



Power of culture

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

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED-FIFTY SIXTH MEETING
OF
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 2022

ONLINE MEETING

Council Members Present were

Nina Fialkow, Chair
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair
Che Anderson
Barbara Schaffer Bacon
Cecil Barron Jensen
Kathleen Castro
Sherry Dong
Joann Davis
Matthew Keator
Allyce Najimy
Troy Siebels

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Charles Baldwin, Dan Blask, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, Maggie Holtzberg, Ann Petruccelli Moon, and Carmen Plazas; and artist Sarah Guerin.

Chair Nina Fialkow called the meeting to order at 10:04am and asked Deputy 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.

Prepared on 9/30/22

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, 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 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.

Executive Director Michael Bobbitt then reminded Council Members that there would be a Mission Moment at the beginning of all Council Meetings to spotlight a Massachusetts artist, program, or organization. Today, bootmaker and Traditional Arts fellowship recipient Sarah Guerin was in attendance and gave a thoughtful presentation about her work. Staff also shared an excerpt from a [short film](#) the Agency recently made about Sarah.

Nina then asked Council Members if they'd had a chance to review the Minutes from their last meeting on May 23 and, if so, she would look for a motion to approve them. Jo-Ann Davis moved to approve the minutes, and Kathleen Castro seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Karen Barry, Karen Hurvitz, Simone Early, Ann Murphy, and Lillian Do were absent it was

RESOLVED: that the Council approves the minutes of the May 23, 2022 Council Meeting in the form presented to the Council.

Nina called the Council's attention to the calendar of upcoming meetings in their meeting materials, then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael gave a brief update noting that staff has been busy creating the FY23 spending plan. He thanked the BIPOC Outreach Coordinator team, the Cultural Equity and Access Initiatives team, and Public Affairs for their work on the recruitment front. He noted that after only 10 days open, the Recovery Grants for Individuals program has 1,013 applications and 94% of them are from new applicants or applicants who have not received a grant in the last six years and 74% are BIPOC. Additionally, 80 organizations have applied to the Recovery Grants for Organizations program; 85% are new applicants. Staff will continue recruitment work.

Nina asked Michael for an update on the strategic plan.

Michael thanked the Task Force and David Slatery for their efforts. Fourteen applications were received and narrowed to three finalists; an offer was made to Dorchester-based Strategy Matters. David is revising their scope of work, and the project will begin in the fall.

Nina then asked Public Affairs Director Bethann Steiner for her Advocacy report.

Bethann noted that the legislature's formal session ended late on August 1. Between now and the end of the calendar year they will convene informally two times per week. The Agency's big point of pride is the success of its budget advocacy strategy which resulted in a \$23.4M appropriation. This is the largest appropriation since 1987. In FY23, Mass Cultural Council has just under \$100M to invest between its appropriation, gaming mitigation funds, recovery funds, and the Cultural Facilities Fund. Bethann reported that she and Michael met with 66% of the legislature – 200 legislators – 160 House Members and 40 Senators.

Nina then asked Catherine Cheng-Anderson for her Cultural Equity and Access report.

In alignment with one of the internal goals of the Racial Equity Plan, and the Massachusetts Pay Equity law; Catherine conducted a good faith, reasonable self-evaluation of Mass Cultural Council's pay practices and completed the Pay Equity Act Assessment ahead of schedule.

Catherine let Council members know that this was a huge undertaking for her as she was also learning about Mass Cultural Council's business operations, grantmaking activities, and services over the past year.

Catherine has developed a new standardized manager classification system and placed each one of the Agency's managers in an appropriate job

classification with clearly defined and transparent pay structures.

Earlier this summer staff were notified that this work was completed, and Catherine has operationalized into her workflow periodic salary review to ensure continued equity in the approach the Agency takes to pay its staff. Catherine thanked the Agency's managers and staff for their support and patience as she completed this review. She then asked Program Officer for Access & Inclusion Charles Baldwin to give his update.

Charles explained that he has been leading the UP Initiative since 2016. He was delighted when the Cultural Equity & Access department was established and UP was brought into it. In his thinking for FY23, Charles considered how the work he does would be embedded into the Agency's equity practices. A good deal of listening and learning more about equitable grantmaking has taken effect. Small grants to organizations who have gone through the Innovation & Learning Network have been eliminated. The grant amounts (\$1K and \$3K) were too low to be paired with such an arduous application and reporting process. Charles has proposed annual funding for the five years of an UP Designation; amounts may vary. Charles is also looking at how the Agency and the program can encompass and embody the principles of disability justice. A plan will be created to address this.

Program Officer for Equity & Inclusion Cheyenne Cohn-Postell then explained that she would provide the Council with a summary of FY22 efforts around racial equity. All grant programs have gone through or are going through a racial equity audit. The changes are exciting. Cheyenne let Council Members know that 58% of the Cultural Facilities Fund panelists self-identified as people of color, and 61% of reviewers within Artist Fellowships self-identified as BIPOC. Staff will continue to strive for more representation. In terms of applications from individuals and organizations who are new to the Agency, 70% of applicants within the AAPI recovery program were new; 38% of Festivals applicants were new; 31% of Artist Fellowship applicants were new. Outreach and recruitment efforts are continuing; 131 people connected with members of the BIPOC Outreach Coordinator team in the first six months; 382 people submitted written comments around the Agency's ARPA allocation. Email open rates are at 54% so staff knows that when they are meeting new people, those people are properly engaged.

