

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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL  
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021**

**ONLINE MEETING**

**Committee Members Present** were

Jo-Ann Davis, Chair of the Grants Committee  
Nina Fialkow, Council Chair  
Marc Carroll, Vice Council Chair  
Che Anderson  
Barbara Schaffer Bacon  
Cecil Barron Jensen  
Karen Barry  
Kathleen Castro  
Karen Hurvitz

**Staff Members and Guests Present** were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director  
David Slatery, Deputy Director  
Jen Lawless, Operations Director  
Bethann Steiner, Public Affairs Director  
Charles Baldwin, Program Officer  
Kelly Bennett, Program Officer  
Luis Cotto, Program Manager  
Diane Daily, Program Manager  
Sara Glidden, Program  
Erik Holmgren, Program Manager

Maggie Holtzberg, Program Manager  
Evelyn Nellum, Grant Operations Officer  
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Special Assistant to the Executive Director &  
Leadership Team  
Carmen Plazas, Communications Manager  
Lisa Simmons, Program Manager

Chair Jo-Ann Davis called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Deputy Director David Slatery reminded all present of the Open Meeting Law but dispensed with reading it since no members of the public were in attendance.

Jo-Ann then asked Committee Members to approve the minutes of their last business meeting held on June 15, 2021. Upon motion duly made and seconded, after roll call vote, by roll call vote it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED:** that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the June 15, 2021 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Grants Committee at its August 10, 2021 Meeting.

Jo-Ann Davis welcomed all to the meeting and stated that there was a good deal on the agenda as the Committee would be reviewing and voting on the Agency's FY22 proposed grant recommendations in advance of the August 24<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. She then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt to give his presentation on the FY22 Grants and Program Plan.

Michael shared a PowerPoint presentation as he described the proposed plans to the Committee. That presentation is available upon request.

Michael told Committee Members that Mass Cultural Council's budget for FY22 is nearly \$29M. This is comprised of a \$21.3M allocation from the state, \$1.9M in federal dollars from the National Endowment for the Arts, \$5.1M in Gaming Mitigation funds, and \$577,285 in other funds. Michael reminded Committee Members of the legislative language that requires the Agency to align its spending with its strategic plan, to invest an amount equal to at least 75% of the state appropriation into grants, and to report on its spending plan by January 3, 2022.

Michael then presented a comparison of grantmaking dollars between FY21 and the proposed FY22 spending plan:

**Total Grantmaking (including Gaming, CARES Act Funds, and earmarks)**

FY21: 29.6M; FY22: \$24M

**State Appropriation Grantmaking (excluding Gaming, CARES Act Funds, and earmarks)**

FY21: \$16.3M; FY22: \$17.9M

The Agency plans to grant \$24M in FY22, this equals 112% of the FY22 state appropriation. If Gaming Mitigation funds are not included in the total, the Agency will still give an amount equal to 89% of its state appropriation to the cultural sector in the form of grants well in excess of the 75% requirement.

Michael briefly reviewed the four pillars of the Agency's strategic plan which act as tent poles for the proposed FY22 spending plan: Enriching Communities, Growing the Economy, Advancing Inclusion and Equity, and Empowering a Creative Generation. He then outlined the recommended grants within each of these four pillars:

First, **Enriching Communities**. Staff proposes maintaining the increase in funding for Cultural Districts from \$5K to \$7500 made in FY21. All Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) will see an increase in FY22 with the minimum grant increasing from \$4800 to \$5000; a 10% increase for LCCs. An increase for Festivals grants is proposed from \$500 to \$1500. It was also noted that the Festivals program ran a limited cycle in FY21 due to the pandemic. Michael noted that eventually he would like to see the Agency offer grants no lower than \$2500. MassHumanities which is formula funded would see a 10% increase in the proposed spending plan, and the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) would receive level funding.

Next Michael shared the Agency's proposed grant spending for **Advancing Inclusion & Access**. Traditional Arts Apprenticeships are in their second year of funding and will be flat funded. Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP) Projects grants will see a 39% increase and UP Innovation Fund grantees will see an 11% increase – both via an increase in the number of awards given. UP Innovation and Learning Network stipends will increase from \$3K to \$5K per organization. LEAD Conference professional development grants will return in FY22 at \$15K – the conference was cancelled in FY21 due to the pandemic. Funding for the Network for Arts Administrators of Color will continue at \$35K, and funding for the Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC), in its second year of

funding, will continue at \$50K. Finally, funding for the Social Prescription Pilot will increase by 85% to \$120K.

Under **Growing the Economy**, the Agency will double the number of Artists receiving grants and increase the amount of its Finalist award from \$1500 to \$5K. Funding for Artists is poised to increase from \$600K to \$1.3M in FY22. With respect to the Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP), nearly all organizations in the Portfolio part of the CIP program will see an increase in their grant in FY22, and CIP Gateway grants will increase from \$3500 to \$4K. Funding for Media Partnerships will remain at \$130K, though Michael mentioned staff is considering making this the final year for these grants and will explore new ways of supporting public media in FY23. MassCreative is recommended to receive a \$15K grant for a specific project relating to their website.

Finally, Michael outlined for the Committee proposed spending to support **Empowering a Creative Generation**. YouthReach and SerHacer are one program now called YouthReach – this is less of a merger and more of a rebranding. YouthReach grants will increase in FY22 by 9%. STARS will increase the number of grants given and increase the per session amount for cultural partners. Funding for Poetry Out Loud, Mass History Day, and the Johnson String Project will continue. Big Yellow School Bus will remain paused in FY22 in light of the fact that schools are still managing through the pandemic and not pursuing field trips. Arts Learning will receive an \$8K project grant to provide integrated arts training to BIPOC educators and schools.

