



Power of culture

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022

2:30 PM

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED ON MASS CULTURAL'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
1. Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice	
2. Minutes of March 5, 2021 Meeting	X
3. Co-Chairs Report	
4. Executive Director Report	
5. FY23 State Budget Strategy Discussion	
a. Recent Press on State Revenues	
b. Mass Cultural Council State Funding Chart 1979-2023	
6. MASSCreative Policy Update	

OPEN MEETING LAW STATEMENT
UPDATED JANUARY 2022

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.

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- All participants in the Zoom platform must enter a waiting room and digitally sign-in before being admitted.
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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.

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(adapted from several sources)

- In order to minimize background noise, please mute microphone when not speaking.
- Please raise hand in order to be recognized by the chair.
- In order for all members to have an opportunity to speak and be heard, please wait to speak until specifically recognized by the chair.
- If there are questions, please direct them to the chair and the chair will then recognize the appropriate person to respond.
- Please limit statements to three minutes.
- The chair will reserve the right to limit discussion in order to allow sufficient time for every member to be heard who wishes to speak.
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- In the event of a service interruption during a Zoom call due to hackers, so-called “zoom bombing” or other technical difficulties, staff will indicate the call is to be terminated. Please exit the call and staff will circulate instructions by email for a new Zoom call to continue the meeting.

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

**FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021
11:00 AM**

ONLINE MEETING

Chair Troy Siebels called the meeting to order at 11:03AM

Committee Members Present were

Troy Siebels, Co-Chair
Sherry Dong, Co-Chair
Nina Fialkow
Marc Carroll
Matthew Keator

Staff Members and Partners Present were

Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Director
Bethann Steiner, Public Affairs Director
Jen Lawless, Operations Director
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Public Engagement Manager
Brian Boyles, Executive Director, Mass Humanities
Emily Ruddock, Executive Director, MASSCreative

Committee Chair Troy Siebels called the meeting to order at 11:03am. Deputy Director David Slatery dispensed with reading the open meeting law notice as no guests were present.

Troy asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes from their last meeting on March 3, 2019. Matthew Keator moved to approve the minutes, Co-Chair Sherry Dong seconded the motioned, all, voting by roll call, were in favor,

Prepared on 4/9/21

and the minutes were approved, noting that members Susan Leff, Victoria Marsh, Allyce Najimy, and Ann Murphy were absent.

Troy thanked staff for sending background information to Committee members prior to the meeting and noted that the question he heard come up earlier that week at the Executive Committee meeting was whether to be more aggressive with the Agency's budget ask this year or not. He further framed the conversation for Committee members: do we ask for level funding acknowledging that the state is in a bind due to the pandemic, or do we take the opportunity to ask for a budget increase knowing that our sector itself is in a bind. He then asked Public Affairs Director Bethann Steiner to provide an update on advocacy efforts and the crafting of the Agency's budget request thus far.

Bethann stated that staff knows through the Agency's continued surveying of the field – individuals and organizations – that 11 months into the pandemic, cultural organizations have been hit hard with up to \$588M in lost revenue. The number of cultural jobs lost is hovering around 30K, and individuals (artists, teaching artists, humanists, and scientists) have lost \$30.4M in personal income. We also know that not all cultural organizations are open just yet. That is what we know as to the ongoing crisis. What we know in terms of the Commonwealth's revenue picture: the state Department of Revenue recently reported its February tax collections with a striking headline: **February Tax Shatters Expectations**. This is strong language when talking about revenue and tax collection and that the number – Bethann believed it to be around \$24.8M – was higher than anticipated. More revenue has been collected this year than last year. Right now, because of that difference in taxes collected, the state has a \$1.1B cushion. If tax collection continues to come in as expected in the months to come, the Commonwealth will head into June with a \$2.531 billion cushion. When there is a surplus like this, supplementary budgets happen. Bethann explained that she shares all of this because she thinks the Agency can make a case that the state's economy is doing well; our budget hearing is falling during a robust time.

