to the present, and posing the question of what our future has in store. That implores you and the other commissioners to envision what our community's future has in store: Will we be a community that ignores the humanistic need to connect and evolve through art by defunding our arts organizations, or will we uplift the voices that serve to educate, inform, and further develop our culture?

Thank you,
Vyolette Hastings

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of bydianedaniel@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposal to eliminate arts funding from Diane Daniel #31768878
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:19:13 AM

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- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Diane Daniel
Subject	Proposal to eliminate arts funding
Message	As a Pinellas County voter (Indian Rocks Beach), I implore you to NOT eliminate or reduce arts funding. Locally I appreciate VERY MUCH the Beach Arts Center in Indian Rocks. I've taken classes, gone to art openings, shopped at their gift shop and enjoyed how much the arts center has enhanced our community. I also attend Creative Pinellas shows and events and am PROUD that they assist so many artists in the county. The arts is a vital part of our community and society, no matter what your work, religion, address or politics are. They enrich us in so many ways. From what I can see, Pinellas Creative as an agency does outstanding work. Please do not take away their funding!
Your Street Address	309 10th Avenue North
City/Unincorporated County	Indian Rocks Beach
Zip Code	33785

Your Phone Number 7272012333

Your Email Address bydianedaniel@gmail.com

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From: fpenhallow@aol.com
Subject: SAVE FUNDING TO CREATIVE PINELLAS
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:46:06 PM

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YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING!!!!

Creative Pinellas is the stronghold for up and coming artists AND artists who are established. There is strength in numbers and CP has brought it all together. I've been in Pinellas County over 30 years and I've seen CP struggle and grow. It is the strongest it has ever been and you want to make it go away?????

I am creative but not an artist and I appreciate the opportunity to experience others' creative work. I'm also influenced by what I see. It is a strong community but having the location and staff to bring it all together is in itself 'a work of art.'

The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas. As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, they drive economic growth, support artists, and strengthen our region as an arts and cultural destination. Losing this support would have a devastating impact on our community. Pinellas has so much talent here and it is of utmost importance to keep their ideas and projects alive and ongoing and **together**.

So much is happening and I fear for what we are losing - it is part of our identity. WE ARE A CREATIVE COMMUNITY!

The ARTS are more important to me than the SPACE PROGRAM. Look at all that money going out to space!!!!

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of mansond@spcollege.edu
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: support from DAVID MANSON #31768458
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:43:09 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	DAVID MANSON
Subject	support
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I wish to voice my support for the continuation of County funding for Creative Pinellas.</p> <p>As a Pinellas artist and director of the nonprofit EMIT, Creative Pinellas has supported my projects and those of EMIT several times during the past two decades. Those projects included free concerts and educational workshops for Pinellas citizens in Tarpon Springs, Largo, Clearwater and St. Petersburg.</p> <p>Altogether, I have programed over 600 events in Pinellas County during the past 29 years including 17 annual St. Petersburg Jazz Festivals, 3 Latin Jazz Fests, 8 years of recording arts training for Boys & Girls Club students at the Royal Theater and hundreds of concerts and workshops. I also served as a board member of the Pinellas County Arts Council for eight years.</p> <p>I believe that that Creative Pinellas provides a valuable cultural service to our citizens and helps to make Pinellas</p>

County a very attractive place to live and work. Please continue to support their efforts.

Sincerely,

David Manson, D.M.A.
Distinguished Faculty
Music & MIRA
St. Petersburg College | Gibbs
727.341.4363 | mansond@spcollege.edu

EMIT – www.emitseries.org
St. Peterburg Jazz Festival – www.stpetejazzfest.com

Your Street Address	620 31st St. North
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33713
Your Phone Number	7273414363
Your Email Address	mansond@spcollege.edu

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From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Do Not Defund Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:05:35 PM

From: Victoria Doyle <v.doyle117@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:58 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Do Not Defund Creative Pinellas

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Hello Commissioner Scott,

I was deeply disappointed to learn that the County Commission is considering defunding Creative Pinellas. This proposal appears both misinformed and politically driven.

Eliminating support for an organization that provides free arts programming for youth through its summer camps and other family-friendly initiatives is not only shortsighted, but counterproductive to the community's long-term vitality.

While much of the discussion has centered around cultural tourism, it's important to recognize that Creative Pinellas plays a broader role in cultivating vibrant arts communities that attract and retain residents. Our thriving arts and culture scene is a key reason people choose to live here, and it deserves continued investment. The County receives significant value from the modest funding it allocates to Creative Pinellas.

As a proud Pinellas County resident for the past nine years, I urge you to consider the broader consequences of defunding this vital organization. What would the County truly gain—and more importantly, what would it stand to lose?

Sincerely,
Victoria Doyle
Gulfport, Florida

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of lippincott.lisa@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Agenda item number 25-1144A, Meeting September 4, 2025 at 6pm from Lisa Lippincott #31768244
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:35:50 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Lisa Lippincott

Subject

Agenda item number 25-1144A, Meeting September 4, 2025 at 6pm

Message

In my estimation, defunding Creative Pinellas would be a grave mistake. The arts, as has been demonstrated by numerous studies on numerous occasions, are a MAGNIFIER of community funds, not a consumer of them. Arts funding returns to the community many, many times over, yet, strangely, the budgetary attack dogs seem to come for the golden goose time and time again.

While the arts add significantly to the draw Pinellas County has as a tourist destination - that is so because the arts here are a wild, vibrant, unpredictable thing, not a carefully-engineered tourist experience.

The hospitality and marketing experts at VSPC are invaluable to our area to be sure, but they are not the best arbiters of where to spend arts funding or administer grants. Creative Pinellas has a wealth of experience and expertise within the ranks of its staff and its board members. Its mentoring,

exhibitions, and grants deeply water the roots of the artistic community, the fruits of which in turn directly feed the community at large.

Creative Pinellas states that its mission is to “foster and sustain a vibrant, inclusive, and collaborative arts community across Pinellas County. We provide support, connection, and opportunities to artists, organizations, and the public in order to grow and sustain the area as an internationally recognized arts and cultural destination.”

Kindly allow them to continue to do just that, as we will all be better for it.

Lisa Lippincott
Director
Soft Water Gallery
515 22nd Street South Unit F
St Petersburg, FL 33712

Your Street Address	4649 8th Avenue North
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33713
Your Email Address	lippincott.lisa@gmail.com

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From: [O'Donnell, Stacy](#)
To: michellefriedline@gmail.com
Cc: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Creative Planning - RE: Contact Form: DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas from Michelle Friedline #31766903
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:20:57 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Michelle:

On behalf of Pinellas County Commissioner Dave Eggers' office, I wanted to acknowledge and thank you for emailing our office to share your feelings, comments, and concerns about Creative Pinellas. Please know Commissioner Eggers has read your email.

We appreciate you contacting our office and continue to encourage citizens to share their feelings and opinions with us on all matters important to them. Thank you.



Stacy O'Donnell
Executive Aide, Commissioner Dave Eggers
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 33756
sodonnell@pinellas.gov
Office (727) 464-3276

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:31 PM
To: Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas from Michelle Friedline #31766903

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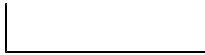


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Direction of Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1• Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)• Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3• Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)• Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5• Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6• Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
Your Name	Michelle Friedline
Subject	DO NOT defund Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Hello. I am writing to urge you to CONTINUE funding Creative Pinellas, whose work makes our county more beautiful and vibrant through public art, cultural programs, and community projects.</p> <p>Their support of local artists nurtures local talent and also strengthens our economy. Artists live, work, and reinvest right here in Pinellas county. Creative Pinellas already plays a direct role in promoting cultural tourism by attracting visitors to galleries and events. Cutting their funding would disrupt the important tourism benefits that Creative Pinellas is already providing.</p> <p>As elected officials, your duty is first and foremost to the citizens and voters who live here, not only to visitors and those who work directly in tourism. Your continued support of Creative Pinellas will help our community thrive both culturally and economically and also enhance our reputation as a destination. I respectfully ask you to maintain and protect this essential funding.</p>
Your Street Address	2833 Orange Tree Circle N

City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34684
Your Email Address	michellefriedline@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [aknau13 at gmail.com](mailto:aknau13@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: In Support Creative Pinellas from Abigail Knauff #31768252
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:38:04 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Abigail Knauff
Subject	In Support Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing to share what Creative Pinellas has meant to me personally, as both a lifelong resident and an emerging artist in Pinellas County. Murals along the Pinellas Trail, at Belcher and Alderman Roads in Palm Harbor, and the signal box projects are all examples of how Creative Pinellas has made our community more beautiful and inspiring. These projects support tourism by turning our public spaces into cultural landmarks.</p> <p>Last year, I received an Ignite grant from Creative Pinellas. While the grant itself was small (\$500), the impact was immense. I used the funds to build a public zine stand at the Palm Harbor Library, which now features over 200 zines from nearly 100 different artists. Zines are small, self-published works that provide raw and honest perspectives from people of all backgrounds. This project is especially meaningful because very few libraries across the country have public zine collections, making it a unique cultural feature that both residents and visitors can enjoy. Zines capture the voices of a</p>

community —offering a cultural record of ideas, stories, and creativity that is diverse, unfiltered, and accessible. Visitors who encounter this collection not only discover something unexpected and memorable, but also gain insight into the cultural life of Pinellas County.

This is just one example of how Creative Pinellas empowers residents to make a difference in their own communities. What Commissioner Scott described as “grant programs that they’re giving money for artists to buy easels and cameras and things like that. And it’s not going to tourism at all.” doesn’t capture the full story. These grants are not handouts—they are investments that yield real cultural, educational, and economic returns for the county.