Nina thanked Catherine, Charles, and Cheyenne for their report, then asked Michael, David, and Operations Director Jen Lawless to give their financial report focused on the FY23 budget and spending plan.

Michael then delivered a presentation on the Agency's budget and spending plan for FY23. A copy of the presentation Michael gave is available upon request.

After Michael read the presentation, there were a few questions from the Council.

Allyce Najimy asked what the Zero Net Gain Workshop is. Jen explained that the Cultural Facilities Fund team would work with organizations map a path towards zero emissions.

Allyce asked why Artist Fellowship grants were being paused. Michael explained that the Agency typically funds 150 artists, plus the Traditional Arts Apprenticeships, and that this was an opportune year to pause and review the program as the Agency will be using \$15 million in Pandemic Recovery Funds from the legislature to separately fund 3,000 artists via the Cultural Sector Recovery Grants for Individuals program (which was approved by the Council at the last meeting). The team is working to review how the program works and affect Massachusetts artists and cultural practitioners and looking at expanding eligibility to include historically overlooked artists such as drag artists, DJs, and many more types of artists who do not fit the current Fellowship categories. The reason for this is to align the Fellowships program with the Agency's racial equity goals.

Allyce asked if this meant the Agency would bring the Fellowships back in January and Michael explained that the program would not return until next year, hopefully with an increase to its funding.

Allyce asked if musicians could apply next year, Jen explained that if Allyce knows a network of musicians, they should look into applying for the Recovery Grants for Individuals program.

Allyce asked if the Cultural Facilities Fund would be run in FY23 since it was not part of the presentation. Michael explained that the CFF is not funded through the Agency's Spending Plan- rather that MassDevelopment actually funds the grants with an allocation from the Governor's annual Capital Plan. The next round of CFF funding will open in October and he highlighted a new rule: organizations who receive a grant must then take one year off before applying again. Allyce asked if this was for all CFF grants or just capital and was told it was just for capital grants- not the CFF Planning Grants.

Matthew Keator asked when the Agency's lease on its office space was up. David explained that it would end in January 2026 and that in the next year staff would start a planning process for its next space with the Commonwealth's leasing office at DCAM.

There were no further questions. The Chair then let Council Members know that the Executive Committee had reviewed the FY23 spending plan and recommends it for approval. She explained that she would seek a motion and a second and then Grants Chair Jo-Ann Davis would walk Council Members

through specific grant recommendations and answer any questions Council Members had. Then, there would be one vote on the spending plan and all grant recommendations. Troy Siebels moved to approve the spending plan. Allyce Najimy seconded the motion. Nina then asked Jo-Ann to begin her presentation of the grant recommendations.

Before Jo-Ann began, David reminded Council Members that in their Meeting Book they would find a Conflict-of-Interest List and asked if there were any additions. There were no additions or changes to be made and it was noted that all votes approving the FY23 grant recommendations will note the various possible conflicts and abstentions of the Council Members in attendance at this meeting.

The following abstentions were noted:

Nina Fialkow disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Boston Ballet and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Marc Carroll disclosed that he would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra or The Rivers School.

Barbara Schaffer Bacon disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to the Arts Extension Service.

Jo-Ann Davis disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to MASSCreative, Springfield Museums, and The Care Center.

Kathleen Castro disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to the Little Theater of Fall River or the New Bedford Festival Theater and the Fall River Coalition for Arts & Culture.

Cecil Barron Jensen disclosed that she would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to the Artists Association of Nantucket, The Nantucket Historical Association, or Nantucket Cultural District.

Che Anderson disclosed that he would abstain from any discussion or vote regarding the provision of a grant or other assistance to Mechanics Hall, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester Historical Museum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA).

Jo-Ann then proceeded with her presentation and let Council Members know that in addition to the presentation Michael gave, there are exhaustive materials in their Meeting Book. She thanked the staff for their amazing work taking a fresh look at the grantmaking process and let the Council know that the Grants Committee had thoroughly reviewed all grant recommendations and the process through which the recommendations were determined. Jo-Ann then asked for a motion to approve the FY23 grant recommendations explaining again that there would be one vote on those recommendations and the spending plan at the conclusion of her presentation. Kathleen Castro moved to approve the grant recommendations, and Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. Jo-Ann then asked Artists Program Manager Dan Blask and Program Officer Maggie Holtzberg to give their presentation on Traditional Artist Fellowships. Together they walked the Council through a brief PowerPoint presentation about the teachers and apprentices noting that it is a very large cohort. A copy of the presentation is available upon request. Maggie is thrilled to note that there is an 80% increase and Michael added that the guidelines had been changed so that apprentices would be paid.