Executive Director Michael Bobbitt stated that he is comfortable pushing for a \$20M allocation, which represents a \$1.82M increase.

Emily Ruddock, Executive Director of MASSCreative added that the cultural sector is mobilized and she believes support can be built around advocating for a \$20M allocation, particularly when talking about a package with the COVID recovery bill, and trying to get Governor Baker to prioritize space for the \$31M bond bill.

Bethann agreed, that is what staff has been thinking about as messaging is crafted. We have our annual allocation to support and stabilize and Senate Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development Committee Chair Ed Kennedy's relief bill to provide one-time relief during a crisis – those two complement each other. We

have not yet determined how to frame the bond bill dollars in that picture, that is still to be determined.

Troy noted that he is optimistic legislators will couple the Agency's annual allocation and the relief bill, that they will commingle the ideas.

Bethann agreed but flagged that sometimes there can be a "you don't need this, because you have that" mentality and that we will need to challenge that thought process should it arise. She is hopeful the budget will continue on its regular cycle and be finalized by July 1, but there is no telling when bills will be assigned or when federal dollars will show up. Emily stated that she believes there is room to clarify the two asks, and Michael added that without federal support the general operating budget will not work.

Troy agreed and said that \$20M will not save the sector, as the sector is in such a deep hole, and ideally a conversation about federal money would happen sooner – before the passage of the state budget.

Council Chair Nina Fialkow noted that former Executive Director Anita Walker would frequently bring someone from the cultural sector to budget hearings and meetings with legislators and asked if that is something to consider incorporating into this year's hearings and meetings; would this add a human component and enhance the Agency's message. Matthew Keator recalled this and believes it to be a good idea, as did Vice Chair Marc Carroll.

Bethann let the Committee Members know that bringing visitors to a hearing is typically frowned upon but in the past the Joint Committee on Ways & Means had allowed it. Bethann thinks with the hearing taking place on Zoom this year and with the excitement of introducing the Agency's new Executive Director that bringing representatives from the cultural sector is something staff could pursue for follow-up meetings with legislators instead. Michael added that only eight weeks ago he was running a cultural organization and can therefore speak to the devastation cultural organizations are experiencing.

Matthew followed up with a suggestion of having a press conference on the steps of the State House that included representatives from cultural organizations. Bethann agreed this is a good idea and noted that it's well-timed as the agency is about to announce its most recent Covid impact data collected from the field. The data will be released on Monday and staff is working to secure media coverage Monday evening into Tuesday morning so that the Agency can go into the Ways & Means hearing with some attention. The Chairs of the Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development Committee know we are preparing to release this data and are ready to share it with their House and Senate colleagues so that it's in-hand before our testimony. Bethann is also anticipating a significant amount of coverage in this Sunday's *Boston Globe*

and noted that once testimony is complete it will be published on the Agency's website.

Nina agreed that data is extremely important, that legislators appreciate it, and that human stories are also very important.

Bethann stated that she believes Emily Ruddock and Brian Boyles, Executive Director of Mass Humanities, are gearing up to launch all of their members into advocacy.

Emily confirmed this stating that MassCreative's main strategy is direct connection with law makers. In addition to data and media coverage, direct points of contact are what she and her team will push for. Brian stated that he has been messaging all of his committee members and that they will receive a package next week reaffirming messaging around advocacy; he is also working to identify grantees in key districts to buttress the case-making.

Michael added that he had personally reached out to the press. Bethann reiterated that there would be a spread in the Globe on Sunday, and that it would appear online on Friday.

Bethann then read into the record an email from Committee Member Ann Murphy who was unable to join the meeting:

I think that if we can make a case for going larger it always helps us because then if they scale us down, we would have some negotiation room. And if they say OK to our request, all the better as we can distribute it to needy arts and culture organizations. I think we have already proven the economic value of the arts and culture in Mass. and also that MCC has done a great job in identifying and disseminating funds to organizations small and large, in particular, to the local grassroots orgs who would be gone without our help. Just my two cents!