Creative Pinellas actively engages with tourism, directly addressing one of the main concerns raised about continuing their funding. They recently debuted a new art gallery, Sightline, at St. Pete–Clearwater International Airport (PIE), designed to connect travelers with the vibrant arts community of Pinellas County. Their upcoming Making Waves program is another strong example of how Creative Pinellas promotes cultural tourism. In April–May 2026, Making Waves will bring together our vibrant cultural community through a series of exhibitions, performances, and arts experiences that highlight the natural beauty of our county. This series of events invites visitors to not only vacation here, but to be immersed in the creativity and culture of Pinellas County. Myself and many other artists already applied for this grant — by cutting funding for Creative Pinellas, you’re discarding fully developed projects that artists have spent weeks putting together. This is an organization with proven momentum, and taking that away without a stronger alternative in place would be a huge loss for both artists and the community.

Defunding Creative Pinellas would mean losing not just support for artists, but a vital force that enriches our neighborhoods, supports local businesses through cultural tourism, and strengthens Pinellas County’s identity as a vibrant, creative place to live and visit.

I urge you to continue funding Creative Pinellas, not just for the benefit of artists like me, but for the benefit of our entire community and the many visitors who come here to experience something special.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Abby Knauff

Your Street Address	530 Severs Landing
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34683
Your Phone Number	7278518212
Your Email Address	aknau13@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of nancypoucher@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas funding from Nancy Poucher #31768135
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 8:08:34 PM

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- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Nancy Poucher
Subject	Creative Pinellas funding
Message	<p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>I'm an artist resident of Gulfport that has benefitted from Creative Pinellas Hurricane relief grant. This organization does so much good for our community, locals and tourists alike.</p> <p>Please don't cut funding for this important organization.</p> <p>Kind regards, Nancy Poucher</p>
Your Street Address	3020 Clinton St S
City/Unincorporated County	Gulfport
Zip Code	33707

Your Phone Number 7274590602

Your Email Address nancypoucher@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of tpiracci@usf.edu
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Tina Piracci #31768441
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:36:22 PM

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- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator
- Webmaster

Your Name

Tina Piracci

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

Creative Pinellas is integral to the arts culture in Saint Pete! When considering moving back to Florida, the thriving arts community in this town thanks to organizations like Creative Pinellas is brought me back just like it contributes to bringing tourists! St. Pete is known for its art, and if we start defunding this, we will lose that value!! Creative Pinellas is what keeps our community as a desirable place to visit or live.

PLEASE Do not defund one of the remaining gems keeping culture and community alive in our town!

Sincerely,
Tina Piracci

Your Street Address

4185 whiting dr se

**City/Unincorporated
County**

St petetsburg

Zip Code	33705
Your Phone Number	9415679178
Your Email Address	tpiracci@usf.edu

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From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:03:52 AM

Topic	Funding of Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	
Citizen Name	Donna Polhamus
Phone	+16036622879
Email	donna@polhamus.org
Address	444 Paula Dr N #431 Dunedin, FL 34698
Comments	I am so upset you are thinking of defunding Creative Pinellas. The exhibits there were only the best I visited.lasy year. I hope you commissioners have seen their exhibits so you can know how worthy of funding th y are. Please continue to fund th m.
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of patton.kel@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: I Support Creative Pinellas! Please Fund! from Kelly Patton #31767607
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:16:45 PM

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- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Kelly Patton

Subject

I Support Creative Pinellas! Please Fund!

Message

When you think about the arts in the County, you might think about the new murals and signal box artworks that have beautified Lealman. Or you might think about the many murals you see when biking the Pinellas Trail. Or you might think about the Artists and Arts Nonprofits that received hurricane-relief funding last year. Or you might even think about the opposite – how blank and silent and uninspired our County would be without these things. Your continued funding of Creative Pinellas is what will help our County be a more vibrant place to visit and spend money – and not become empty. It's often so difficult to define the fabric that holds our communities together, so they are safe and attractive and vibrant for visitors. Creative Pinellas enhances that fabric every day, and we need not take it for granted as we consider the County budget.

Your Street Address

6501 Emerson Ave S

**City/Unincorporated
County**

St. Petersburg

Zip Code 33707

Your Email Address patton.kel@gmail.com

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From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:47:25 AM

Topic	Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-1144A
Citizen Name	Perry Ransbottom
Phone	+117407043794
Email	ransbottompk@eckerd.edu
Address	4200 54TH AVE S SAINT PETERSBURG, Florida 33711
Comments	Pinellas County Commissioners I'm writing to voice my support for Creative Pinellas. Transparently, I have recently benefitted from one of their grants to develop an educational arts program related to Florida ecology. I am a professor and artist at Eckerd College as well as a county resident. I used these funds to create a prototype version of my game, that I'm continuing to develop. This work would not have been possible without Creative Pinellas. Creative Pinellas does excellent work to support artists in our community as well as drive tourism to our county. Thank you for your time, Kyle Ransbottom
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [justaddie26 at gmail.com](mailto:justaddie26@gmail.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Arts Funding Support is Vital !!!!! from Addie Rodriguez #31767640
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:23:06 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- General Information
- Report a Problem
- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator
- Webmaster

Your Name

Addie Rodriguez

Subject

Arts Funding Support is Vital !!!!!

Message

In response to the county commissioner that recently stated “he frankly doesn’t see what Creative Pinellas brings to the table”, I believe he clearly hasn’t taken the time to attend any of the beneficial events offered to Pinellas County visitors and residents at no charge to them because of the support. I think it’s ridiculous that .004% of the overall Pinellas County budget is what Creative Pinellas receives from Pinellas County and still has been able to demonstrate many ways of improving and supporting the programs for our students and professional artists. Not sure why you all need to be reminded of this but... you are elected officials for ALL of Pinellas County, not for selected groups. Keep funding at current or better yet higher levels to show you serve all your constituents. Thank you.

Your Street Address

519 1/2 13th Ave NW

City/Unincorporated County	Largo
Zip Code	33770
Your Email Address	justaddie26@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of britsfairylights@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Amelia Rodriguez #31768421
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:29:15 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Amelia Rodriguez

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

Hello commissioners, my name is Amelia Rodriguez and I am writing to urge you to NOT cut the funding of arts in Pinellas. Although I no longer reside in the county I attended USF St Pete and the legacy of the city as a hub of the arts greatly enhanced my experience as a student/resident. Creative Pinellas was integral to my experience in the county. Time and time again the positive expensive arts bring enhance our communities. Street art reduces accidents. Taking art classes improve students' grades. Art programs provide rehabilitation in prisons and mental health institutions. Art is vital for a healthy and happy community. I strongly urge you to NOT cut the funding of Creative Pinellas.
Respectfully,
Amelia Rodriguez

Your Street Address

22810 Collridge Dr

City/Unincorporated County

Land O Lakes

Zip Code 34639

Your Email Address britsfairylights@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of sand7152@hotmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Defunding of the Pinellas Arts Partnership from Steve Sanderson #31769833
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:01:34 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Steve Sanderson

Subject

Defunding of the Pinellas Arts Partnership

Message

I have only been a residence of this county about three years now. But one of the things that drew me to this lovely city (St Pete) is the amazing amount of art that is part of the fabric of our communities. Museums that are incredible, especially given the size of some of our communities like Gulfport and St. Pete. Art and creativity permeate the culture and bring life and vitality to all of our lives. I believe this "atmosphere" has a special attraction to visitors and those who wish to be residence of our fine communities and I believe it would be less attractive to both visitors and future residents were the arts defunded.

Many years ago I read a short story by the great SF writer, Ray Bradbury. in the story man had figured out a way to time travel and the world was a creative and vibrant place. This time travel appealed to trophy hunters, I mean, who wouldn't want the head of a dinosaur mounted on their wall? The plot follows one expedition back through time. Before they left the time machine they were instructed to "Stay On The Paths" that had been laid previously. This was strongly stressed. During the actual time in that past one of the hunters got distracted

and accidentally stepped off of the path, just one foot. When he lifted his foot to get back on the path, there in his boot print was the remains of a very primitive butterfly. It was dead. The expedition was completed and the hunters and guides returned to present day with their trophies and pictures only to find that their world was not as they'd left it--vibrant and thriving--instead it now was a gray industrial wasteland. No color, no nurturing of the spirit, a life without the creative arts. All of this the results of accidentally killing one little primitive butterfly 75m years ago.

The arts (beauty, creativity and expression) are vital, not only for our communities, but for the enrichment of the humanity that includes all of us. Because of that, I request that you and your constituents consider the ramifications--not just next year but for years to come--of a decision to defund the support of the arts. Thank you for taking the time to read this communication and considering it's contents. I hope you are persuaded, at least, to reconsider your recent decision. Creative expression goes where it is welcomed and it leaves where it is not welcomed.

Your Street Address	1637 66th Ave S
City/Unincorporated County	SAINT PETERSBURG
Zip Code	33712
Your Phone Number	4692236210
Your Email Address	sand7152@hotmail.com

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From: [O'Donnell, Stacy](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Robin Saenger - Supports Keeping Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:31:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Robin Saenger called to let you know her support for keeping Creative Pinellas. She used to be Vice Mayor in Tarpon Springs and spearheaded the arts in Tarpon Springs wanted to thank you for everything you do and wanted you to know she supports keeping Creative Pinellas.

