



Power of culture

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024
10:00-11:30 AM**

ON-LINE MEETING

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT

<https://www.youtube.com/live/WIVWwEVnazs>

**MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED ONLINE
UNDER "OCTOBER 30, 2024 ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING"**

AGENDA **VOTE**

1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice
2. Minutes May 15, 2024 Meeting **X**
3. Report from Co-Chairs
4. Executive Director Report
5. Public Affairs Report
 - a. Awards Celebration Planning
6. Advancement Activities Across the Agency
 - a. Executive
 - b. Public Affairs
 - c. Program

7. Member Engagement

8. Adjourn

UNOFFICIAL DRAFT SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Ché Anderson, Co-Chair
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, Co-Chair
Rhonda Anderson
Diane Asadorian Masters
Anika Lopes
Marc Carroll – ex officio
Jo-Ann Davis – ex officio

Staff Members Present were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Manager of Executive Affairs
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Erik Holmgren, Program Manager, Creative Youth Development & Arts Education

Co-Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:02am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement:

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

This meeting is a virtual meeting held under the Open Meeting Law as modified under current law to permit online open meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube or other channel as described in the publicly posted meeting notice. Only Council members, staff and invited participants and guests will be provided access to the Zoom or other videoconferencing platform hosting the meeting. As a safety measure, in order to prevent disruption of the meeting or non-public communications among the participants, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Committee of Mass Cultural Council has asked staff to implement the following protocols for participants in on-line meetings of Mass Cultural Council or its committees:

- Any "chat" or similar function on the Zoom platform hosting the meeting shall be disabled.
- Other than Council members or participants specifically recognized by the Chair of the meeting, all Zoom platform participants will be muted and have no ability to share media or documents or project or type images or text.
- All participants in the Zoom platform must enter a waiting room and digitally sign-in before being admitted.
- Any attendee in the Zoom platform who nonetheless causes a disruption will be summarily removed from the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

This meeting is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the Chair.

Any member of the public may record this meeting provided that they do not interfere with the meeting. The Chair will then inform the members of the meeting that they are being recorded.

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter

Ché thanked Dave. This was the first meeting of the newly created Advancement Committee. As such, Ché asked all Committee Members and staff to introduce themselves. After introductions and noting that two Committee Members – Petrina Martin and Allyce Najimy were unable to attend today's meeting – he asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael shared his thoughts on the formation of the new Advancement Committee. Because Mass Cultural Council is an independent state government agency, it is

uniquely positioned to pull together parts of the public and private sector and infuse the cultural sector into all parts of life in the Commonwealth. The Agency can build relationships across government and broker deals between the private sector and cultural sector, acting as a concierge of sorts. In thinking about this, Michael has identified core competencies needed by the staff as well as infrastructure the Agency will need in terms of staffing and existing job descriptions – some of this will be reflected in budget conversations the Executive and Grants Committees and the full Council will have with staff this summer. Michael has identified five key focus areas for advancement work in the coming year – education, healthcare, economic development, workforce development, and affinity groups. The work began this year with the implementation of the Agency's new strategic plan, and there have already been a lot of wins.

Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrigal then reviewed the Advancement Committee Charter noting that meetings of the Committee will be 60 to 90 minutes long, materials will be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and the Committee will be comprised of between five and ten members.

Michael then shared a bit more about his vision for the Committee and the Agency's advancement work with the goal of infusing the cultural sector into the whole of the Commonwealth. Michael believes a strong focus of the work must be building relationships. He attended the Commonwealth Summit recently and much of the agenda was focused on Housing and Transportation – both areas impact our sector, and we must be part of those conversations – Michael and staff are beginning to determine what that looks like. Right now, there are webinars and events with agencies and groups outside of the cultural sector planned approximately once a month. Agency staff members Colin Baylor and Ann Petruccelli Moon have worked together to create a tracking mechanism in the Grants Management System that can help us track our advancement-related relationship building efforts. Michael also plans to come to meetings of the Advancement Committee with lists of individuals and organizations he and other staff members are about to meet with to see if Committee Members can offer insight, guidance, or make connections to additional contacts. As staff begins to think about cultural policy this fall, the plan is to bring policy and proposed amendments before the Advancement Committee for their input. To illustrate these points, Michael asked Program Manager Erik Holmgren to explain his recent efforts as they pertain to advancement and Erik provided a brief update on the Agency's work with Arts on Prescription in collaboration with Art Pharmacy, the Executive Office of Education's STEM Council, and ongoing conversations with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Council Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis asked if the Agency has a relationship with the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association. Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner confirmed that the Agency does have a relationship and that the Association's President & CEO, Steve Walsh is a former legislator and someone we have worked well with in the past. Erik added that Program Officer Käthe Swaback was co-presenting a webinar to the Mass Health & Hospital Association with Dr. Lisa Wong that morning.