Nina asked if Ann was saying the Agency should ask for more than \$20M. It was noted that it was unclear.

Troy stated that he believes asking for more than \$20M would be a mistake. He thinks the Agency should separate its budget request from the greater relief request and asks what other tools staff needs to prepare for next week's hearing.

Deputy Director David Slatery noted that the legislature heard the Agency ask for \$20M last year before the pandemic began, so this request is in keeping in the same mode of how we approached the legislature in previous years.

Marc thought this was a good point made by David. Since a similar request was made last year, it's something legislators should expect and fund given all the good the grants have done this year. He added that the data Bethann has pulled together is compelling. He believes this is a solid case to actually receive a \$20M allocation.

Troy asked a question about relief bills noting that Senator Kennedy's was a substantial one, are there others that are competing, and do we have issues with support for more than one relief bill.

Emily stated that MassCreative's approach was to work with coalitions across the sector to ask for endorsement: the live events coalition and Save Our Stages both signed off on the bill. MassCreative has made the case that this is the bill the cultural sector is behind and as the bill was drafted the team tried to make something that that folks could see themselves benefitting from. MassCreative has heard a few rumblings that the bill is not enough, but is making the case that all will be heard from and that Mass Cultural Council is the best agency to distribute the funds.

Troy asked where Emily had heard that this bill may not be enough.

Emily responded that she'd had a conversation with leaders on the Cape who felt they weren't getting prioritized. Also, some of the larger organizations in Boston wanted to see specific carve-outs for themselves. There is also concern amongst BIPOC leaders that this bill will have large organizations getting large grants and equity not being taken into account. Emily reiterated that MassCreative's job is to hold together as large a coalition as possible, and that on occasions she's told those she's speaking with, "that sounds like something you should talk to Mass Cultural Council about."

Bethann stated that she thinks this might be one of the most comprehensive cultural sector proposals she has seen. It talks about jobs, equity, racial equity, geographic equity; she doesn't think in the past those things would have been included so strongly and this signifies a change of direction based on Michael's vision and the Council's backing.

Troy asked if there are other sectors that have similar proposals for the federal money; are there any requests for earmarks? He is curious if our approach is similar to what other sectors are doing. Bethann did a quick scan and sees similar requests from small businesses, restaurants, and seasonal workers, but has not read the requests in detail and couldn't state with full confidence where they are requesting funds from. Mass Cultural Council isn't requesting funds from the rainy-day fund or from state taxes, the Agency's message focuses on federal money coming into the state.

Michael noted that he wasn't sure how much federal money there would be and Emily responded that it's about \$8.4 billion with the states getting a little more than local government. Right now, the bill is with the Senate and democrats added language stating that eligibility prioritizes local economic recovery efforts including the hardest hit sectors. We are poised to say that the cultural sector is one of the hardest hit.

Troy asked what else staff needed in order to prepare for the budget hearing and Michael thanked Troy and the Committee for their points and ideas and he thinks staff is well-prepared to draft testimony. Bethann agreed and stated that she would draft testimony for a \$20M request for the Agency.

David noted that it still needed to be determined what the Agency would ask the Governor for in terms of the \$31M from Economic Development bond bill in the Governor's capital plan. Michael stated that he, Nina, and Marc are scheduled to meet with Governor Baker on March 24th.

Bethann reminded the Committee that there are four areas of interest in the economic bond bill: first, a commission chaired the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development to look at the impact of the sector - we have a seat, so does MassCreative. Second, three new capital spending accounts. The first account is broad: a new grant program administered by Mass Cultural Council to promote artists of all disciplines and cultural organizations to make sure they can showcase their work remotely, that is a \$6M account. The second account is a competitive grant program administered by Mass Cultural Council in consultation with the state Department of elementary and Secondary Education to assist public school districts in providing access to cultural experiences, this is a \$5M account. The third account would create a non-profit equipment grant program; capital grants to help cultural organizations do what they need to do to reopen, that is a \$20M account. There is a conversation to be had around all of this.

