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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.