

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
Sherry Dong
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
Cecil Barron Jensen

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
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Manager of Executive Affairs
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:01am and asked Deputy Executive 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.

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, 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 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 that 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

Marc then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of the last meeting held on January 11th and called for a motion to approve them. Jo-Ann Davis moved to approve the minutes; Ché Anderson seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Julie Wake was absent all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the January 11, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Executive Committee.

Marc welcomed all Committee Members and thanked new appointees Ivan and Cecil for accepting their assignments. He noted that there had been additional changes to the Council since January; Council Member Kathy Castro has sadly passed away and Ann Murphy has cycled off. Marc remembered Kathy and thanked Ann for their service to the Council and their dedication to supporting arts and culture in Massachusetts. He is awaiting news of two new appointments from the Boards & Commissions Office; the next set of Committee Meetings will take place in May and June.

Executive Director Michael Bobbitt gave a brief report. He welcomed Ivan and Cecil to the Committee, then let Committee Members know that Friday, March 1 was a big day for Mass Cultural Council and the entire creative and cultural sector: Governor Maura Healey filed a \$3.5 billion economic development bill referred to as the Mass Leads Act. The legislation contains multiple recommendations of interest to the creative and cultural sector including a capital spending authorization of \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund. To supplement the Mass Leads Act, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced additional actions including Executive Order 631 establishing the Governor's Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council. The staff is making a list of names to recommend for the Advisory Council; Michael would like to see some people appointed who work in sectors outside of the arts. The Advisory Council will be required to submit a report to the Governor by mid-September. Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner prepared a blog post explaining the bill and supplementary actions in full detail and she will keep the Council updated as further information becomes available.

Michael also shared that the staff is reviewing the Cultural Districts Initiative with an eye towards having it align more closely with the spirit of the law; he would like to see district approval involving partnering with other state agencies. Two new grant programs will open soon: Operating Grants for Organizations (formerly known as CIP or the Cultural Investment Portfolio) and Festivals & Projects. The entire staff is participating in three mandatory two-hour advancement workshops this spring with the goal of improving their networking and relationship building skills. Michael is excited about the many relationships he is forming across state government, especially working with the Mass Office of Travel & Tourism and within the healthcare and education sectors. The Agency will present workshops this spring with the Mass Municipal Association; Nutter, McLennan, & Fish; Mass- Econ and NAIOP focused on the benefits of adding arts and culture to projects. Senior staff is beginning to build plans for FY25 using the Strategic Plan as a guiding document.

Marc asked when the Advisory Council's report is due and how it would be structured; also, how many people are needed to serve on the Council. Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis also asked if the Advisory Council is short-term or ongoing and if, once the report is submitted, the Council would disband.

Michael and staff provided the following information: The report is due in mid-September; no specific date is given. The Advisory Council is Chaired by the Secretary of Economic Development Yvonne Hao, Co-Chaired by Mass Office of Travel & Tourism Executive Director Kate Fox, and Michael will serve on the Committee with up to 15 additional appointees. The Chair will determine how the Council is structured and how often it will meet. The Advisory Council will likely exist for the duration of the Healey-Driscoll Administration since it was created by via an Executive Order. Should a new administration take office it would remain to be seen what that administration would choose to do with existing Executive Orders.

Jo-Ann asked what types of backgrounds we are looking for in the people we recommend to the Advisory Council and might some of them be Mass Cultural Council grantees. Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner read Section 2 of the Executive Order which clarifies this:

Section 2. The Council shall be comprised of the Secretary of Economic Development or their designee, who shall serve as chair; the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, or their designee, who shall serve as vice-chair; the Executive Director of the Mass Cultural Council, or their designee, and up to 15 additional members appointed by the Governor who shall represent a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds from stakeholders in the Commonwealth's arts and culture sector. Members so appointed shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor and without compensation.

To conclude his Executive Director's report, Michael shared that there are upcoming Committee Meetings scheduled: the Grants Committee and the newly formed Advancement Committee will meet on May 15th and the Executive Committee and Grants Committee will meet on June 12th.

Marc asked Bethann for her legislative update.

Bethann let Committee Members know that this is the second year of the legislative session. The formal session concludes on July 31st so the timetable for getting the Governor's economic development bill is quick. She highlighted a few items in the bill including \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund which would allow the Agency to continue the program for an additional five years, the live theater tax credit pilot program encouraging pre-Broadway productions to come to Massachusetts, the Executive Order Michael outlined, and support for Cultural Districts – the Administration will begin to give additional consideration and priority to infrastructure, planning, and other community grant proposals for projects located within state-designated Cultural Districts in the next funding rounds for Community One Stop and the MOTT Destination Development Grants. Bethann also let Committee Members know that the state budget process continues; Mass Cultural Council will give testimony at the Joint Ways & Means budget hearing in Gloucester tomorrow; the message will be one of appreciation for the recommendation Governor Healey made in her H.2 budget proposal which was a 2.2% increase for Mass Cultural Council and a request that the Committee embrace this recommendation. Once budget hearings are complete, the House will release its budget in April, the Senate will release their budget in May, then the Conference Committee will meet and most likely deliver a final document to the Governor in July.

There were no questions for Bethann. Marc asked Senior Director of Business Operations Catherine Cheng-Anderson to explain the travel approval request to the Committee. Cathy stated that Mass Cultural Council fiscal policies require preapprovals for all out-of-state travel by the Executive Committee. She reported that a travel request has been reviewed and found to offer direct benefits consistent with the Agency's strategic plan, with expenses justified by the value of the travel for a request totaling \$1,750.00. The approval sought is for Käthe Swaback, Program Officer for Creative Youth Development, to attend a convening by the National Guild for Community Arts Education in Washington, D.C. from April 9 to April 12, 2024. This is crucial for the Council's plans to update its grant model for FY26. Käthe's participation will align with the Strategic Plan's emphasis on creativity, inclusion, and public service, and CYD's focus on youth voice, racial equity, and collective action. It will also allow Käthe to network,

share insights, and strengthen connections within the community arts education sector.

Marc asked for clarification on the cost. Cathy explained that the \$1,750.00 covers lodging, conference admission, and meals. Käthe wishes to pay for her own flight. Marc then asked for a motion to approve the travel request. Iván Espinoza-Madrigal moved to approve the request; Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Julie Wake was absent it was unanimously

RESOLVED: to approve the staff-recommended out-of-state travel request as presented to the Meeting.

Marc moved on to the final agenda item: reviewing a draft agenda for the Council's Meeting & Retreat scheduled for March 21st which was included in the Committee's meeting materials. Marc asked if more time could be added for the discussion of the two equity plans staff planned to bring to the Council for a vote: d/Deaf & Disability Equity Plan and Native American and Indigenous Peoples Equity Plan. It was decided that there would be 30 minutes allotted to that discussion and Dave would update the agenda. Cecil said that 9:30am is a challenging start time for Council Members traveling to Boston from other regions within the state and perhaps there could be time after the meeting for social, informal conversation since this is the first time so many new Council Members would meet. Staff mentioned that the meeting itself will not begin until 10am so there will be time before and after the meeting for Council Members to meet each other and speak informally.

There was no further discussion. Marc asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the changes that were discussed. Ché Anderson moved to approve the agenda; Iván Espinoza-Madrigal seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Julie Wake was absent it was unanimously

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approve the draft March 21 2024 Mass Cultural Council Retreat Agenda presented to the Executive Committee, modified as discussed above.

The end of the Executive Committee Meeting agenda had been reached and there was no further discussion. Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:34am.