Michael let the Committee know that staff would come back to them with thoughts on the bond bill and seek their opinions on strategy around it.

Troy as Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:41am.

Analysts See State Tax Revenue Growth Rolling Along

Experts Return After Missing Mark Last Cycle

Colin A. Young and Katie Lannan | 12/21/21 4:32 PM



Beacon Hill's budget chiefs, (from left) Sen. Michael Rodrigues, Rep. Aaron Michlewitz, and Secretary Michael Heffernan, looked at revenue projection bar graphs during Tuesday's fiscal 2023 consensus revenue hearing. [Sam Doran/SHNS]

DEC. 21, 2021.....State tax revenues have defied expectations throughout the pandemic and federal aid has helped to keep Massachusetts fiscally healthy over the last two years. But uncertainty about the sustainability of recent positive economic trends and unknowns

surrounding the latest mutated form of the coronavirus made trying to predict tax collections for the next 18 months a daunting task Tuesday.

House Ways and Means Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, Senate Ways and Means Chairman Michael Rodrigues and Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan called economists and budget experts to testify on what they expect to see in fiscal year 2023 from state tax collections, the first step in building a spending plan for the budget year that begins July 1, 2022.

Trying to predict something as fickle as tax revenue seven months to a year-and-a-half out is inherently challenging, and Beacon Hill has so far struggled to wrap its arms around the changes brought upon by the pandemic. At one point early in the pandemic, some state budget watchers predicted that tax revenues could end up as much as \$8 billion short of expectations. Instead, Massachusetts generated a surplus of about \$5 billion in fiscal year 2021 and is on track to significantly exceed revenue expectations this budget year as well.

"For nearly two years, the commonwealth has gone through some of the most turbulent budgets that this building has ever seen. Throughout these unprecedented times, the commonwealth has seen historic highs in terms of our revenue numbers. One of the main drivers of this has been the unprecedented amount of assistance the federal government has given," Michlewitz said. "Unfortunately, this level of support is not permanent and, going forward, we must keep that in mind as we plan for the future of the commonwealth."

Despite all pointing to a number of factors that could undermine their estimates — like yet another COVID-19 surge, ongoing labor shortages and supply chain glitches, and persistently high inflation — the experts assembled Tuesday largely agreed that Massachusetts can expect to collect at least about \$36.48 billion and possibly as much as nearly \$40.8 billion in tax revenue next budget cycle, which would be between 6 percent and 18.6 percent more than the Baker administration's official expectation for the current budget year.

Department of Revenue

Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said Tuesday that the current year's tax collections have been solid enough so far that he now projects fiscal year 2022 will end with DOR having collected between \$35.726 billion and \$36.623 billion -- between \$1.325 billion and \$2.222 billion more than the consensus revenue agreement reached a year ago. The fiscal 2022 benchmark could be updated when the fiscal 2023 agreement is announced.

For fiscal year 2023, the primary focus of Tuesday's hearing, Snyder said that DOR forecasts that state tax revenue will land in the range of \$36.484 billion to \$37.684 billion, which would be between 2.1 percent and 2.9 percent higher than the agency's revised fiscal 2022 forecast.

Snyder also flagged for the budget managers DOR's expectation that capital gains taxes, a source of revenue that has helped Massachusetts bulk up its reserves during the recent years of strong stock market performance, will tail off in fiscal 2023.

"Capital gains taxes are a volatile revenue source. With years of rising capital markets, we recognize the potential for growing reserves of unrealized gains. However, capital gains revenue collections have been very strong over the past several years, hitting an all-time high in FY21, which leads to uncertainty about how much more unrealized gains remain," he said, referring to the \$2.584 billion in capital gains tax revenue last fiscal year.