Robin Saenger
1630 Lonesome Pines Lane
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689



Stacy O'Donnell
Executive Aide, Commissioner Dave Eggers
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 33756
sodonnell@pinellas.gov
Office (727) 464-3276

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of leannamsharp@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Protect Creative Pinellas, protect the arts from LeAnna Sharp #31768700
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 11:09:46 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	LeAnna Sharp
Subject	Protect Creative Pinellas, protect the arts
Message	<p>Hello all county commissioners,</p> <p>My name is LeAnna Sharp, I am a local musician, and creative arts educator. I am writing to you today to strongly urge you to protect Creative Pinellas and to continue funding this amazing organization.</p> <p>The fact that even the discussion of cutting funding is coming up is absolutely ridiculous to me. The work that Creative Pinellas achieves is remarkable, and they support so many local artists. Art is so critical to our community, to our education and youth, and to our economy. Three years ago, I moved here to Saint Petersburg from out of state specifically because of the vibrant, dynamic and active arts community is here. Why would you threaten something that is so precious and unique to this region?</p> <p>I understand that budget cuts are happening everywhere, not only in our state, but across the country. Everything is being impacted. But when are we going to put the arts first as something of substantial value in the community?</p> <p>Please, I ask you to not cut funding for Creative Pinellas, and stop undermining a vibrant arts community.</p>

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
LeAnna Sharp

Your Street Address	8045 31st Ave N
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33710
Your Email Address	leannamsharp@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of a.w.palms@mac.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Funding for Creative Pinellas from Anthony Palms #31769619
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:15:20 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Anthony Palms
Subject	Funding for Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Please continue the funding for Creative Pinellas. My friends and I enjoy driving over from North Tampa regularly to their exhibitions and openings.</p> <p>Without Creative Pinellas, Pinellas and the greater Tampa Bay Area will lose a major part of our cultural impact and identity.</p>
Your Street Address	8657 Hunter Key Circle
City/Unincorporated County	Tampa
Zip Code	33647
Your Email Address	a.w.palms@mac.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of jonogle@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Preserve Creative Pinellas funding from Jonathan Ogle #31768495
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:54:06 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name	Jonathan Ogle
Subject	Preserve Creative Pinellas funding
Message	Creative Pinellas does a lot for the students and artists of our beautiful community each year. Please preserve funding for Creative Pinellas to ensure access to the arts for our citizens and the tourists who look for it. As an arts supporter, thank you for your serious consideration.
Your Street Address	3589 Fairway Forest Dr
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor
Zip Code	34685
Your Email Address	jonogle@gmail.com

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From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Please Continue Funding Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:05:12 PM

From: Patricia Thomas <patricia@beachartcenter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Please Continue Funding Creative Pinellas

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Dear Commissioner Scott,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am a resident, taxpayer, and voter in Pinellas County, and I know you have an important decision ahead regarding funding for Creative Pinellas. I'd like to share why continued support for this organization is essential for the well-being of our community — across all ages and economic backgrounds.

I've witnessed the impact of Creative Pinellas firsthand: from scholarships that make art camps accessible to children who might not otherwise have such opportunities, to the expert guidance and support they provide to local artists and small community art centers.

The creative arts can be life-changing — and, at times, even lifesaving. Art brings peace to those experiencing sadness or depression, a sense of value to those who don't realize what they have to offer, and a powerful outlet for self-expression when words are not enough.

Art builds community, especially for those who may feel they don't have one.

For children — particularly those growing up in difficult circumstances or feeling like they don't fit in — art provides an opportunity to explore, create, and take control of a world they imagine.

And of course, art is also beautiful and fun!

Creative Pinellas is a vital resource that enriches our community and strengthens the economic and cultural fabric of Pinellas County.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge you to continue funding Creative Pinellas and the important work they do.

Thank you for your time, and for your service to our community.

Warm regards,

Patricia Thomas

504 Lookout Ct
Largo, FL

From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: agenda item number (25-1144A)
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:08:42 PM

From: Jack Tovey <jtovey50@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:51 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: agenda item number (25-1144A)

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Good morning,

My name is Jack Tovey, My address is 7941 58th Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL 33709.
My phone number is 727-644-0289.
I'm a digital artist. I taught in Pinellas County Schools for 36 years.

I want to thank you for your continued support of Creative Pinellas – and right now we need it more than ever. The Pinellas County Commission is proposing to eliminate their funding for Creative Pinellas, the County's designated Local Arts Agency.

The arts matter. Our community matters. And so does the work of Creative Pinellas. As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, they drive economic growth, support artists, and strengthen our region as an arts and cultural destination. Losing this support would have a devastating impact on our community.

The grants that Creative Pinellas provides help support artists and as a result of this support our community is now known for its art," along with its beaches. We need the commission to continue supporting Creative Pinellas.

Thank you!

Jack Tovey

jtovey50@yahoo.com

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of wmjs164@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Support Creative Pinellas from Mary Jean Sinkhorn #31768056
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:54:03 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Mary Jean Sinkhorn
Subject	Support Creative Pinellas
Message	Creative Pinellas supports the neighborhood in many ways! One of the ways that the community participated was with the Spacecraft project which moved around a number of public parks. This project was for children & adults! All experiences were positive. We need the Arts! Think of your family & see what your grandkids enjoy!
Your Street Address	16414 Lake Byrd Dr.
City/Unincorporated County	Tampa
Zip Code	33618
Your Email Address	wmjs164@gmail.com

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From: [O'Donnell, Stacy](#)
To: kimbersmithly@gmail.com
Cc: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: RE: Contact Form: Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas from Kimberly Smith #31763314
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:08:56 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Kimberly:

On behalf of Pinellas County Commissioner Dave Eggers' office, I wanted to acknowledge and thank you for emailing our office to share your feelings, comments, and concerns about Creative Pinellas. Please know Commissioner Eggers has read your email.

We appreciate you contacting our office and continue to encourage citizens to share their feelings and opinions with us on all matters important to them. Thank you.



Stacy O'Donnell
Executive Aide, Commissioner Dave Eggers
Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street, Clearwater, FL 33756
sodonnell@pinellas.gov
Office (727) 464-3276

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com <noreply@fs30.formsite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 9:24 AM
To: Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Contact Form: Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas from Kimberly Smith #31763314

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Direction of Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1• Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)• Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3• Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)• Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5• Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6• Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
Your Name	Kimberly Smith
Subject	Plead to not de-fund Creative Pinellas
Message	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I am a lifelong resident of Pinellas county and am raising my five children here as well. I love raising my children and living in a county that truly appreciates the arts. Pinellas County is a special oasis in Florida and I am proud of how our county has embraced the arts. I recently read that the Board of Commissioners is considering defunding Creative Pinellas. I am writing to express that this would be awful to our community and am pleading with you to NOT defund Creative Pinellas.</p> <p>At a time when the arts is being defunded nationwide, it is more important than ever to have organizations and resources such as Creative Pinellas for our county and our children. Creative Pinellas has been essential for me and my children. Not only have I thoroughly enjoyed the arts through the events and galleries they set up and host, I have been paid to work on large scale exhibits through Creative Pinellas, which has helped put food on the table for my children. My children have also had opportunities to attend art summer camp programs which would have otherwise been unfeasible.</p>

So again, please do not take this away from our community and please continue to fund the arts through Creative Pinellas.

All the best,
Kimberly

Your Street Address	736 69th Ave S
City/Unincorporated County	Saint Petersburg
Zip Code	33705-6248
Your Phone Number	7272729386
Your Email Address	kimbersmithly@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of staciesteinke@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Funding for Creative Pinellas from Stacie Steinke #31767634
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:21:59 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Stacie Steinke

Subject

Funding for Creative Pinellas

Message

I am a vocal professional who lives in St Petersburg and chose to live here in large part because of the breadth and depth of the Arts Community in Pinellas County. It is hugely different from Hillsborough County and its impact is perceived on a broad level. I believe in and support the work of Creative Pinellas as it serves to promote the arts in a large-scale, yet personal way.

Please continue to fund Creative Pinellas at the same level. They do great work in the community to bring artists' work to broader audiences locally. The organization has also been part of engine that increased the visibility of our Arts community to national and international levels, which has and will continue to bring people to our region.

The amount of funding provided by the County is very low relative to the amount of positive effect it provides. There appears to be no financial motivation for removing the current level of funding. So why? Reducing funding to this organization does not makes sense.

Thank you for your consideration of behalf of Creative Pinellas.

Your Street Address	131 26th Ave NE
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33704
Your Phone Number	7275999089
Your Email Address	staciesteinke@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of weinzettle@hotmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Keep Funding Creative Pinellas, County Arts Agency from Joseph Weinzettle #31767736
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:39:34 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Request a Service
- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Joseph Weinzettle

Subject

Keep Funding Creative Pinellas, County Arts Agency

Message

As your constituent, I urge the Board of County Commissioners to continue funding Creative Pinellas, the Arts Agency of Pinellas County.

This agency provides a vital service to Pinellas County residents. Creative Pinellas stimulates the making of art, music and literature while promoting the arts for residents and visitors alike to enjoy. The various strains of creative work throughout the county are uplifted and amplified by this vital agency.

I personally benefitted from a Creative Pinellas arts grant in 2020 during the Covid Pandemic. It was a great achievement for me personally and I was proud to be involved with Creative Pinellas, and continue to be involved with the County's arts and culture programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Your Street Address	4221 12th Ave N
City/Unincorporated County	St Petersburg
Zip Code	33713
Your Email Address	weinzettle@hotmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of sdufs.at.duck.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas Continued Funding from Sarah Urriste #31768047
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:51:24 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)

Your Name

Sarah Urriste

Subject

Creative Pinellas Continued Funding

Message

Hello,

I am writing to object to the removal of Creative Pinellas support from the budget. Further, I object to the funds being directed to Visit St. Pete Clearwater. As a resident of neither St. Pete or Clearwater AND a resident of Pinellas County, I do not think it's a fair redistribution of funds. Creative Pinellas is funding the arts that benefits the ENTIRE county through art programs for youth and other artists. We have a vibrant art community in Safety Harbor that could be impacted if funding is removed. For a commissioner to arbitrarily and without supporting facts say that "he doesn't think they bring much to the table" is perhaps a sign of the times, where people make moves without fully understanding the impacts, however, I would hope that at the local level folks are more level headed and community minded. Please don't remove funding to local artists, summer art programs, youth art programs. There's so much defunding going around where people don't see the value at the state and federal level that we really need our local government to step in where the others are failing us. Thank you

Your Street Address

110 Park Street

City/Unincorporated

Safety Harbor

County

Zip Code 34695

Your Email Address sdufs@duck.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of carolstewartart@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Creative Pinellas from Carol Stewart #31767849
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:04:50 PM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name

Carol Stewart

Subject

Creative Pinellas

Message

Dear Commissioners
I am an artist. I moved here from Ohio in 2019.
In Columbus Ohio I felt very supported as an artist. There were lots of opportunities to exhibit my work and grants both at the city and and state level. Please look up the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Ohio Arts Council to see all they are doing. Creative Pinellas supports the arts. We need to grow this not cut it. I am so disturbed to know you are thinking of cutting it and so quickly.

