



Power of culture

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025
10:00-11:30 AM
ON-LINE MEETING**

**MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/LIVE/GH6Q6IAYLQC](https://www.youtube.com/live/GH6Q6IAYLQC)**

**MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED AT
[HTTPS://MASSCULTURALCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT/BOARD/](https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/)
UNDER "FEBRUARY 12, 2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING"**

AGENDA	VOTE
1. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law	
2. Minutes- October 16, 2024, January 6, 2025	X
3. Chair Report	
a. Benchmarking Project	
4. Report from Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council	
5. Executive Director's Report	
a. CPDAC	
6. Public Affairs Update	
7. Draft Agenda February 26, 2025 Council Meeting	X
8. Adjourn	

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Simone Early
Cecil Barron Jensen
Julie Wake

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 and Chief Financial Officer
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:01am and asked Deputy Chief of Staff Ann Petruccelli Moon to read the Open Meeting Law statement. Ann read the Open Meeting Law statement. Marc then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of their last meeting held on August 8th and called for a motion to approve them. Julie Wake moved to approve the minutes; Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Iván Espinoza-Madriral was not present all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the August 8, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Executive Committee.

Marc let the Committee know that the name of the Grants Committee had been changed to the Programs Committee. Jo-Ann, Cecil, and Julie all voiced support for this shift. The change will better reflect the work of the Committee and align it with the Agency's strategic plan.

The next full meeting of the Council takes place November 13th at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston, MA. Marc is pleased the Council will have this opportunity to meet in person. He is interested in increasing opportunities for the Council to connect in person and is thinking of ways to improve Council engagement. Executive Director Michael Bobbitt and his team are continuing to reach out to Council Members with a monthly report that lists events and meetings attended by the Executive team, as well as more targeted invitations to join meetings and events. Marc recently joined Michael for a meeting with Fenway Health.

Julie finds the monthly report helpful; even if she is unable to attend meetings and events that are listed, it's helpful for her to know what is happening.

Marc concluded his report by letting the Committee know that the Governor's Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council had been established and has held its first meeting. Julie Wake is a member of that Council.

Marc asked Michael Bobbitt for his Executive Director's report.

Michael let the Committee know that fall was off to a busy start. He provided an update on the Agency's grantmaking and advancement work along with a report on his participation in the recent Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Conference in Chicago October 6-9. Michael shared:

- GIA is a national association of public and private arts funders - providing members with resources and leadership to support artists and arts organizations.
- He attended networking events with Americans for the Arts, LGBTQ+ and Black affinity groups.
- He spent time with Pam Breaux, President and CEO of NASAA, Michael Orlove of the National Endowment for the Arts, Suzan Jenkins of Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and Torrie Allen of WESTAF.
- Attended several all-conference events including the opening reception and keynote – which really put the heat on funders regarding equitable grant making; Michael felt proud of Mass Cultural Council's work.
- Also attended the closing reception at a space renovated by Theater Gates, an American social practice installation artist, and a professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago.
- Sessions Michael attended included:
 - o Beyond Grantmaking: Impact Investing – which looks at grantmaking beyond subsidizing general operating budgets.
 - o An Inside Look at Organizers, Artists and Funders on the Front line of Political Mobilization and Social Change

- The Case for Support of Policy and Advocacy – Advancing Cultural Policy to disrupt Unjust Systems
- The Power of Harnessing Partnerships to Preserve Artistic and Cultural Real Estate Assets in Massachusetts
- The reason Michael attended was to be on a panel called Culture at the Intersection of State and Local Policies to talk about Arts Prescriptions. His fellow panelists who worked for municipal councils talked about how they are working within municipalities to support the growth of arts and culture to benefit their creative sectors and the residents of their municipalities.

Marc asked for further information about the Agency's work with arts prescriptions. Michael explained that close to 200 prescriptions have been given across Massachusetts. Art Pharmacy is still securing payers, the work is continuing to grow. Mass Cultural Council, Art Pharmacy, and the Health Equity Compact are hosting a convening focused on the work in January.

Ché Anderson shared that he has an appointment to meet with Chris Appleton of Art Pharmacy later this month to talk about bringing the work into public housing projects.

Marc then asked Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner for her report.

Bethann shared that the legislature is meeting informally, and we are still waiting for the economic development bond bill to come out of conference committee. Leadership may call for a rare informal session; the hope is this might happen before the new year. A close-out supplemental budget for the year is also still pending. There are two public events taking place this week: tomorrow in Worcester at JMAC, Coffee & Conversation with Michael Bobbitt and Friday in Amherst, a celebration of the latest round of Cultural Facilities Fund grants at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. The Public Affairs team is beginning to think about how the Agency will rebrand and launch a bi-annual awards ceremony which in previous years was called the Commonwealth Awards. Bethann knows there will be a role for the Council as plans come together. The new awards ceremony will align more closely with the Agency's current strategic plan. Julie expressed support for the awards ceremony noting that recognition from the Agency could be transformational for awards recipients.