DOR is forecasting that fiscal year 2022 capital gains will be between \$2.409 billion and \$2.713 billion, roughly in line with the capital gains-specific benchmark of \$2.615 billion. For fiscal year 2023, however, Snyder said that DOR is projecting that capital gains revenue will sink to between \$2.198 billion and \$2.356 billion.

As did most of the experts who testified Tuesday, Snyder said DOR's forecast is clouded with "a significant degree of uncertainty" related to the future course of COVID-19, labor and supply chain constraints, and inflation's impacts on the global economy.

Mass. Taxpayers Foundation

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation offered a mixed outlook, with President Eileen McAnneny forecasting that revenue growth will "remain robust" this fiscal year before flipping to a "completely different story" next year when the situation will revert "back to a period of stalled growth."

McAnneny projected the state will end fiscal 2022 with \$37.2 billion in tax collections -- \$3.1 billion or 9 percent above last year, growth that she said would be fueled by "employment bouncing back, wage increases, asset value spikes, increased spending on durable goods and motor vehicles with higher prices due to inflation, and healthy profits for corporations."

After that, though, McAnneny said revenues would grow only 1.1 percent or \$411 million in fiscal 2023, giving budget-writers \$37.6 billion to work with. She said more workers, earning higher wages as employers compete for labor, will drive up withholding income tax revenues by

nearly \$600 million next year, but those gains will be offset by a "steep decline" in capital gains and other non-withholding income tax revenues.

Sales tax growth will moderate to 1 percent in fiscal 2023 as spending shifts back from durable goods to services and inflation rates slowly decline over the next 18 months, McAnneny said.

Alan Clayton-Matthews

Northeastern University economist Alan Clayton-Matthews had the rosiest forecast for fiscal year 2023, projecting that Massachusetts could collect as much as \$40.795 billion based on "a very sanguine economic outlook." That would represent 6.5 percent growth over his fiscal year 2022 forecast of \$38.301 billion, he said.

Clayton-Matthews reviewed how withholdings from unemployment insurance programs helped prop up state tax revenues during the pandemic. He said that impact is tailing off and should get back down to normal pre-pandemic levels during fiscal 2023.

Withholding from unemployment insurance added \$258 million to fiscal year 2020 revenues and \$557 million to revenues in fiscal year 2021, he said, and is expected to contribute \$137 million to state revenues in fiscal year 2022. For fiscal year 2023, he projected that unemployment insurance withholdings would provide about \$58 million to state coffers.

"That's a normal level, \$58 million. So we are seeing the waning effects of unemployment assistance support to revenues," Clayton-Matthews said. "On the other hand, of course, if unemployment is falling, employment and therefore wage and salary income and income revenues are rising."

Center for State Policy Analysis

Higher-than-expected inflation creates a "dark cloud" over the state's revenue picture, cautioned Evan Horowitz, executive director of the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University.

Horowitz is projecting \$36.5 billion in revenue collections for fiscal 2023, and said he thinks it makes sense to raise this year's benchmark by \$1 billion, to \$35.4 billion.

Accounting for inflation, Horowitz said next year's growth could actually work out to "a slight decline in revenue, meaning the state could have fewer real dollars to work with for FY23."

Because the cost "of running state government has risen more rapidly than we've seen in a generation," he said that even a "maintenance budget" for next year "will have to reckon with

the fast-growing cost of hiring people, procuring materials, providing housing support, and a great deal besides."

Horowitz said the uncertainties arising from the pandemic have created a mix of risks and "hopeful possibilities" on the economic front. Right now, he said, consumer spending levels above long-term trends, the job market near its pre-pandemic highs, "extremely" high valuations for asset prices and the Federal Reserve's plans to raise rates combine to mean "there are a lot more ways for our economy to stumble and a lot fewer chances to accelerate from here."

"In terms of state tax revenue, Massachusetts may already be overdue for a correction, with the volatile parts of our tax system, like capital gains and estimated taxes, having outrun the more stable parts, like income withholding and the sales tax," he said.