Your Street Address

165 12th Ave NE

City/Unincorporated County

St Petersburg

Zip Code

33701-1201

Your Phone Number

3148008718

Your Email Address carolstewartart@gmail.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [Lmstover55 at aol.com](mailto:Lmstover55@aol.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed elimination of funding for Creative Pinellas, our Local Arts Agency from Linda Stover #31769578
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:08:05 AM

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Direction of Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)• Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
Your Name	Linda Stover
Subject	Proposed elimination of funding for Creative Pinellas, our Local Arts Agency
Message	<p>It is my understanding that The Pinellas County Commission is proposing to eliminate their funding for Creative Pinellas, the County's designated Local Arts Agency. I would like to ask the two of you as the Pinellas County Commissioners for Dunedin and Clearwater to rethink that proposal.</p> <p>In my experience, the arts have been a positive, uniting influence in our community. The arts can bring out the beauty in our imperfect world. Art fosters connection and brings all of us closer together. Our communities need that cohesiveness in the midst of all the upheaval going on around us.</p> <p>As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, Creative Pinellas drives economic growth, supports artists, and strengthens our region as an arts and cultural destination.</p> <p>With less than 1% of Tourist Development Tax funds and just .001% of the County budget, Creative Pinellas provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artist grants & professional development• Public art care• Community workshops & education• Gallery exhibitions for local talent <p>I attended the exhibit opening last weekend, which was well attended. It was a fun, relaxing, interesting experience. I invite</p>

the two of you to visit Creative Pinellas, especially if you have never been there, before you make a decision that could hurt the people in our communities.

Also, with the price of everything going up in our community, and many families moving out of Pinellas County, it is a relief to go to an event that is free of charge.

Think about all the times you may have enjoyed a moment listening to music, viewing something beautiful that touched your soul, enjoying a theatrical production or a visit to a museum.

As the representatives of the communities I live in, and my representatives, I hope you will grant me the courtesy of at least reading my message and thinking about keeping the funding for Creative Pinellas intact.

Respectfully,
Linda Stover

Your Street Address	2512 Southpointe Dr.
City/Unincorporated County	Dunedin
Zip Code	34698
Your Phone Number	727-754-3931
Your Email Address	Lmstover55@aol.com

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From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [Lmstover55 at aol.com](mailto:Lmstover55@aol.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed elimination of funding for Creative Pinellas, our Local Arts Agency from Linda Stover #31769519
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 7:52:51 AM

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Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7

Your Name

Linda Stover

Subject

Proposed elimination of funding for Creative Pinellas, our Local Arts Agency

Message

It is my understanding that The Pinellas County Commission is proposing to eliminate their funding for Creative Pinellas, the County's designated Local Arts Agency. I would like to ask the Pinellas County Commission to rethink that proposal.

In my experience, the arts have been a positive, uniting influence in our community. The arts can bring out the beauty in our imperfect world. Art fosters connection and brings all of us closer together. Our communities need that cohesiveness in the midst of all the upheaval going on around us.

As the designated arts agency for Pinellas County, Creative Pinellas drives economic growth, supports artists, and strengthens our region as an arts and cultural destination.

With less than 1% of Tourist Development Tax funds and just .001% of the County budget, Creative Pinellas provides:

- Artist grants & professional development
- Public art care

- Community workshops & education
- Gallery exhibitions for local talent

I attended the exhibit opening last weekend, which was well attended. It was a fun, relaxing, interesting experience. I invite all of the Pinellas County Commissioners to visit Creative Pinellas, especially if you have never been there, before you make a decision that could hurt the people of Pinellas County.

Also, with the price of everything going up in our community, it is a relief to go to an event that is free of charge.

Think about all the times you may have enjoyed a moment listening to music, viewing something beautiful that touched your soul, enjoying a theatrical production or a visit to a museum.

I hope you will at least read my message and think about keeping the funding for Creative Pinellas intact.

Your Street Address	2512 Southpointe Dr.
City/Unincorporated County	Dunedin
Zip Code	34698
Your Phone Number	727-754-3931
Your Email Address	Lmstover55@aol.com

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From: [Chaney, Coleen](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Please Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:10:12 PM

From: Nicholas Shenefelt <shenefeltn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Please Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas

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Dear Mr. Scott,

Hello, I am a public librarian here in Pinellas County, where I work with young children to enrich their lives and promote lifelong learning every day. I'm writing to express strong support for the continued county funding for Creative Pinellas, an organization which has personally impacted me and the children in my family. Recently, a child in my family was featured at an art show hosted by Creative Pinellas and it was the highlight of her year. For a young child struggling with self-esteem issues and unsure of what they wanted to do in their life, it was a shaping and confidence-building moment to be recognized for their creative efforts.

Creative Pinellas plays a vital role in enriching community life, supporting local artists, and even driving tourism, all at a such a small fraction of the tourism budget. To be personally blunt on the impact of budget cuts, your board had already cut the public library budget last fiscal year, which caused us to be unable to provide as many back-to-school and creative programs for children this summer. It saddened me immensely to have to tell parents and kids that we couldn't provide as good a service as we had the previous years. So, I ask you, Commissioner, what exactly will you be doing with that money instead of supporting children's creativity and confidence?

Please choose to invest in what makes our county unique, welcoming, family-orientated, and forward-thinking. I urge you to vote in favor of continued funding.

Thank you for your leadership and service.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Shenefelt
31790 US Highway 19 North #185
Palm Harbor, FL 34684

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:41:11 AM

Topic Citizens To Be Heard – Public Comment

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 4

Citizen Name Amanda Zantal-Wiener

Phone +13019223828

Email azantalwiener@gmail.com

Address 175 2nd St S APT 1116
FL 33701

Comments

Re: Keep Creative Pinellas funded Chair and Commissioners, My name is Amanda, a resident of and small business owner in downtown St. Petersburg. I'm asking you to retain funding for Creative Pinellas, our county's designated arts agency since 2011, responsible for public art, artist grants, and arts-tourism marketing with Visit St. Pete–Clearwater. Cutting the agency would undercut proven economic drivers and a core part of our visitor brand. The evidence: Arts are a jobs-and-revenue engine here. In 2022, nonprofit arts and culture in Pinellas County generated \$294.7M in economic activity, supported 4,528 jobs, and produced \$58.9M in tax revenues at all levels of government. One-third of attendees were visitors from outside the county, and they spent ~\$46 per person in our local businesses. That's a measurable return on a comparatively small public investment. Creative Pinellas is the infrastructure you already have. It connects local artists, venues, and visitors; it's the county's established conduit for grants and cultural programming. Eliminating it outright, rather than updating goals and metrics, throws away working capacity and institutional knowledge. Tourism momentum is real, and the arts help sustain it. January 2025 set a record for Pinellas bed-tax collections (\$8.29M), and St. Petersburg itself broke its January record. Why risk weakening a sector that helps keep visitors spending year-round? If the concern is performance, set clear targets (audience reach, private match, earned media, visitor conversion) and require quarterly reporting. But don't zero out the line. Even recent coverage of this proposal frames it as a sudden move; a better path is performance-based reform, not elimination. Please keep Creative Pinellas in the FY26 budget and direct staff to return with outcome-based

metrics and a modest matching requirement, so public dollars continue to leverage private spending, jobs, and visitor activity in Pinellas County.

Your Stand on the Issue

Undecided

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:31:50 PM

Topic Creative Pinellas Funding
BCC Agenda Date 9-3-2025
Agenda Item Number
Citizen Name Jennifer Brown
Phone +116072620402
Email jen.b.brown@gmail.com
Address 180 55th Street North
Florida 33710

Comments
As someone who moved to Pinellas County in part due to the vibrant arts scene, I oppose cuts to funding for Creative Pinellas. The arts in St. Pete/Pinellas County drive tourism, residency, and help create an amazing community where people can enjoy world class art, from theatre and visual arts to music and more. Any cuts to Creative Pinellas would be a loss to this community and our visitors, as well as to the arts as a whole. I'd caution the board to consider the revenue driven by organizations who rely upon CP to help with their operating costs as well as the invaluable programming those organizations provide to both citizens and visitors. As COVID-19 reminded us, the arts help us enjoy and appreciate life and, in bad times, help us heal. To cut funding for the arts at this time would be grossly irresponsible and a cause of significant embarrassment to a community that boasts and appreciates its vibrant arts scene. I am writing today to oppose cutting funding for Creative Pinellas.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of [jaegrandma at yahoo.com](mailto:jaegrandma@yahoo.com)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Proposed Budget Change Detailed in the 2025 Notice of Proposed Property Taxes ... from Lynn Fuhler #31770322
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:15:48 AM

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Direction of Inquiry	Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
Your Name	Lynn Fuhler
Subject	Proposed Budget Change Detailed in the 2025 Notice of Proposed Property Taxes ...
Message	<p>Dear Commissioner Eggers,^[1]_[SEP] I reside in District #4 which you represent.</p> <p>My request is simple: I implore you to VOTE AGAINST the proposed budget change detailed in the 2025 Notice of proposed property taxes and proposed or adopted non-ad valorem assessments.</p> <p>I was appalled to see a proposed budget increase that will impact my property at a nearly 12% rate increase.</p> <p>I can't say this strongly enough: READ THE ROOM.</p> <p>Americans are angry, scared and extremely frustrated right now. You see it in protests across the country and in town hall meetings held by elected officials. I suspect the Pinellas County courthouse and commission meeting chamber will experience similar events if they continue to harm their constituents financially.</p> <p>This should seem obvious. However, the balance of this email explains why I urge you to consider voting against this proposed budget change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pinellas County suffered through 2 hurricanes last year. Numerous businesses were closed for months. That workforce, supply chains and service providers all took a hit. Recovery

has been slow. Tourism is and will continue to be impacted by the federal administration. Pinellas County had long been a favorite destination for visitors from Canada, England and Germany, among other countries. Those target markets do not feel welcome in the U.S. In the months ahead, the tourist development tax will take a hit.