Committee Member Anika Lopes shared that she is impressed with the Agency's Arts on Prescription work and that the Chief Operating Officer of Mt. Auburn Hospital has had art installed on the ceilings of exam rooms and is thinking a lot about how best to infuse the arts as a way of enhancing the patient experience at the hospital. Michael added

that part of the Arts on Prescription work will be to encourage the cultural sector to share this intel outside of the cultural sector – Michael feels the sector has a tendency to self-segregate and part of the work is encouraging members of the sector to, for example, attend a healthcare convening and share how the arts can have a positive impact on health.

Michael then shared a brief PowerPoint presentation outlining a new idea the Agency is developing – an arts benefit that could be offered by Massachusetts employers. Reimbursement for participation in cultural activities could be added to existing employee benefit programs, or employees could be reimbursed for the cost of participating in arts-related activities using existing HR mechanisms. Adding this benefit would improve employee retention and well-being, reduce loneliness and isolation, cultivate an appreciation of diversity, and even provide a new avenue for child and senior care for employees. A copy of the presentation is available upon request.

Iván expressed strong support for the idea of framing participation in the arts as a wellness benefit. Jo-Ann shared that she believes there is also most likely a cost benefit to employers – incorporating the arts could translate into retention and engagement and into health, but there is also a potential positive impact on the bottom line. This could resonate with employers. Jo-Ann suggests staff incorporate data on how this initiative translates into a return-on-investment into the presentation. Anika also expressed strong support adding that as a student and employee at the Parsons School of Design and The New School, she was offered a reimbursement program like the idea presented today. Ché agreed this is a strong way to further establish that the arts are essential to daily life and have the potential to be an incredible benefit to the workforce.

Council Chair Marc Carroll asked, if the Agency is successful in convincing employers to implement this benefit, how it would become part of benefits packages. Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer Catherine Cheng-Anderson shared that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is one option, another option is through insurance. Jo-Ann added that Human Resources leaders at organizations can add any type of incentive; this was part of Jo-Ann's work at Baystate Health.

Marc asked if this initiative might be an extension of Arts on Prescription; staff responded that this would be separate. Marc added that staff should consider approaching unions with the idea.

The Arts Benefit initiative was the final item on the agenda.

There was a brief discussion about the work of the Committee in general. Michael reiterated that it is important for the arts to be infused into areas we may not have thought about yet, and to bring about a new revenue stream for artists and cultural organizations. This will require the cultural sector to step up and begin relationship building in rooms that are new to them. Anika shared that there is a new exhibition at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut called *Entwined: Freedom, Sovereignty, and the Sea* that has incorporated curriculum for K-12 students and that there is a focus on incorporating the arts into public school curriculum. Michael thanked Anika for sharing that and added that he hasn't yet encountered a state with a full STEAM plan baked into government; this is an opportunity for Mass Cultural Council.

Co-Chairs Ché and Iván commended Michael and the staff team for thinking about the advancement of the sector in this way. Iván noted that this is a good example of Agency responsiveness and represents a strong approach to Massachusetts staying competitive and committed to growth. Michael thanked the Co-Chairs and encouraged Committee Members to be in touch with ideas of other agencies, companies, and individuals with which the staff should begin pursuing relationships.

Ché thanked Michael and the staff for their efforts to position the Committee to have this first meeting and creating a runway for the work. There was no further discussion. Ché adjourned the meeting at 11:03am.

To: Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee
Fr: Michael Bobbitt, Dave Slatery, Bethann Steiner, Christian Kelly
Dt: October 30, 2024
Re: Awards Celebration Planning

Overview. We are looking to reconstitute a regular “awards ceremony/celebration”, organized by Mass Cultural Council, to recognize champions of the power of culture. We hope to engage this Committee in planning this event, particularly during the selection process of honorees.