Monitoring Fiscal Year 2022 and Next Steps

When the same trio assembled last year to forecast fiscal year 2022 revenues, they settled on an estimate of \$30.12 billion. At the time, they said it represented 3.5 percent growth in state tax revenue compared to their then-current estimate of \$29.09 billion in fiscal 2021 revenue.

About six months later, fiscal year 2021 ended with DOR having collected \$34.137 billion -- well in excess of the initial pre-pandemic estimate of \$31.15 billion.

Five months in, fiscal year 2022 tax collections are more than \$900 million ahead of consensus revenue expectations to this point in the year and are trending more than \$2 billion ahead of actual fiscal 2021 collections through the same period of time.

"I certainly appreciate the difficulty of projecting tax revenues over the past two years, and for the upcoming one as well," MTF's McAnneny said Tuesday. "We were talking prior to the start of this, some of the presenters, and we were all saying just how difficult it has been. I liken it to a roller coaster ride, complete with dips and turns, and unfortunately I think we have one more loop before this ride is over."

After the hearing, the Joint Ways and Means Committee and Heffernan will work up an agreed-upon tax revenue forecast for fiscal year 2023. They have until Jan. 15 to arrive at that number. The figure will become the state revenue-side anchor in Gov. Charlie Baker's final budget filing, which is due to the Legislature by Jan. 26.

The House will roll out and debate its own version of a fiscal year 2023 budget in April and the Senate will follow suit in May. Because it is their "consensus" number, both branches generally rely upon the same revenue estimate when they assemble their budgets even though the estimate is months old by that point.

June is typically when a six-member conference committee hammers out an agreement between the branches on a single budget bill before the governor gets his chance to sign, amend or veto its provisions. Fiscal year 2023 starts July 1, 2022.

Still Having Technical Difficulties

Tuesday's hearing got off to a dubious start when the chairmen of the House and Senate Ways and Means committees and Baker administration finance officials huddled to go over their tax revenue forecasts without providing access to the public, press or even to lawmakers assigned to sit on the Ways and Means committees.

Rodrigues' office said a technical glitch kept the start of the hearing from being broadcast on the Legislature's website. Only Rodrigues, Michlewitz and Heffernan were allowed to participate in the hearing in person from the State House, which remains wholly closed to the public.

By the time the public broadcast became available at about 10:20 a.m., Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder was already partway through his testimony, which generally follows opening remarks from the chairmen and secretary, comments that sometimes set the tone for the upcoming budget cycle.

A Rodrigues aide said that the committee staff was not alerted to the fact that the hearing was not available to the public or press until about five minutes in.

"As an unintended consequence, Chair Rodrigues commenced the hearing without this knowledge and opening remarks were well underway before he was informed by staff that we were experiencing technical difficulties," the aide said. "Fortunately though, the technical difficulties with the live feed were resolved and public access has been preserved thanks to the fact the hearing is being recorded."

Michlewitz's office did not respond to questions from the News Service.

Early in the pandemic, when virtual hearings were still relatively new to lawmakers, Rodrigues and Michlewitz had to postpone a virtual summit with many of the same economic experts

they heard from Tuesday because they were not able to livestream the proceedings.

"We could have held this but for it to not be broadcast live, for it to not be transparent, it's not worth it. We'd rather do it the right way," Michlewitz said at the time.

0:00 / 1:51:15



-END-

12/21/2021

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Mass Cultural Council State Budget Appropriations -- FY79 to FY22

Fiscal Year	State Funding
1979	2,700,000
1980	2,300,000
1981	4,075,000
1982	4,360,506
1983	8,077,539
1984	11,636,671
1985	16,739,000
1986	19,524,497
1987	23,540,302
1988	27,395,489
1989	25,120,847
1990	17,573,420
1991	12,571,038
1992	3,587,543
1993	6,282,381
1994	6,309,470
1995	12,065,981
1996	14,162,525
1997	14,146,541
1998	14,691,657
1999	17,329,850
2000	18,283,646
2001	18,530,458
2002	19,144,688
2003	7,294,921
2004	7,294,921
2005	8,346,874
2006	9,643,520
2007	12,093,520
2008	12,298,243
2009	12,658,827
2010	9,692,945
2011	9,098,781
2012	9,199,866
2013	9,527,624
2014	11,082,439
2015	12,000,000
2016	14,000,000
2017	13,950,000
2018	13,950,699
2019	16,154,982
2020	18,180,000
2021	18,180,000
2022	21,375,000