Barbara Schaffer Bacon asked if there might be a map developed so that Council Members could see where the teachers and apprentices are from, and Maggie stated that staff would love to do this in the future.

Jo-Ann thanked Dan and Maggie for their presentation which brought to light all the incredible work being done in Massachusetts, how its being passed on; she also loved Sarah Guerin's presentation at the beginning of the meeting noting the craftsmanship, history, and themes. Jo-Ann asked if Council Members had any questions, and they did not. That concluded the presentation on grants.

The Chair explained that at this point the Council would take one vote on the FY23 spending plan and grant recommendations together. David added that there are 11 Council members present and that with the abstentions, 10 members would vote on every grant. He then did a roll call noting that Karen Barry, Karen Hurvitz, Simon Early, Ann Murphy, and Lillian Do were absent. The votes were unanimous, and

WHEREAS, the General Court of the Massachusetts State Legislature has appropriated a budget of \$22,377,000 to the Mass Cultural Council for FY23; AND

WHEREAS Mass Cultural Council staff has presented a draft FY23 budget and spending plan to the Executive Committee at its meeting on August 5, 2022;

WHEREAS the Executive Committee reviewed said plan and recommended that it be forwarded to the Council for approval;

WHEREAS Council staff presented the Plan to the Mass Cultural Council at its meeting on August 25, 2022.

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: To approve the Plan as presented at the Council Meeting and attached hereto, subject to the further approvals of the individual grant and program recommendations to be considered and voted upon the Council later in this meeting; and

RESOLVED: To make available funds from gaming tax revenues contained in the Massachusetts Cultural and Performing Arts Mitigation Trust Fund and Pandemic Recovery Funds provided under Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021 to be spent in FY23 in the manner set forth in the Plan.

Section 10-22 Grant Recommendations (Section numbers refer to sections of the Council Meeting Book which is available on the Council's website)

WHEREAS Council staff presented the grants portion of the Plan to the Grants Committee at its meeting on August 5, 2022 ("Grants Committee Meeting"), in connection with recommended grant allocations;

WHEREAS the Grants Committee recommended to the full Council the allocation of the grants presented at the Grants Committee Meeting;

WHEREAS the Grants Committee reviewed procedures of grant allocations and recommended that the Council approve the same;

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

Section 10 RESOLVED: To approve the funding of the Apprentice Grants program in the amount of \$180,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 11 RESOLVED: To approve allocations to the Cultural Investment Portfolio and CIP Gateway programs as recommended by the Grants Committee for an aggregate total of \$6,996,300.

Section 12 RESOLVED: To approve the third cycle of the Gaming Mitigation Program as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 13 RESOLVED: To approve an allocation to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$5,500,000 and up to \$825,000 in Cultural District grants as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 14 RESOLVED: To approve the new Festivals & Projects program totaling \$1,375,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 15 RESOLVED: To approve grant allocations to YouthReach program in the amount of \$1,892,000, continued funding of the Instrument Library in the amount of \$30,000 and participation in the META and CYP Teaching Artist Fellowships program with outside foundations and provision of up to \$120,000 in grants/stipends/reimbursements to participating organizations in the CultureRX

Social Prescription program and \$30,416 to the Youth Arts Impact Network with EdVestors, all as recommended by the Grants Committee.

RESOLVED: To approve the following Arts Education grant allocations, \$1,401,250 to the STARS program, \$20,000 in support of Massachusetts History Day and \$20,000 in support of the NEA-funded Poetry Out Loud program, all as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 16 RESOLVED: To approve the continuation of the UP Program with grants of up to \$496,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 17 RESOLVED: To approve a \$125,000 grant to Arts Connect International for underwriting 500 Massachusetts cultural sector participants in its Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC) 2.0 teaching course as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 18 RESOLVED: To approve a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$849,247 and an allocation of \$2.5 Million in Pandemic Recovery Funds, all as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 19 RESOLVED: To approve Council a grant to NEFA of \$70,000 as recommended by the Grants Committee Meeting.

Section 20 RESOLVED: To approve a grant to Mass Creative for \$100,000 to commission a cultural data impact report and to continue improve their online community engagement portal, all as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Section 21 RESOLVED: To approve an allocation of \$70,000 to ArtsBoston acting on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color as recommended the Grants Committee.

Section 22 RESOLVED: To approve \$100,000 in Media Transition Grants to- 5 public media companies, all as recommended by the Grants Committee.

Nina thanked Agency staff and her fellow Council Members for their time and energy to make sure citizens of the Commonwealth are served by Mass Cultural Council. Troy echoed Nina's comments and added that it would be a good deal of work to invest this level of funding.

Michael added that staff is working very hard on recruitment and told Council Members about a QR code card developed by the Public Affairs team that was part of the materials staff created to enhance recruitment and communication efforts this fiscal year. Allyce asked if the code could be emailed, Communications and Community Engagement Manager Carmen Plazas explained that the code could not be emailed, but the links the code represented could be shared.

There was no further business and no further questions and Nina, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:28am.