Background. Most states organize a regular arts awards program.¹ In Massachusetts, the [Commonwealth Awards](#) began in 1993 as a biannual celebration recognizing excellence in Access, Achievement, Creative Communities, Creative Youth Development, Cultural Philanthropy, Leadership, Media, STEM to STEAM, and more. The Commonwealth Awards were discontinued after the 2019 celebration, following the retirement of the Agency’s former Executive Director and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the new strategic plan now in place, we are working to redevelop an awards celebration with the goal of having an event in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

Name. Given the Commonwealth Awards had a different emphasis from the new direction we intend to take with this event, we plan to develop a new name for this event. We are also mindful that our colleagues at Mass Humanities organize an annual event known as the Governor’s Awards and so we will want to avoid confusion between the two.

Format. We envision retaining the biannual format for this event and are currently targeting March 2026 for the inaugural celebration. We plan for this to be a brief, late afternoon/early evening event that lasts

¹ National Association of State Arts Agencies, 2018 (<https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Governors-Arts-Awards.pdf>)

approximately 90 minutes with light hors d'oeuvres, entertainment, and opportunity for attendees to mingle and network throughout.

While we have not yet begun identifying potential locations in earnest, we hope to work with a more commercial event venue in the Boston area.

We hope to secure a high-profile keynote speaker to headline the event along with several mission moments who can add luster to the program.

Awards. We have identified six awards to present during this celebration. Much like the name of the event overall, we are also in the process of developing formal titles for each of these awards, however these are the groups we plan to recognize:

1. A group or individual advocate for arts and culture
2. An equity leader
3. A public or private sector partner (intended to be an agency or organization)
4. A community/municipality
5. A policymaker
6. The Council/Chairman's award (which will be given at the sole discretion of the Council/Chair)

We plan to solicit nominations for these awards through a public process and then will develop a small staff committee to review the nominations and develop a short list of finalists. We then plan to bring the list of finalists to this Committee, and ultimately the Council as a whole, to vote on the award recipients.

After the awardees have been determined, we then hope to work with a videographer and those selected to put together small video packages for each that can be displayed at the event as part of the announcement.

Council Engagement. We are confident in our ability to organize such an event, given the current anticipated timeline. During the planning process, we will be engaging with this Committee especially as we think through everything from the name for this event, to the selection process, to the awards themselves. We welcome any feedback you have and look forward to working together over the next 17 months.

**Executive Team Advancement Efforts: Fall 2024
Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting | October 30, 2024**

Overview. Below is a summary list of recent Executive staff appearances, key meetings, and outreach activities completed throughout the fall and a list of upcoming engagements. Connections and relationships are continuing to grow within the education, health and human services, economic development, and transportation sectors. We are also maintaining and strengthening relationships within the creative sector via individual meetings, public events, and the Governor's new Cultural Policy Development Advisory Committee.

We thank you for your participation in these meetings and events and encourage you to join us whenever you are able. We are also eager to hear ideas from the Advancement Committee as to additional rooms we should be in and connections that are important to pursue.

September & October Public Appearances & Key Meetings

- MassEcon Diversity & Equity Forum
- Arts Foundation of Cape Cod's Creative Exchange Conference
- Eastern Bank 2024 Celebration of Social Justice
- CAP Collaborative Offshore Wind Briefing
- State Arts Agencies' Arts & Health Cohort – presentation on Arts Prescriptions
- Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs re Tribal Cultural Council Program
- MassArt Museum's Climate Conversations
- Mass MoCA Executive Director Kristy Edmunds and team
- Roxbury Cultural District Celebration
- Congress for New Urbanism Annual New England Summit
- Governor's Black Empowerment Advisory Council – meeting with Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler
- STEM Advisory Council- participation in STEM week activities with Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of Education
- Catherine Morris, The Boston Foundation
- Grantmakers in the Arts Annual Conference – presented on Arts Prescriptions
- 2024 Massachusetts Book Awards