Marc moved to the final item on the agenda, reviewing the agenda for the November 13th Council Meeting. Dave shared that there was one addition: the designation of new Cultural Districts in Holyoke, Westfield, and Watertown would be considered and voted upon at the meeting so this will be added to the agenda. Cecil asked if there might be time before or after the meeting for the Council to connect; Ann is arranging a tour of New England Botanic Garden for Council Members to take place before the meeting. Marc asked for more information about the video from the Executive Branch. Bethann explained that since this is the first in-person meeting of the Council since the spring and the Council is fully appointed, the Governor was invited to attend. She cannot be there in person but will share a video message to be played at the beginning of the meeting.

There were no further questions. Simone Early moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ché seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Iván was absent it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the draft agenda for the November 13, 2024 Mass Cultural Council Meeting as presented to the Executive Committee and amended.

That concluded the meeting agenda and Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:48pm.

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Simone Early
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Cecil Barron Jensen
Julie Wake

Staff Members Present were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 9:05am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement. The Chair then explained the purpose of the meeting: a discussion and vote on a proposed contract with Arts Consulting Group (ACG) to provide executive salary data to the Executive Committee. In the fall of 2024, Executive Director Michael Bobbitt requested a salary correction as he felt his current salary had fallen below the benchmark of his peers. Previously, in August 2023, the Council approved a salary correction for Michael. At that time, Council Members suggested that if an executive salary inquiry arose again, an independent, third-party consultant should be engaged to provide salary data that would assist the Executive Committee in its deliberations. The Chair is asking the Executive Committee to authorize entering into contract with ACG to provide this data.

Prepared on 2/3/25

The cost is \$2,000, which will come out of a consultant line within the spending plan the Council approved at its meeting in August. ACG specifically is being proposed for this project because they were contracted in 2020/2021 to lead the search for the Agency's new executive director, leading to the hiring of Michael. At that time, ACG provided salary benchmarking data; this is an update to that data. ACG will conduct research on the salaries of Michael's peers as well as salaries within other state agencies and work to determine where Michael's salary should land and if a salary correction is recommended. The Chair then asked Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis to share her thoughts.

The Vice Chair let Committee Members know that she spent her entire career in Human Resources and knows this type of salary research by an independent, third-party consultant to be customary practice. Engaging ACG to conduct this research will ensure that Michael is being compensated fairly. The Vice Chair reiterated that the last time Michael's salary was adjusted, the Executive Committee had indicated to the Council that an outside party would be engaged to ensure future adjustments continued to be fair and appropriate.

Committee Member Simone Early asked how often the Council needed to hire a consultant to determine salary benchmarks. The Chair explained that the last time Michael's salary was adjusted, the Committee did not work with a third-party consultant. The Council recommended at that time that any future adjustments be considered with the guidance of an independent, third-party consultant.

Simone asked if the Committee feels Michael's salary has fallen below the benchmark of his peers. The Chair explained that Michael requested his salary be revisited as he feels it has fallen below the benchmark of his peers. Contracting with ACG will allow the Committee to determine if that is the case and if it is, what level of correction to Michael's salary is necessary.

Council Member Ché Anderson asked what the timeline for ACG's work will be. The Chair explained that after preliminary conversations with ACG, he and the Vice Chair believe the work will be completed by the end of January. At that point, the Committee will reconvene to consider the data and recommendations from ACG. The Vice Chair added that the timeline and fee are more than reasonable.

Council Member Iván Espinoza-Madrugal agreed with the Vice Chair and noted that he has seen many non-profits and agencies begin a regular practice of conducting benefits and compensation assessments. This is a growing trend, and something Mass Cultural Council should consider so that it can stay competitive. The landscape following the pandemic shifted, and there is much competition for executive talent. The work of the Agency has grown more complex; Iván also noted that Michael has successfully championed several resources to support the Agency's deepening work. He sees this work with ACG as a strong way of professionalizing how the Council thinks about executive compensation, is probably something that should happen with a regular cadence – perhaps every two or three years – and is in favor of it.

The Chair and Vice Chair agreed that Michael has done an excellent job and that he should be compensated fairly.

Council Member Julie Wake noted that since the spending plan the Council approved in August included funding for work such as the proposed work with ACG, she is fully in

favor of it. She is also pleased that having an independent, third-party consultant will provide a broader scope as the Committee makes decisions. The Chair clarified that the spending plan item he referred to is an overall consultant line; not a line specifically pertaining to executive salary research.

Simone agreed with Iván's suggestion that salary benchmarking be a regular occurrence and not only take place when a salary adjustment request is made. The Chair suggested that perhaps the Executive Committee can determine what the appropriate interval is for salary assessment.