- Pinellas County consumers have only begun to see the impact of tariffs taxes charged to consumers for imported goods. Businesses front-loaded inventory, while those consumers who could afford them front-loaded purchases. If consumers thought inflation was bad before, it's only the tip of the iceberg. The \$3.18 price tag on a SNICKERS® candy bar at a local store serves as evidence. Companies think consumers are stupid, too. We are wise to shrinkflation practices and find it insulting.
- We have only begun to see the negative impact of ICE raids and the deportation of America's workforce - agricultural/farm workers, construction laborers, landscapers, etc. Those jobs will be difficult to fill as Americans will NOT do that work for the same low wage. Employers will need to pay more, and so Pinellas County consumers will face rising costs.
- Pinellas County housing costs have forced workers to move to nearby counties, placing more demands on our roadways and resulting in traffic. Thank goodness for remote work.
- Grant funds have dried up for many non-profits. How can they continue to operate without cutting their workforce?
- The events of the last eight months are having chilling effects, particularly on low- and middle-income families who were already struggling due to inflation. The elderly - seniors, especially those relying solely on Medicare and Medicaid, are the most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time. Again, I implore you to VOTE AGAINST the proposed property tax increase and proposed, or adopted, non-ad valorem assessments. Now is not the time.

Sincerely,

Lynn Fuhler

Your Street Address	4939 Kernwood Ct.
City/Unincorporated County	Palm Harbor

Zip Code 34685

Your Email Address jaegrandma@yahoo.com

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From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:33:23 PM

Topic	Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date	9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number	25-2244A
Citizen Name	Kimberly Spice
Phone	+1+12069414444
Email	kimmieallen@gmail.com
Address	241 Taylor Ave S St Petersburg , FL 33705
Comments	I moved to St Pete because of its vibrant arts community, and the public art here is one of the things I love most about living in this county. Eliminating funding for Creative Pinellas would be devastating, not only to local artists but to the character and spirit of our community. Please don't take away what makes Pinellas County such a creative and inspiring place.
Your Stand on the Issue	Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:08:40 PM

Topic Defunding Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number 25-1144A
Citizen Name Christina Bertso
Phone +117276411601
Email info@christinabertos.com
Address 115 Citrus Ave
Dunein, FL 34698

Comments

Dear Board of County Commissioners, I am writing with urgency to implore you to oppose the defunding of Creative Pinellas. This is not just about an arts organization—this is about the cultural, educational, and economic lifeblood of our county. As a professional artist in Pinellas County, I can say without hesitation that Creative Pinellas has been the single most essential resource in my career. Their grants, opportunities, and dedicated staff made it possible for me to achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a professional artist—something that would have been impossible without their support. There is no other organization in our region that provides this kind of impact for artists and the community. Eliminating funding for Creative Pinellas would have devastating consequences. It would silence opportunities for artists, shut down pathways for cultural engagement, and rob residents and visitors alike of a museum-quality gallery experience that inspires, educates, and enriches. Defunding this program would not only strip away vital support for the arts, but it would also weaken the very identity and vibrancy of Pinellas County. This is a moment of choice: do we invest in a thriving, creative future that strengthens our community, or do we allow a cornerstone of culture and opportunity to be dismantled? I urge you in the strongest possible terms—retain funding for Creative Pinellas. Our community cannot afford to lose it. Respectfully,
Christina Bertso

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:22:10 PM

Topic Creative Pinellas support

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 25-1144A

Citizen Name Jeannie Knauff

Phone +17275607916

Email Mtnluvers@aol.com

Address 530 Severs Landing
Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Comments I am supportive of Creative Pinellas and all of the art activities and projects that they sponsor. Creative Pinellas is instrumental in distributing grants and awards for many artists in our area. I am concerned about what would be put into place if Creative Pinellas is defunded. How would the money that they spend on various art projects in our county be better spent to support the arts in our community? Creative Pinellas is an already existing organization that has already proven their support for our local artists, the community, and visitors and tourists alike.

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:45:07 PM

Topic Funding Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number 4

Citizen Name Allen Wiener

Phone +13019222837

Email awiener1@verizon.net

Address 700 Island Way - #302
Clearwater Beach, FL 33767

Comments I urge the Board of Commissioners to continue funding Creative Pinellas. The arts are a vital part of Pinellas County and generate large attendance and revenues. They are an attraction for those visiting our state and county. In St. Petersburg alone we are very fortunate to have so many quality museums, galleries, and performance venues. I support use of my tax dollars to continue funding Creative Pinellas and celebrating our artists.
NOTE: I am checking the "Undecided" box because I do not see the wording of the resolution, nor a specific agenda item addressing the funding of Creative Pinellas. If the agenda calls for a vote on continuing the funding, then I "Support" that proposal.

Your Stand on the Issue Undecided

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:54:26 PM

Topic Funding of Creative Pinellas

BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025

Agenda Item Number

Citizen Name Kathryn Howd

Phone +17273651781

Email khowd@icloud.com

Address 842 36th Ave N
St Petersburg, FL 33704

Comments

I am a 28+ year resident of Pinellas County. I have volunteered my time to many arts related projects and am deeply involved in the Arts Community. I have also worked with Visit St Pete-Clearwater in their efforts to market the Arts. They have done an amazing job of promoting the SHINE Mural festival to an international market and they are very good at their job. However, their job is not to decide which artists get grants, put on exhibitions or create places for artist to show work and grow their talents. That is the job of Creative Pinellas and a job that is being done very well. Please do not defund Creative Pinellas. We will all loose if you do that. Thank you, Kathryn Howd

Your Stand on the Issue Oppose

From: [Pinellas County Clerk of Court](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: NEW BCC AGENDA COMMENT
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:10:30 PM

Topic Proposed defunding Creative Pinellas
BCC Agenda Date 9-4-2025
Agenda Item Number (25-1144A)
Citizen Name Heather Rippert
Phone +16107333429
Email Hrippert@icloud.com
Address 2052 Kings Hwy Apt 5
Clearwater , FL 33755

Comments

Dear Pinellas County Commissioners, Firstly, as a well respected local artist who has benefitted from Creative Pinellas through grant funding for a traffic signal box at Tampa and McMullen Booth Roads (2023), an Emerging Artist Grant (2022), and participating as a brand ambassador for the #artscoast (Pinellas County) at the Piedmont Park Arts Festival in Atlanta, GA (2022), among other projects, I must express my deep dismay, frustration and anger at the short sightedness of the proposal to defund such a vital organization that gives so much to our community. Secondly, as a member of the Board of the Clearwater Arts Alliance, I stand firmly with our organizations statement as follows regarding this matter; As the official Arts Alliance for the City of Clearwater, we strongly urge continued funding for Creative Pinellas, our County's designated arts agency. With less than 1% of the county's tourism tax and just 0.004% of the overall Pinellas County budget, Creative Pinellas delivers tremendous impact through cultural tourism and arts advocacy. Creative Pinellas also leverages state, federal, philanthropic, and contract dollars that multiply the County's investment many times over. Their leadership supports community beautification projects including murals, art-wrapped signal boxes, and exhibitions featuring both youth and professional artists in multiple locations across the County, making our neighborhoods more vibrant and welcoming. A strong arts community also improves mental health, supports aging well, keeps young people positively engaged, and builds a more creative workforce that strengthens businesses of all kinds. Considering that our County is recognized nationally and internationally as an arts destination, which strengthens our tourism economy, withdrawing support from Creative Pinellas would

undermine—not preserve—our County’s unique charm. To defund Creative Pinellas would destabilize the cultural infrastructure that sustains artists, arts and culture organizations, and residents across Pinellas County, and weaken the very foundation of the cultural tourism economy that benefits us all. I sincerely hope that you will reevaluate this matter and turn it around.

Your Stand on the Issue

Oppose

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Please Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas from a Concerned Civilian
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:33:25 PM

From: Max <maxlatura@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:26 PM
To: Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Cc: Latvala, Christopher <clatvala@pinellas.gov>; Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>; Nowicki, Vince <vnowicki@pinellas.gov>; Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>; Scherer, Chris <cscherer@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Please Continue Funding for Creative Pinellas from a Concerned Civilian

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Hello, My name is Maximilien Latura. I am a resident here in Pinellas County, I work as a software engineer where I support parts of the healthcare system.

I am writing to express my support for continued funding of Creative Pinellas. This is an organization whose goals of empowering local artists are important to me. By empowering local artists, Creative Pinellas is also helping to support local businesses. Local art drives tourism, encourages pedestrian traffic, and creative community engagement, all while creating safe and fun ways to express themselves. The defunding of Creative Pinellas will only hurt communities across Pinellas. Please, consider the value this type of organization provides to the community, and to the children that participate in activities sponsored by this organization. Nobody benefits from this funding being cut.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Maximilien Latura

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Creative Pinellas & The Economic Value of Investing in the Arts from a 4th Generation Pinellas County Business Leader
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:04:56 PM

From: Liz Dimmitt <liz@floridarama.art>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 3:58 PM
To: liz@dimmittchev.com; Liz Dimmitt <liz@floridarama.art>
Subject: Creative Pinellas & The Economic Value of Investing in the Arts from a 4th Generation Pinellas County Business Leader

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Dear Commissioners,

I write today as both the CEO of FloridaRAMA, an arts & tech startup and tourist attraction here in Pinellas County, and also the Managing Partner of Dimmitt Chevrolet, a fourth-generation Pinellas County business. My family's automotive dealerships have operated in Pinellas County for over 101 years and pay significant taxes each year. You can be assured that I understand and care deeply about how our tax dollars are used, about the bottom line and return on investment.