Karen Barry was recognized and asked if different organizations in CIP received different increases of funding in FY22 and if any new organizations had been able to receive funding. Sara Glidden, CIP Program Manager answered that because of the way the funding formula worked based on a three-year average of an organization's expenses, different organizations received different percentage increases but also that the staff had elected not to use FY20 numbers in the calculation due to the pandemic. Also, six organizations that otherwise would have had a reduced grant under the formula were level-funded based on the idea that no organization should suffer a reduction in a year when the Agency's budget increased by 10%. The CIP Gateway program was designed a pathway into the main Portfolio by new organizations but explained that in FY22 Gateway was still in the second year of a cycle so there would be no movements of Gateway participants into the main portfolio this year.

Jo-Ann indicated that the Committee had now heard the presentation on the FY 22 Grants Allocation Plan and entertained a motion for approval of the FY 22 Plan, referring to the resolutions contained on pages 3-5 of the meeting book for the text of the vote. After receiving a motion and second, Jo-Ann stated that the Committee would next consider all of Grants Recommendations individually before formally taking a vote on the entire package but prior to that asked Deputy Director David Slatery to review the conflict-of-interest procedures.

David then reviewed the Agency's Conflict of Interest policy with Committee Members. He referred to the list of conflicts found on page 30-31 of the meeting book. No additions or edits were made. It was understood that Committee Members who had stated conflicts of interest on the list would abstain from voting on grants pertaining to the organizations with which they may have a potential conflict.

It was noted that the votes recommending the FY22 grant recommendations will note the following conflicts and abstentions of the Committee Members in attendance at this meeting.

**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 the **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.**

Jo-Ann let Committee Members know that staff was on hand to answer any questions they might have about each program and then walked Committee Members through each section of the plan.

During the presentation and discussion, Council Member Karen Hurvitz raised an objection with regard to grant proposed to the organization known as Primary Source. She referred to materials she had circulated to the Committee earlier in the day (copies are available upon request). Karen indicated that she opposed funding to this organization because of educational materials produced for Middle Eastern unit which is being used by many Massachusetts school districts. Karen opposes this material because it is "ahistorical, and horribly biased perspective ...[and]... paid for by Qatar, and which stokes the fires of the already alarming rise in Jew hatred and hatred of Israel" and strongly opposed any funding of Primary Source by the agency. Karen referred to examples cited in her materials in support of her statement. In response to a question, Karen stated that even though funding from Qatar several years ago, her objection was based upon materials being used by Primary Source today. She explained that she had obtained access to Primary Source's materials by signing up as a member on their website.

After a discussion of Karen's comments, Michael indicated he would follow up with Karen Hurvitz after the meeting to address her concerns more specifically.

David stated that when the Committee wished to vote, all resolutions were written out at length on page 3-5 of their materials. Jo- Ann then stated that if there were no objection, she would now call for a vote on the FY 22 Grant Allocation Plan and all of the FY 22 Grants Recommendations pursuant to votes contained on pages 3-5 of today's meeting.

Upon motion made and duly seconded, David called the roll and there were seven YES votes (Jo-Ann, Nina, Marc, Che, Karen Barry, Cecil and Barbara), one NO vote (Karen Hurvitz) and Council member Kathy Castro's internet connection was lost at some point prior to the vote so was not present,

WHEREAS, the General Court of the Massachusetts State Legislature has appropriated a budget of \$21,375,000 to the Mass Cultural Council for FY22; and

WHEREAS, Mass Cultural Council staff has presented a recommended FY22 grants budget to the Grants Committee at its meeting on August 10, 2021 ("Grants Committee Meeting"), including recommended grant allocations for a variety of Mass Cultural Council programs;

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee further recommends that the Council approve the allocation of grants and processes and procedures presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council the funding of the Apprentice Grants program in the amount of \$100,000 and Artist Fellowship program allocations totaling \$1,300,000, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend allocations to the Cultural Investment Portfolio, CIP Gateway and CIP Projects (collectively, the "CIP Programs") as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting in for an aggregate total of \$6,797,500.

RESOLVED: To recommend allocations to the Media Partnerships program of \$130,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend an allocation to the Local Cultural Councils totaling \$4,785,000, up to \$412,500 in Cultural District grants, and \$300,000 to the Festivals Program all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend grant allocations to YouthReach program, continued funding of the Instrument Library in the combined amount of \$1,636,000 plus expenditure of any remaining CARES Act funds, participate in the META and CYP Teaching Artist Fellowships program with outside foundations and provide up to \$120,000 in grants/stipends/reimbursements to participating organizations in the CultureRx program all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council the following Arts Education grant allocations, \$1,265,000 to the STARS program, \$20,000 in support of Massachusetts History Day, \$20,000 in support of the NEA-funded Poetry Out Loud program and \$8,000 to Arts | Learning for its School Arts Leader Program, all as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council the continuation of the UP Program with grants of up to \$155,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a \$50,000 partnership grant to Arts Connect International for development of its Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC) 2.0 teaching course as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant to Mass Humanities totaling \$754,886 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant to NEFA of \$60,000 as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council a grant to Mass Creative for \$15,000 to improve their online community engagement portal as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council an allocation of \$35,000 to ArtsBoston acting on behalf of the Network Arts Administrators of Color as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED: to recommend to contract with SMU Data Arts to provide the Cultural Data Profile tool as presented at the Grants Committee Meeting.

There being no questions and no further business, Jo-Ann as Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:44pm.