Simone asked if there are any other roles at the Agency that should be captured in a study like the one being proposed. The Vice Chair said the Committee can ask ACG to consider this. [The Council's enabling act only states that the Council approves the Executive Director's compensation.]

There was no further discussion. The Chair asked for a motion and a second to approve and direct staff to enter into a contract with Arts Consulting Group. Julie moved to approve the proposal, Iván seconded the motion. By roll call vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee approves and directs the staff to enter into a contract with Artists Consulting Group for \$2000 to provide executive salary benchmarking data on such terms as the Chair may direct.

The Chair thanked Committee Members for their participation in the meeting and confirmed that their next meeting is on February 12th. He then adjourned the meeting at 9:24am.



Power of culture

TO: Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee
FROM: Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
DATE: February 4, 2025
RE: **Upcoming Events**

The Public Affairs Team is working with numerous internal and external stakeholders to plan and produce several upcoming public events. All Council Members are warmly welcome to join and participate in these convenings.

Please save the following dates on your calendars, and if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Bethann or Christian Kelly, our Public Relations & Events Manager.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Registration currently open

February 13, 2025 – FY25 Cultural District Investment Grant Celebration

Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Lowell | 1pm to 3pm

[Registration Link](#)

February 24, 2025 - Spotlight Series: MassReconnect & MassEducation

Webinar | 2pm to 3pm

[Registration Link](#)

March 6, 2025 – Spotlight Series: MOTT Massachusetts 250

Webinar | 12:30pm to 1:30pm

[Registration Link](#)

SAVE THE DATE: Events in the works, details to be confirmed

March 4, 2025 – Creative Sector Policy Briefing for Legislators and Staff

State House, Room 428 | 1pm to 2pm

March 13, 2025 – Cultural Asset Inventory Briefing for Legislators and Staff

State House, Room 437 | 2:30pm to 4pm

March 21, 2025 – Cultural Asset Inventory Virtual Lunch & Learn Briefing

Webinar | 12pm to 1:30pm

March 25, 2025 – Cultural Asset Inventory Virtual Briefing

Webinar | 4pm to 5:30pm

April 15, 2025 – Poetry Out Loud Massachusetts 20th Anniversary Celebration

State House, Room 428 | In the morning

April 30, 2025 – Creative Sector Day at the State House

State House, Great Hall | 9am to 1pm

May 19, 2025 – FY25 Grants for Creative Individuals Award Celebration

State House, Great Hall | 1pm to 3pm

As a reminder, all Mass Cultural Council events, convenings, office hours, and key dates and deadlines for grant programs and initiatives are published and frequently updated on the [Agency Dates](#) page of the website.

DRAFT

**ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING
OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025
10:00 AM-NOON
IN-PERSON MEETING**

**MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/LIVE/LR1XWC1NJ-8](https://www.youtube.com/live/LR1XWC1NJ-8)**

**MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED AT
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UNDER "FEBRUARY 26, 2025 COUNCIL MEETING"**

AGENDA

VOTE

-
1. **Call to Order- Open Meeting Law Notice**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (Open Meeting Law Notice)*
 2. **Welcome**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 3. **Mission Moment Guest Speaker**
 - *Cory Shea*
Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy
Town of Franklin
 4. **Minutes of 164th Council Meeting** **X**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (Reads the Roll)*
 4. **Chair Report**
 - *Marc Carroll, Chair*

5. **Report from Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council (CPDAC)**

- *Julie Wake, Co-Chair Programs Committee and Member of CPDAC*

6. **Executive Director Report**

- *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*

7. **Public Affairs Report**

- *Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs*

8. **Business Operations Update**

- *Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations & CFO*

9. **Program Operations Report**

- *Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations (unless otherwise noted)*

a. Updates

b. Cultural District Initiative Redesign

- *Carolyn Cole, Special Projects Manager for Advancement*

c. Samples of Submitted Work by Creative individuals

- *Dan Blask, Program Manager, Artists Department*

d. Reminder re Conflict of Interest Notifications

- *David Slatery, Deputy Director*

e. Additional FY25 Grant and Program Recommendations **X**

i. Cultural Investment Portfolio/ Operating Grants for Organizations

ii. Grants for Creative Individuals

iii. Gaming Mitigation Grants

10. **Adjourn**

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 meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube channel as described in the posted meeting notice.

Instructions on how to contact the Council with questions or problems accessing the broadcast are also included in such notice. Only Council members, staff and invited guests will be provided access to the Zoom 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 may be required to 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.

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.

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A VIRTUAL OPEN MEETING USING ZOOM OR OTHER
VIDEOCONFERENCING PLATFORMS WHEN THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS**

(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.
- Modify Video Settings to “Hide all non-video participants”- this will make it easier to follow who is speaking and participating
- 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.