My background and education is in both Finance and Art Administration and I have spent 22+ years, 17 in NYC, working as a Cultural Strategist, helping global organizations and companies drive strategy by activating cultural strategies.

From my experience, as a cultural strategist and business leader and entrepreneur, I can tell you that defunding Creative Pinellas does not serve the best short or long term interest of residents and visitors to Pinellas County.

While it may seem an easy "budget cut" solution to those without an understanding of the full arts impacts, it actually risks eliminating earnings, profits and economic benefits in years to come.

Creative Pinellas is a business incubator. Their product is identifying and nurturing artists and creative professionals who operate their own small businesses and are entrepreneurs in their own right. Just as tech incubators fuel innovation and economic growth, Creative Pinellas has fueled the growth of Pinellas's cultural and placemaking ecosystems which in turn sustain a vibrant arts and cultural economy.

Having a thriving art and culture is critical to helping Pinellas County remain

competitive as both a business destination and a tourism powerhouse. Defunding the arts risks destabilizing this creative economy, and sends the wrong message to entrepreneurs, cultural leaders and investors who are choosing where to build and grow their businesses.

To share an example from my own arts & tourism business, FloridaRAMA: Since opening in 2021, FloridaRAMA has hired over 80 artists. Half of them have a history with Creative Pinellas. And not simply with competitive grants. Their training, support, development and opportunities for growth under Creative Pinellas directly translate into the quality, professionalism and sustainability of the arts locally and of arts organizations (including the county's 15+ museums, 75+ commercial galleries and 10+ performing arts venues/companies) as well as businesses like mine that rely on their talent.

The economic impact of the arts in Pinellas County is undeniable. According to the most recent Arts & Economic Prosperity report, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated \$241.4 million in economic activity in Pinellas County in 2022, supporting 4,628 jobs and delivering \$53.9 million in wages to local workers. The arts also returned \$49.5 million in tax revenue including \$7.6 million directly back to local government. Importantly, these figures only account for non-profit arts organizations and do not include for-profit cultural attractions like FloridaRAMA, commercial galleries, independent studios or professional artists which includes musicians, performers, dancers, writers and filmmakers as well as visual artists. So, the true economic impact is even greater, with a return on investment in keeping with many other key industry sectors. Also, did you know that without Creative Pinellas, we would not have these countywide numbers? They managed the months-long process that collected information from arts organizations around the county and from visitors and guests.

Creative Pinellas is a crucial part of Pinellas County's arts and cultural ecosystem. By incubating artist entrepreneurs and strengthening our arts and cultural infrastructure, they ensure that Pinellas County remains competitive as both a business destination and a tourism powerhouse. Defunding them risks destabilizing this creative economy, and sends the wrong message to entrepreneurs, cultural leaders and investors who are choosing where to build and grow their businesses.

As a business leader and entrepreneur responsible for both a century-old company and a new cultural tourism startup, I assure you: long-term investment in the arts is good business. The County's financial support of Creative Pinellas, leverages hundreds of times more in private investment, cultural tourism dollars and tax revenue, which is the type of stewardship your constituency expects and respects from you.

I respectfully urge you to recognize Creative Pinellas for what it is and what they do: a proven incubator for small businesses, a driver of economic growth and one of the smartest investments Pinellas County can make.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this critical matter. I would be happy to meet with you personally to further discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth "Liz" Dimmitt
CEO, FloridaRAMA
Managing Partner, Dimmitt Chevrolet

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Impact of Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:37:40 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

From: Stacy Stockdale <stacy.stockdale@thejamesmuseum.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:34 PM
To: Scherer, Chris <cscherer@pinellas.gov>; Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>; Nowicki, Vince <vnnowicki@pinellas.gov>; Eggers, Dave <deggers@pinellas.gov>; Latvala, Christopher <clatvala@pinellas.gov>; Peters, Kathleen <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Impact of Creative Pinellas

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Dear Pinellas County Commissioners,

My name is Stacy Stockdale, and I am the Youth & Studio Programs Manager at The James Museum of Western & Wildlife art and a longtime community partner with Creative Pinellas. I am writing you today to share the firsthand impact I have experienced while partnering with Creative Pinellas.

Over the last 6 years Creative Pinellas has helped fund over 50 underserved Pinellas County youth to attend summer art camp at The James Museum. These art camp experiences not only help students to develop creatively but offer opportunities for them to thrive in a social environment that lifts them up and gets them excited about what creative careers and opportunities might be part of their lives and future.

I cannot share enough about how grateful and happy these students are to attend camp at the museum, thanks to Creative Pinellas. To give you a better context; some of these students are in foster care, homeless or with rough situations at home. These creative experiences are vital to the wellbeing of our local youth and Creative Pinellas is a hub for connecting young people with high quality experiences that they deserve.

I have also seen local mural artists thrive and grow within their fields because of the mural opportunities that Creative Pinellas provides for artists. These are incredibly powerful ways for artists to build their portfolios and get their names out there. Just another way that CP provides our community with access and opportunities!

I respectfully ask you to rethink your defunding efforts and remember the core of what Creative

Pinellas does for our local youth, artists and educators. Our community depends on you. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Stacy Stockdale



Stacy Stockdale

Manager of Youth & Studio Programs

The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art

150 Central Ave St. Petersburg, FL 33701

727.892.4200 ext.1010



From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Keep Funding Creative Pinellas
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:35:35 PM

From: Katie <mkillary@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:18 PM
To: Scott, Brian <brscott@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Keep Funding Creative Pinellas

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Hi Brian,

This is Katie Killary, I'm a St. Pete resident, USF St. Pete alum and local art lover!

I'm writing to ask to keep funding Creative Pinellas. So many of us attend their events and gallery exhibitions and appreciate what they do for artists in Pinellas County.

St. Pete and the surrounding areas are well known for their art and the artist community. Eliminating funding would harmfully impact the community, tourism, and possibly the areas' reputation.

Please do not eliminate funding for Creative Pinellas.

Thank you,
Katie Killary

From: [Scott, Brian](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Please let Creative Pinellas keep its funding
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:36:51 PM

From: Maggie Duffy <maggie.duffy@creativepinellas.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 4:20 PM
To: Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>
Subject: Please let Creative Pinellas keep its funding

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Dear Pinellas County Commissioners and TDC Board Members,

I am writing to you in respect to the proposed defunding of Creative Pinellas. As the managing editor of Creative Pinellas' soon-to-launch online magazine, I urge you to continue funding Creative Pinellas rather than redirecting those dollars to Visit St. Pete-Clearwater.

While I only came on board back in May, as a longtime arts professional in Pinellas County and the former arts writer for the Tampa Bay Times, I have watched Creative Pinellas from its inception blossom into the organization it is today.

The impact of Creative Pinellas on the community includes, but is not limited to, the grants it provides to artists and arts organizations, although those are vital for building and maintaining the vibrant arts destination that is Pinellas County.

Creative Pinellas does so much for the arts in the community in myriad ways, including providing a place for artists to exhibit and sell work in the gallery, leading professional artist development workshops, placing artwork from Pinellas County artists at the St. Pete Clearwater International Airport, and on beautification projects throughout the county.

Because of the work Creative Pinellas does, Pinellas County youth get to experience participating in art, through exhibitions and art summer camps. This year, Creative Pinellas gave \$63,000 from the County General Fund directly to arts camps across Pinellas County—supporting program fees, need-based scholarships, and access for PCS students and families. Those kinds of experiences can be life-changing for kids.

Creative Pinellas is focused on being a driver of cultural tourism through two new initiatives, Making Waves, a new pilot program that connects the cultural community with the places people gather - Pinellas County's beautiful beaches, parks and outdoor spaces - to create a countywide exhibition with live performances and arts experiences.

CURRENT|CULTURE is our new online magazine geared toward attracting visitors to Pinellas County as a traveler's guide to local culture. It launches on Oct. 4. The magazine also pays local writers to contribute; another layer of the arts economy.

Please don't defund Creative Pinellas. It's a treasure and resource on which many Pinellas County residents rely.

Thank you.

--

Maggie Duffy

Managing Editor

(727) 464-4545 Office

(727)560-3120 Mobile

maggie.duffy@creativepinellas.org

creativepinellas.org

Submit Articles:

[Use this link to submit your article](#)

Submit Invoices:

[Use this link to submit your invoice](#)



From: noreply@fs30.formsite.com on behalf of terrilipseyscott@gmail.com
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Contact Form: Preserve the Office of Human Rights from Terri Lipsey Scott #31758899
Date: Sunday, August 31, 2025 2:46:24 PM

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This information is a result of a Pinellas County Online Customer Service form submission from the Pinellas County web site.

Direction of Inquiry

- Commissioner Chris Scherer - District 1
- Commissioner Brian Scott - District 2 (2025 Chair)
- Commissioner Vince Nowicki - District 3
- Commissioner Dave Eggers - District 4 (2025 Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Chris Latvala - District 5
- Commissioner Kathleen Peters - District 6
- Commissioner René Flowers - District 7
- County Administrator

Your Name	Terri Lipsey Scott
Subject	Preserve the Office of Human Rights
Message	<p>Dear Honorable Commissioners,</p> <p>Thank you for your continued service and commitment to the residents of Pinellas County. I recognize the challenges you face in balancing priorities at the state, federal, and local levels, and I am deeply appreciative of your leadership during these times.</p> <p>I write to express my strong opposition to any effort to delete, downsize, or absorb the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (OHR) into another department.</p> <p>The OHR plays a vital role in protecting residents against discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, government programs, and wage theft. Its work goes far beyond investigation—last year alone, OHR successfully mediated or settled over 400 cases, including HUD conciliations, EEOC mediations, wage theft recoveries, and public accommodation complaints. These efforts have</p>

returned much-needed resources to working families and upheld the promise of fairness in our community.

