



Power of culture

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30TH, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

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

Staff Members Present were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Christian Kelly, Public Relations & Events Manager

Co-Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:04am and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement.

Ché thanked David and asked Committee Members if they'd reviewed the minutes from their last meeting held on May 15, 2024. If they had, he would look for a motion and a second to approve those minutes. Council Chair Marc Carroll moved to approve the minutes, Rhonda Anderson seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Committee Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrigal was absent it was unanimously

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024 Advancement Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Ché let Committee Members know he'd spoken with his Co-Chair, Iván in preparation for his report today. He began his report by giving kudos to the staff nothing that it seems Mass Cultural Council is everywhere advancing the cultural sector and enhancing the public perception of the Agency and its work. He then noted that in this age of virtual meetings and opportunities to connect digitally, there should be an opportunity for the Committee and the full Council to get together for networking and idea sharing in person. Plans for a gathering will begin soon, with the number one question being location. Ché also noted the amazing number of opportunities presented to the Committee from the staff for participation in events, speaking engagements, and meetings. He would also like to see Committee Members be proactive and seek out opportunities to participate in events and meetings in their communities and to share those opportunities with each other and with the staff. He then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael began by congratulating Committee Member Allyce Najimy who recently received the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston's Deborah Re Believe in Girls Award. He then let Committee Members know the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council held its first meeting in late September. Additional members are being added and the group has been divided into four working groups: workforce development, creative placemaking, economic development, and community support. The groups are led by Chair Paul Park, Chair Mindy Domb, Joyce Linehan, and Michael. The goal is to present policy recommendations to the Governor in the spring. There is a meeting next week between the Agency and the Executive Office of Economic Development to more clearly define their partnership. Senior staff is close to making an offer for the Advancement & Strategic Partnerships Manager position. Arts Consulting Group has been hired as a fundraising consultant to conduct research on what federal grants might be available to Mass Cultural Council – the idea is not to take funding opportunities away from the cultural sector, but rather to seek out additional funds to further support it. The research will help determine whether or not the Agency will hire a full-time staff member to work on grant writing and fundraising. Arts prescriptions continues to scale and spread around the country. Michael is speaking on many panels and at several events and receiving interest from a myriad of groups. Michael and Chris Appleton of Art Pharmacy will give a presentation to Boston Medical Center tomorrow. An event in collaboration with the Health Equity Compact is being planned for January. Staff is working with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities on a grant program to bring art into housing projects. A conversation is scheduled with the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to discuss Percent for Art – a program wherein 1% of all construction budgets is devoted to putting art into projects. A re-design of the Cultural Districts Initiative is underway; Civic Moxie has been contracted to consult on that project. A conversation with the Department of Conservation and Recreation is ongoing regarding the scaling of its historic curatorship program. The Agency is being courted by the Department of Homeland Security to apply for a large grant focused on how the arts can mitigate violence and domestic terrorism.

Ché thanked Michael for his report and mentioned that he has two meetings about arts prescriptions this week alone; it's great to see its reach expanding. He then asked Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner for her report.

Bethann explained that for many years the Agency produced a bi-annual awards ceremony called the Commonwealth Awards focused on celebrating and advocating for the sector. It was frequently held in the State House. In 2020 the Agency had a leadership transition, and the pandemic began, and the awards ceremony was put on hold. Michael has charged the staff with rethinking the awards ceremony so that it mirrors the Agency's current strategic plan and equity goals. Bethann then asked Public Relations & Events Manager Christian Kelly to say more about the plans.

Christian let Committee Members know a memo outlining the current plans was available in their meeting materials. The revised awards ceremony will be rebranded and redeveloped and used as an advancement tool to celebrate partnerships with entities outside the cultural sector who have been leaders in efforts that advance the cultural sector. The goal is to hold an event in March 2026 and bi-annually thereafter. Full details are available in the memo, and it is the hope of the staff that the Advancement Committee will play a crucial role in the shaping of the new awards ceremony.

Anika Lopes expressed her support and excitement about the event. Allyce echoed Anika's remarks and asked if the event would be a fundraiser for the cultural sector, what the budget might be, and where the event will be held.

The event will be held in Boston. Michael explained that it will not be a fundraiser but rather an opportunity to build new connections. In the past Michael felt the awards ceremony pitted theaters against other theaters so-to-speak, this event will focus more on bringing leaders from outside of the sector into the room. The budget for the event will come from the Agency's annual allocation.

Chair Marc Carroll asked for more information about how the staff envisioned the Advancement Committee helping with the project and how large the event is expected to be.

Michael explained that the Committee's input will be very important in identifying the scope of each award. The Committee will also approve the award recipients and help recruit leaders across the state to attend the event. Michael envisions approximately 1,000 guests at the event.

Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis expressed her support for the awards ceremony and asked if the staff had considered an award for a member of the business community. Christian thanked Jo-Ann for her feedback and will explore the possibility of breaking the partnership award into two categories: public sector and private sector.

There were no further questions and Ché asked Michael for his Advancement report.

Michael explained that most of the Agency's advancement efforts were summarized in his previous report. He added that for the last year the efforts have been very broad; a rolodex of new contacts and partners was built. This year the team is determining what specific areas to focus on. A big part of the work is the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council; the recommendations that come out of that effort will serve as another jumping off point for the Agency's advancement work. Michael still advises that Committee Members invite staff to meetings and events they believe might benefit the sector and/or the Agency.

Allyce asked for an example of a great room Michael has been invited to join.

Michael shared that he was invited to attend the Commonwealth Summit – an annual cross-sector gathering of Massachusetts leaders – for the last two years and has now joined the planning committee for this year's summit.

Allyce shared that she and Chair Marc Carroll attended an event at The Quin House earlier in the fall and Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao spoke about the importance of weaving the creative economy into all sectors.

Ché then asked if Chair Marc Carroll would like to say more about Council engagement before the meeting adjourned. Marc echoed Ché's earlier comments about planning an opportunity for Council Members to network with one another. Marc is pleased to have an extraordinary group of Council Members and would like to make sure their knowledge and skills are known and utilized. He is eager to hear what the Advancement Committee proposes in terms of this Council engagement opportunity.

That brought the Committee to the end of its agenda and Ché as Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:48am.