- Department of Homeland Security Quarterly Prevention Meeting
- Jordina Shanks, Fenway Health
- Boston Queer Arts Festival
- Boston's Indigenous Community Social & Dance
- Kate Fox, Mass Office of Travel & Tourism
- MA Arts Funders Network in Worcester
- Coffee & Conversation with Michael Bobbitt in Worcester
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation Arts Funder Engagement Event
- Collective Future Boston 2024
- Visit to Lupinewood art colony in Greenfield
- Cultural Facilities Fund Celebration, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
- Boston Arts Activation 2024: Harmony & Healing
- Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce Tourism Summit
- The Art of Vision: An Evening with Renowned Artist Dr. Sergo Tbileli
- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Annual Conference
- Massachusetts Federal Funds Partnership meeting
- Mass Cultural Council Spotlight Webinar Series: Small Business Administration
- Jenny Larios Berlin, MIT
- *What's in a song?* Podcast recording
- Mike Scutari, Inside Philanthropy
- Visit to Hudson Armory with Senator James Eldridge
- A Conversation with Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll at Nutter, McClennen & Fish
- Visit to Marilyn Rodman Performing Arts Center with Gaming Commission Chair Jordan Maynard
- Special Commission on the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution
- Commonwealth Summit Host Committee Meeting
- Arrow Street Arts Ribbon Cutting, Cambridge
- Visit to The Cut in Gloucester with Mayor Greg Verga
- *Where Are All The Black People At?* Conversations with Artists, Watertown
- *Innovation: Earth* reception at the Museum of Science
- Earthshot Innovation Challenge: Northeast Edition at the JFK Library and Museum
- Natick Concert Hall Tour
- Unveiling and opening reception for *Your spirit whispering in my ear* on the Rose Kennedy Greenway
- State House News Service's *They're Leaving MA* Policy Forum
- Cultural Equity Learning Cohort Celebration
- Philanthropy MA Annual Meeting at Artists for Humanity
- Associated Industries of MA (AIM) Annual Outlook
- Monthly meeting with MOTT Executive Director Kate Fox

- Monthly meeting with Mass Humanities Executive Director Brian Boyles
- Joe Kriesberg and colleagues from MassINC
- Jazz Urbane Café staff
- John Andrews, Creative Collective
- Berklee Music & Health Institute
- Angel Donahue-Rodriguez, MBTA
- MassPort – John Raftery, Chief Marketing Officer and Luciana Burdi, Director of Capital Programs and Environmental Affairs
- Boston Medical Center's EQTY 2024: Accelerating Health Justice convening
- Paul Jahnige, Mass Office of Outdoor Recreation
- Mass250 Launch at the Massachusetts State House
- Cultural Facilities Fund Advisory Committee Meeting
- First meeting and swearing-in ceremony of the Cultural Economy Advisory Council.
- Media Interview: Jonathan Soroff, Boston Spirit Magazine
- Brigid Boyd, Chief of Public Affairs for United Way of Massachusetts Bay
- Commonwealth Summit Host Committee monthly meeting
- Philanthropy MA Annual Meeting
- Mass Humanities Governor's Awards
- Mass Humanities Board Meeting
- Adam Theater's *Library Lion* at the Boston Public Library
- TLC Studios in Dedham: Thank You Reception and Check Presentation

Upcoming Meetings, Engagements & Events

- Monthly meeting with Mass Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) Executive Director Kate Fox – November 1, 4pm
- Meeting with Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to discuss a potential FY26 arts grant for their residents – November 8, noon
- Conversation with Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) regarding Percent for Art – November 12, 4pm
- Historic New England Summit – Michael moderating a panel discussion on arts and health – November 14th at 10am in Portland, Maine
- AAPI Arts & Culture Summit – November 15th at 10am at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the US Senate
- Rhode Island College Arts & Business Symposium – Michael joins a panel discussion – November 21st at 9:30am
- Invest in New England's Communities: A Conversation on Philanthropic Place-Based Impact Investing – November 22, 1:30pm at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (attending, not speaking)
- Weston Art & Innovation Center – Michael giving talk on Mass Cultural Council's work – December 3, 6:30pm

Public Affairs Advancement Efforts**Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting | October 30, 2024**

While we believe every function performed by the Public Affairs team is directly related to advancement, here are a few highlights from our recent initiatives:

1. Fiscal Year 2025 marketing materials are in, including an updated "[Programs At-a-Glance](#)" print piece that details Mass Cultural Council's funding opportunities this year. In late September we delivered a copy to all legislative offices in the State House so they might help raise awareness of our programs in their Districts.
2. Public Affairs staff represented Mass Cultural Council at a "[State Grant Expo](#)" hosted by Senator Barry Finegold and his regional colleagues at the North Andover Senior Center on September 25, 2024. More than a dozen state agencies were in attendance and more than 175 people attended, mostly from Merrimack Valley nonprofit organizations.
3. A new virtual webinar series has been launched, the Spotlight Series. Each month Public Affairs has featured a public agency or cultural partner that is administering a funding or professional development opportunity that creative and cultural sector stakeholders can benefit from. To date we have hosted Spotlight sessions with the Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism, MASSCreative, and the U.S. Small Business Administration's Massachusetts District Office. In November we will feature the Mass Growth Capital Corporation and in December we are partnering with Open Door Arts. More information and links to the virtual sessions [are online](#).
4. Public Affairs staff [moderated a panel](#) in the Governor's Office celebrating Massachusetts artists whose work are currently on display in the Executive Suite of the State House for Hispanic Heritage Month.
5. Public Affairs staff has worked closely with Spanish media outlet [El Planeta Boston](#) to ensure consistent coverage of Mass Cultural Council programming and events for this readership market.
6. As directed by the Agency's [d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan](#), Public Affairs staff is engaging with a user-vendor to review HireCulture.org for accessibility purposes, to ensure individual sector stakeholders with various access needs and abilities are able to use and benefit from the site.