Key points to consider:

Federal and Local Value: OHR is contracted by HUD and EEOC, allowing local resolution of cases that save both time and taxpayer dollars.

Cost Efficiency: Its budget is small relative to the overall county budget (a proposed reduction of only \$1.5M in Personal Services).

Qualified Staff: OHR employees hold specialized certifications that ensure expertise in highly regulated areas of law.

Right-Sized & Effective: The office is not overstaffed and consistently exceeds performance expectations.

No True Savings in Dissolution: Absorbing OHR into another department would not reduce costs—it would only redistribute them, while weakening focus and accountability.

The Office of Human Rights exists because forward-thinking leaders recognized the necessity of enforcement mechanisms to protect equality and ensure justice. While we cannot legislate morality, we can enforce accountability. Eliminating or weakening OHR would undermine decades of progress and remove a proven resource that residents, businesses, and federal partners rely on.

I respectfully urge you to preserve the Office of Human Rights as a standalone department and affirm Pinellas County's commitment to fairness, equity, and justice for all.

With gratitude for your service.

Your Street Address	530 Lake Maggiore Boulevard
City/Unincorporated County	St. Petersburg
Zip Code	33705
Your Phone Number	727434-0777
Your Email Address	terrilipseyscott@gmail.com

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LYNN E. HANSHAW, ESQ.

ATTORNEY AT LAW

POST OFFICE BOX 531304
ST PETERSBURG, FL 33747

(727) 249-7592
hanshawlaw@yahoo.com

August 29, 2025

Board of County Commissioners
315 Court St
Clearwater, FL 33756

RE: Defunding of the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR)

Dear Commissioners:

Today I received several calls and emails from colleagues and other concerned members of our community regarding the attempt by a few Board members to dismantle the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights. Wanting to hear exactly what was said for myself I sat through the entire workshop video from August 28, 2025 and was more than a little concerned about some of the information and misinformation that was shared. Although I am unclear where this information came from, I am hopeful that you will allow this missive to provide first-hand, boots on the ground, facts.

For purposes of this communication, I am going to focus on my expertise as it relates to the fair housing component of this office. I can reach out to colleagues with knowledge related to other areas this department handles if that would be of assistance – please just let me know.

Many years ago a group of lawyers, government officials, realtors and various laypeople created the Tri-County Fair Housing Consortium out of need. We were seeing more and more cases of discrimination against families, children, people with disabilities and people of various races and religions being denied the basic right of a roof over their heads. I have spoken on this topic to legal groups, realtors, landlords and home and condo association just to name a few and they are always shocked at what they learn. The mom who applies for an apartment and is directed to a unit in the back by the dumpster while the single guy in the sports car is driven in a golfcart to view a unit by the pool. The children who were denied a swing set or the right to ride their bikes. The man who was blind and just wanted a side porch so he could sit outside in cooler weather. The foster parent who was required to pay extra rent when he arranged for somewhere his foster kids could stay. The cruelty and bad acts of others does not go away because you disband the office who investigates it. The bad actors are simply emboldened.

For several years I handled all the fair housing litigation for the City of St Petersburg and the County of Pinellas. In every case I had the distinct gift of working with Suzanne Mucklow, researcher extraordinaire who worked with the Clerk's office and various trained professionals who worked as investigators for the Office of Human Rights. Under the law, a pre-suit investigation is a mandatory prerequisite before a lawsuit can be filed and that investigator is then an essential witness at trial.

Pinellas County has the distinct honor of taking the very first fair housing case to a jury trial in the history of the Middle District of Florida. The judge was Magistrate Scriven who is now a sitting Federal Judge. One of the key witnesses was the investigator from the PCOHR. We were victorious in that case and it remained the only fair housing jury verdict for many years. I saw Judge Scriven at a seminar a few months ago and she is still moved by the facts from that case.

In 2008 St Petersburg rescinded their own human rights ordinance based squarely on the assurance that the PCOHR would be there to continue to protect its citizens. The agreement did not envision an out of the area agency that no one can reach and that has no interest in serving our community. I heard two commissioners talk about duplication of services but that supposes that there is another service out there. I strongly encourage anyone who is truly interested to try and get a case from our area properly investigated by someone other than the PCOHR.

During the meeting I also heard one commissioner identify his primary goal as rollbacks. I am genuinely hopeful that was not an accurate statement. A rollback cannot possibly be the primary goal, Or even a secondary goal. Being a good financial steward cannot possibly mean leaving our most vulnerable citizens unprotected.

I implore this Board to be good listeners and caring human beings. Someone mentioned a separate workshop to discuss this department. Let me come and tell you about the good this department has done. How it works. Why it matters and why it cannot be moved elsewhere and added to someone else's duties. Allow me to share inspirational truths about the difference the PCOHR made in your constituents' lives. As I write this I am sitting here staring at a letter from a lawyer for a mobile home park hired to evict a severely disabled senior woman from the mobile home she owns because she put a small gate on her front porch and that gate violates a rule related to outdoor fencing. The gate is clearly a fair and reasonable accommodation that is allowed under the law but without the help of the PCOHR there is no one there to help stop that eviction. What would you have me tell this woman?

Sincerely,

Lynn E. Hanshaw, Esq.

From: President@naacpstpetersburg.org
To: [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#)
Cc: [Burton, Barry](#); [Dashon](#); [Deirdre Crudup](#); fscnaacp@gmail.com; [donald hart](#); [HARRY HARVEY](#); [Weathers, Sandra D](#); [WTSP-News Desk Editors](#); CWright@tampabay.com; leon.russell4@icloud.com; [Thomas Jones](#); [Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance](#); [Lynn Hanshaw](#); [Kenneth T. Welch](#); [Doyle Walsh](#); [Rita R. Wesley](#); Bruce.Rector@MyClearwater.com; [George B. Smith](#); media@naacpldf.org; fscnaacp@gmail.com
Subject: Forwarding Letter from Attorney Lynn Hanshaw Regarding the Office of Human Rights
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:18:18 PM
Attachments: [BCC letter.pdf](#)
Importance: High

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Good afternoon Commissioners,

I am forwarding for your attention a letter from Attorney Lynn E. Hanshaw (attached), who has extensive expertise in fair housing litigation and a long history of working with the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (PCOHR).

Attorney Hanshaw's letter speaks directly to the vital role that the PCOHR plays in protecting residents of Pinellas County from unlawful discrimination, particularly in the area of fair housing. It also provides important historical context, including prior litigation, the unique role of trained investigators, and the consequences of removing or diminishing this office.

Given the ongoing discussion regarding the future of the PCOHR, I believe it is essential that the Board review Attorney Hanshaw's perspective and the concrete examples she outlines of the office's impact on our community.

I respectfully request that this letter be given full consideration in your deliberations.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to ensuring that Pinellas County continues to protect the rights and dignity of all its residents.

In Appreciation,

Esther Sanni, MSW, MLC
President

St. Petersburg NAACP Branch #5130
(727) 900-1170

From: President@naacpstpetersburg.org <President@naacpstpetersburg.org>

Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 1:40 PM

To: Robinson-Flowers, Rene <rflowers@pinellas.gov>; brscott@pinellas.gov <brscott@pinellas.gov>; kpeters@pinellas.gov <kpeters@pinellas.gov>; deggers@pinellas.gov <deggers@pinellas.gov>; cscherer@pinellas.gov <cscherer@pinellas.gov>; vnowicki@pinellas.gov <vnowicki@pinellas.gov>; clatvala@pinellas.gov <clatvala@pinellas.gov>

Cc: bburton@pinellas.gov <bburton@pinellas.gov>; Dashon <naacp5130secretary@gmail.com>; Deirdre Crudup <deirdrecrudup@outlook.com>; fscnaacp@gmail.com <fscnaacp@gmail.com>; donald hart <hartdonald@bellsouth.net>; HARRY HARVEY <harryciara@aol.com>; Weathers, Sandra D <sandra.weathers@charter.com>; WTSP-News Desk Editors <desk@10tampabay.com>; CWright@tampabay.com <CWright@tampabay.com>; leon.russell4@icloud.com <leon.russell4@icloud.com>; Thomas Jones <tjones@bestsourceus.com>; Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance <imastpete@gmail.com>; Kenneth T. Welch <Ken.Welch@stpete.org>; Doyle Walsh <Doyle.Walsh@stpete.org>; Rita R. Wesley <Rita.Wesley@stpete.org>; Bruce.Rector@MyClearwater.com <Bruce.Rector@MyClearwater.com>; George B. Smith <george.smith@stpete.org>; media@naacpldf.org <media@naacpldf.org>; fscnaacp@gmail.com <fscnaacp@gmail.com>

Subject: Upholding the Pinellas County Home Rule Charter – Office of Human Rights

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the proposal to dismantle or diminish the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (OHR). This proposal raises serious legal and ethical issues, as the Pinellas County Home Rule Charter explicitly requires protection of human rights from unlawful discrimination.

Article 2, Section 2.04 of the Charter mandates ordinances that safeguard citizens from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations. These protections were later expanded to include individuals with disabilities. This language is clear: human rights protections are not optional—they are required under the governing law of this County.

It is also important to note that these provisions were strengthened under the leadership of Leon W. Russell, now Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National NAACP, during his tenure as the founding Director of the OHR. His work ensured that Pinellas County moved from a history of exclusion toward a framework that demanded equity and opportunity for all residents.

Further, the Board of County Commissioners does not have the authority to make a unilateral decision regarding the elimination or weakening of the OHR. Because the OHR was established under the Charter and as part of a legal remedy to systemic discrimination, any attempt to alter its authority, structure, or funding would require citizen affirmation and input. To bypass this process would constitute a direct violation of the Charter.

For reference, the full text of the Pinellas County Home Rule Charter can be accessed on the County's website here: [Pinellas County Code of Ordinances Part I Charter](#) . We encourage each of you to review this Charter language, which clearly mandates the protection of human rights.