Note: Data for 1979 to 1990 are combined state funding figures of Mass. Council on the Arts & Humanities and Mass. Arts Lottery Council; Data from 1990 to 2017 is Mass Cultural Council's state funding.

01.26.2022

Governor’s Budget Includes Modest Increase for Arts & Culture

Bethann Steiner, Public Affairs Director

Budget

FY23 H. 2 budget represents Baker-Polito Administration’s highest investment in Mass Cultural Council

Governor Charlie Baker today released his final spending proposal, [H. 2](#), for Fiscal Year 2023. As a state agency Mass Cultural Council relies upon an annual state budget appropriation to support operational, administrative, and programmatic expenses. Further, the Agency’s annual state budget appropriation represents the Commonwealth’s largest investment into the cultural sector each year.

The Governor’s FY23 H. 2 budget funds Mass Cultural Council at \$20,382,378. Mass Cultural Council notes with appreciation that this is the highest-ever level of funding the Baker-Polito Administration has recommended for the Agency in its eight years, and represents a 25.1% increase from the FY22 H. 1 proposal of \$16.3M last year:

Fiscal Year/Bill Number*	Governor’s Funding Proposal for Mass Cultural Council
FY23 – H. 2	\$20,382,378
FY22 – H. 1	\$16,298,039
FY21 – H. 2	\$16,298,039
FY20 – H. 1	\$16,110,765
FY19 – H. 2	\$13,950,699

FY18 – H. 1	\$14,307,229
FY17 – H. 2	\$14,160,000
FY16 – H. 1	\$11,785,200

**Massachusetts’ fiscal years run from July 1-June 30.*

Mass Cultural Council’s current FY22 state appropriation, \$21,375,000, includes \$20M for administrative costs, programs, and services and \$1,375,000 in legislative earmarks. It is important to recognize that the Governor’s FY23 H. 2 funding recommendation, \$20,382,378, provides Mass Cultural Council with 1.9% more unrestricted operating support (\$382,378) than the current General Appropriations Act (GAA):

Fiscal Year/Vehicle	Total Appropriation	Total Earmarks	Amount Available for Agency Operations
FY23 – H. 2	\$20,382,378	\$0	\$20,382,378
FY22 – GAA	\$21,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$20,000,000

Mass Cultural Council greatly appreciates the Baker-Polito Administration’s proposed investment today, and believes it is a statement about the importance of the cultural sector in the Commonwealth.

What Comes Next?

Generally, after the Governor’s budget is filed in January the House and Senate Committees on Ways & Means convene a series of public hearings, which are followed by budget debates in the House of Representatives (April) and the Massachusetts Senate (May). Mass Cultural Council enjoys strong collaborations with Members of both Chambers and looks forward to budget meetings with our partners on Beacon Hill. We are delighted that for the first time in many years, we are entering the budget building exercise with a proposed slight increase to our line-item and hope that, as the process continues, the Governor’s \$20.4M recommendation is considered a starting point. At minimum we will urge the Legislature to retain this figure in their FY23 budgets.

Fiscal Year 2023 begins on July 1, 2022 and ends on June 30, 2023.

Engagement Opportunity

Cultural sector stakeholders who wish to engage in the budget process can consider sending a [thank you message to Governor Baker](#) for his proposal today. You can also email your [State Representative](#) and [State Senator](#) to let them know that the Governor’s FY23 H. 2 recommendation for Mass Cultural Council is a strong investment, and that you’d like them to make funding for the cultural sector a priority in FY23.

Budget

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