7. In October, Public Affairs organized a [Coffee & Conversation](#) drop-in event in Worcester for stakeholders to come and speak with Mass Cultural Council leadership and staff, as well as a [press conference](#) in Amherst celebrating new Cultural Facility Fund grants.
8. Public Affairs staff is beginning a year-long planning process to reimagine an awards ceremony/advocacy event (formerly known as the Commonwealth Awards) for the creative and cultural sector. The plan is to hold the event in calendar year 2026.
9. Public Affairs is working with program staff and external partners, including Art Pharmacy and the [Health Equity Compact](#) to host a cross-sector convening for those working in the medical field to learn more about the practice of arts-based social prescribing. This event is scheduled to take place in downtown Boston the morning of January 14, 2025.
10. Public Affairs is meeting with representatives of the Registry of Motor Vehicles to explore whether messaging on their screens located in customer waiting rooms statewide would be useful to spread awareness of Mass Cultural Council programs and initiatives.

Program Team Advancement Efforts

Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting | October 30, 2024

Overview. Since we met in August the Program Team has been hard at work both on advancement and grant administration. The Program team is tracking advancement activities in our GMS/CRM (Grants Management System/Customer Relationship Management system). **The team has recorded 80 activities since the start of the fiscal year.**

What follows are some highlights about advancement work currently in process written in shorthand. It is not an all-inclusive report- if there are questions, please feel free to raise them at the Advancement Committee Meeting (or let us know beforehand and we can provide further information that the meeting).

Advancement Activity Highlights July to October

- Busking best practices and research on state arts transit partnerships.
- Meetings with MBTA and MassPort.
- Governor's Office Exhibitions: Cape & Island artists and artists for Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month, Native artists to come.
- Upcoming: working with the Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities on their grant program for arts projects for public housing.
- Meetings/connections to advance traditional, immigrant, and indigenous artists.
- Met with the Berklee Institute for Music and Health to discuss potential future projects including aggregating research and potentially co-hosting a convening
- Attended the BMC Health EQTY Conference.
- Met with the (George) Lucas Museum for Narrative Arts.
- Opportunities with Mass Housing Stability Program.

- Access and accountability meetings with Smithsonian SEIA, WolfBrown, Mass Developmental Disabilities Council, MassRehab (MassAbility), Mass Housing, and others
- Continue to meet with funders to discuss advancement work and new directions for the agency.
- Meetings with Division of Developmental Services to support use of Card to Culture, with a focus on supporting residential facilities
- Continued work with Mass Development and Office of Housing and Livable Communities and Mass Downtown Initiative – around bringing on a consultant to review and advise on how our programs can work together to deepen the impact arts and culture in communities.
- Connecting with Mass Office of Travel and Tourism, MA 250th, and Regional Tourism Councils – Offer a series of webinars, membership and promotional options, and opportunities for LCCs and Cultural Districts. North of Boston working to incorporate LCCs and Cultural Districts as members.
- Continued work with Mass Municipal Association – Attended the Annual Trade show. Hosted 2 webinars with municipal officials. Will attend Mayor's meeting July 24th and will be working with them on a series of webinars around arts and culture in communities. Attended the mayor's meeting.
- Connection to the Office of Rural Affairs, Ann Gobi. Conversations around how to support rural communities around arts and culture.
- Continued work with Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) around their arts and culture program in communities.
- Connection to Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Program Officer Carolyn Cole is part of the future Economic Assistance Coordinating Council meetings.
- Connecting with Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. They are looking to provide technical assistance and funding for transportation projects based on regional goals and public feedback and pursuing storytelling activities and activating walking/biking/rail trails.