Pinellas County Code of Ordinances Part I Charter

Whereas, the only legal method available to the board of county commissioners to define its powers, duties, and responsibilities under the Constitution of the State of Florida is the adoption of a Home Rule Charter, and

pinellas.gov

Should the Commission move forward with dismantling or diminishing the OHR, the St. Petersburg branch of the NAACP and its partners are prepared to take all necessary actions, including:

- Challenging the action as a violation of the Home Rule Charter in state court, seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.
- Revisiting the original federal discrimination lawsuit that led to the creation of the OHR, asserting that dismantling undermines the remedy established by that case.
- Filing new litigation under state and federal civil rights laws (including Title VII, the Fair Housing Act, the ADA, and the Florida Civil Rights Act).
- Pursuing citizen-led Charter enforcement or referendum challenges to ensure compliance with the Charter's requirements.

Please note that I have cc'd National NAACP Chairman Leon W. Russell, The Florida State Conference leadership and the NAACP Legal Defense team on this correspondence to ensure they are aware of this unilateral move being sought by one County Commissioner.

The St. Petersburg branch of the NAACP will view any effort to dismantle or weaken the OHR as a direct violation of both the Charter and the civil rights obligations owed to the residents of Pinellas County. We urge you to uphold the commitments embedded in the Charter and affirm your responsibility to safeguard the rights and protections it guarantees for all citizens.

Respectfully,

Esther Sanni, MSW, MLC

President

St. Petersburg NAACP Branch #5130

(727) 900-1170

From: [Rita R. Wesley](#)
To: [Scott, Brian](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#)
Cc: [Burton, Barry](#); [Jayne E. Ohlman](#); [Kimberly A. Amos](#); [Doyle Walsh](#); [David Thompson](#); [Rita R. Wesley](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for the Office of Human Rights of Pinellas County ~ Office of Mayor Kenneth T. Welch, City of St. Petersburg
Date: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:50:53 PM
Attachments: [OHR Letter of Support City of St. Petersburg Office of Mayor Kenneth T. Welch 090425.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon, Chair Scott and Honorable Commissioners,

please see the attached letter of support for the Office of Human Rights of Pinellas County.

Sincerely,

Mayor Kenneth T. Welch
City of St. Petersburg
727.893.7287
www.StPete.org

Sent from my iPhone Pro Max 16



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

KENNETH T. WELCH, MAYOR

September 2, 2025

Pinellas County Government
c/o Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756

Dear Chair Scott and Honorable Commissioners,

Thank you for your continued leadership and steadfast commitment to improving the lives of our shared residents. As we continue to navigate unprecedented times at the state, federal, and international levels, I am comforted knowing that our County is governed by such thoughtful leaders. It is that same thoughtfulness I invoke as the Board of County Commissioners considers its budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

I am reaching out to express my deep concern with any proposals that would eliminate, reduce, or diminish the role of the Office of Human Rights. This office has played an instrumental role in protecting our residents from wage theft, housing and job discrimination, and ensuring disability access. During its existence, the Office of Human Rights has grown from simply the requirement of a court order to the full-fledged function of the County government serving our residents who need it the most. The office and its functions have become so effective that on two separate occasions, the City of St. Petersburg transferred specific enforcement responsibilities over to the county, and the county has absorbed a meaningful number of former city employees to continue to enforce those ordinances. A change in that structure would go against those long-standing agreements between our governments and create an unfortunate lapse in support for our residents.

As many of our residents continue to recover from both the recent hurricanes and escalating costs due to inflation and supply chain disruptions, now is not the time to downsize an office that has proven its usefulness and demonstrated time and time again its value to the community. I encourage you to keep the Office of Human Rights intact as it currently exists and ensure that the residents of Pinellas County continue to have this vital resource.

Sincerely,

Kenneth T. Welch
Mayor

From: President@naacpstpetersburg.org
To: [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#)
Cc: [Burton, Barry](#); [Dashon](#); [Deirdre Crudup](#); fscnaacp@gmail.com; [donald hart](#); [HARRY HARVEY](#)
Subject: Opposition to the Proposal Regarding the Office for Human Rights
Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025 2:42:01 PM
Attachments: [Ltr.Commissioners.pdf](#)

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Honorable Commissioners and Mr. Burton,

On behalf of the NAACP St. Petersburg Branch, I am submitting the attached letter to express our strong opposition to the proposal that seeks to eliminate, downsize, or absorb the Office for Human Rights (OHR) into another department. As an organization deeply invested in justice and equity for the residents of Pinellas County, we feel it is essential to highlight the value and effectiveness of this office in serving our community.

The letter outlines key concerns, including the critical role OHR plays in addressing discriminatory practices, wage theft, and other issues that directly impact the wellbeing of our residents. We believe that reducing or absorbing this office will undermine the valuable services it provides.

Please find the attached letter for your review. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, I would be happy to provide any additional information. We appreciate your attention to this important issue and look forward to your thoughtful consideration.

Thank you for your continued service to our community.

In Appreciation,

Esther Sanni, MSW, MLC
President
St. Petersburg NAACP Branch #5130
(727) 900-1170

From: [Jackie Takach](#)
To: [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Scott, Brenda D](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#)
Subject: Proposal to Dissolve the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 6:16:39 PM

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To: Pinellas County Commissioners

RE: Proposal to Dissolve the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

As a resident of Pinellas County, I am deeply troubled—and personally offended—by the suggestion to dissolve the Office of Human Rights. Such a proposal is not only misguided, but un-American.

To imply that discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, or other protected categories no longer exists in our community is dangerously out of touch with reality. What seems absent instead is fair-minded, independent, and creative leadership—leadership capable of addressing budgetary challenges without dismantling an office that protects the dignity and rights of our residents.

I am alarmed by the broader trend of vital public institutions—FEMA, NOAA, and others—being weakened or eliminated at state and federal levels. When the next crisis comes, the cavalry will not be coming. That is why strong local institutions like the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights are more important than ever.

I cannot stop state or federal leaders from pursuing shortsighted agendas, but I can make it absolutely clear that I do not support your proposal to dissolve this Office. I urge you to reconsider and instead demonstrate the kind of principled, independent leadership our community desperately needs.

Thank you,

Jacqueline Takach
8217 Lapin Ct.
Seminole, FL 33777
jtakach52@gmail.com
216-905-6248

From: [Johna Holloway](#)
To: [Eggers, Dave](#)
Subject: Support Creative Pinellas and the County Office of Human Rights
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 7:46:17 PM

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Please support funding for this important program and important county office:

Creative Pinellas

Pinellas County Office of Human Rights

Thank you.

Johna Holloway
10862 109 Way
Largo FL 33778

From: President@naacpstpetersburg.org
To: [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Scott, Brian](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Scherer, Chris](#); [Nowicki, Vince](#); [Latvala, Christopher](#)
Cc: [Burton, Barry](#); [Dashon](#); [Deirdre Crudup](#); fscnaacp@gmail.com; [donald hart](#); [HARRY HARVEY](#); [Weathers, Sandra D](#); [WTSP-News Desk Editors](#); CWright@tampabay.com; leon.russell4@icloud.com; [Thomas Jones](#); [Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance](#); [Kenneth T. Welch](#); [Doyle Walsh](#); [Rita R. Wesley](#); Bruce.Rector@MyClearwater.com; [George B. Smith](#); media@naacpldf.org; fscnaacp@gmail.com
Subject: Upholding the Pinellas County Home Rule Charter – Office of Human Rights
Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 1:44:13 PM
Attachments: [Ltr.Commissioners.pdf](#)
Importance: High

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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the proposal to dismantle or diminish the Pinellas County Office of Human Rights (OHR). This proposal raises serious legal and ethical issues, as the Pinellas County Home Rule Charter explicitly requires protection of human rights from unlawful discrimination.

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It is also important to note that these provisions were strengthened under the leadership of Leon W. Russell, now Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National NAACP, during his tenure as the founding Director of the OHR. His work ensured that Pinellas County moved from a history of exclusion toward a framework that demanded equity and opportunity for all residents.

Further, the Board of County Commissioners does not have the authority to make a unilateral decision regarding the elimination or weakening of the OHR. Because the OHR was established under the Charter and as part of a legal remedy to systemic discrimination, any attempt to alter its authority, structure, or funding would require citizen affirmation and input. To bypass this process would constitute a direct violation of the Charter.

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[Pinellas County Code of Ordinances Part I Charter](#)

Whereas, the only legal method available to the board of county commissioners to define its powers, duties, and responsibilities under the Constitution of the State of Florida is the adoption of a Home Rule Charter, and

pinellas.gov

Should the Commission move forward with dismantling or diminishing the OHR, the St. Petersburg branch of the NAACP and its partners are prepared to take all necessary actions, including:

- Challenging the action as a violation of the Home Rule Charter in state court, seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.
- Revisiting the original federal discrimination lawsuit that led to the creation of the OHR, asserting that dismantling undermines the remedy established by that case.
- Filing new litigation under state and federal civil rights laws (including Title VII, the Fair Housing Act, the ADA, and the Florida Civil Rights Act).
- Pursuing citizen-led Charter enforcement or referendum challenges to ensure compliance with the Charter's requirements.

Please note that I have cc'd National NAACP Chairman Leon W. Russell, The Florida State Conference leadership and the NAACP Legal Defense team on this correspondence to ensure they are aware of this unilateral move being sought by one County Commissioner.

The St. Petersburg branch of the NAACP will view any effort to dismantle or weaken the OHR as a direct violation of both the Charter and the civil rights obligations owed to the residents of Pinellas County. We urge you to uphold the commitments embedded in the Charter and affirm your responsibility to safeguard the rights and protections it guarantees for all citizens.

Respectfully,

Esther Sanni, MSW, MLC

President

St. Petersburg NAACP Branch #5130

(727) 900-1170