

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Marc Carroll, Chair
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair
Ché Anderson
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 & Chief Financial Officer
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff
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 March 7th and called for a motion to approve them. Jo-Ann Davis moved to approve the minutes; Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Simone Early was absent all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the March 7, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Executive Committee.

Marc mentioned that he attended yesterday's Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) celebration at The Children's Museum in Easton and expressed his thanks to Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll for being there. The event was well-attended, and Marc thanked Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner and Public Relations & Events Manager Christian Kelly for their work to plan the celebration. He then asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael echoed Marc's comments on yesterday's CFF event and expressed his gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor. He then shared that the senior staff team held a planning retreat last week and built a draft budget for FY25 that reflects the Agency's advancement and equity goals. Michael and the team are excited to share the spending plan with the Committee and the full Council at the August meetings. Advancement continues to be a major strategic priority. The entire staff participated in a three-part training focused on relationship building; a survey was distributed to the staff to see what else they might need as it pertains to the requirement that they prioritize advancement and relationship building in their work. Senior staff is looking at infrastructure and staffing needs and considering what the grants management system can do to support and enhance the Agency's advancement work. Michael attended a summit focused on arts prescription hosted by the Longwood Symphony Orchestra and former Council member Dr. Lisa Wong; there is a good deal of buzz about the work. The Agency continues to deepen relationships in education and economic development. Michael, Dave, and Erik Holmgren attended the recent STEM Summit. Conversations continue about the possibility of STEAM being integrated into this fall's STEM week. Michael frequently presents at tourism-focused events alongside Mass Office of Travel & Tourism Executive Director Kate Fox. Interesting conversations are also taking place with MassDOT and the MBTA; Michael and Dave met with MassDOT to discuss their proposed Request for Information (RFI) on highway service plazas to encourage them to include the arts in the RFP process. There is a bottomless pit of opportunities. A meeting is scheduled with Commissioner Brian Arrigo of the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation in July; Michael and the team will continue developing ideas of other ways to support and bring visibility and, potentially, revenue to the sector.

That concluded Michael's report. Marc asked Bethann for her Advocacy report.

Bethann shared that the House and Senate have completed their FY25 budget debates and Mass Cultural Council saw an increase to its current operating budget in both scenarios. The proposed allocation in the House is slightly higher than the Senate by \$380,000. The next step in the process is for a Conference Committee to be appointed and begin its work to come up with a final budget to send to the Governor. This should happen soon. Advocacy urging the Conference Committee to retain the House number has commenced, and Bethann is optimistic. MassCreative is seeking signatures to a letter they plan to send to the Committee; more than 200 organizations and individuals have already signed. Committee Members are encouraged to sign, Bethann will send a link to the letter. In other news, the economic development bill (which the Governor called Mass Leads Act) is on the move and Bethann thinks it will continue to move quickly. Formal session ends on 7/31. Finally, Bethann shared that there is another event coming up next week – a celebration of the recipients of Grants for Creative Individuals and the final recipients of Cultural Sector Recovery Grants. It will take place at the Center for the Arts at the Armory in Somerville on Monday at 1pm and Council Members are encouraged to attend.

Marc then asked Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer Catherine Cheng-Anderson to present a pending travel request to the Committee.

Catherine explained that, per the out-of-state travel policy, staff is seeking the Committee's approval for four members of the staff to attend the Leadership Exchange in Arts & Disability (LEAD) Conference taking place July 29 – August 4, 2024 in Seattle, WA. Staff has attended this conference regularly over the years; last year's conference was held in Boston, so more members of the staff were able to attend. With the Committee's approval, Executive Director Michael Bobbitt, Program Officer Charles Baldwin, Program Officer Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, and Public Relations & Events Manager Christian Kelly will attend this year.

Marc asked if Committee Members had any questions regarding the travel request and they did not. Iván Espinoza-Madrigal moved to approve the request and Ché Anderson seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Simone Early was absent it was unanimously

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

Senior Director of Program Operations Jen Lawless then gave a brief update on the cultural asset inventory project. Mass Cultural Council is working with our contractor, Diversity North, and nearing the end of the engagement. The project provided a great opportunity to connect with partners and several community foundations; Jen thanked Committee Member Julie Wake for the data she shared from the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod. Diversity North will share a high-level analysis of creative individuals using federal data and community survey data; we will also receive a list of cultural organizations. This will provide crucial understanding as to the actual size of the cultural sector. Jen believes the findings will confirm the urgency and importance of the Agency's advancement work. After an initial review of the findings, staff will share the report with the Council and key partners.

Michael added that when the Agency was engaged in its strategic planning process, last year one key question was to determine the benefit of the Agency to people who do not receive grants; what is Mass Cultural Council uniquely positioned to do? Data from this project will confirm that the sector is very large, and that advancement work can support people beyond grantmaking. It could be used as a nice advocacy tool as we work to increase our allocation in future years.

Cecil asked if there is a formula that can be used to understand the economic impact of the cultural sector. Jen explained that Mass Cultural Council has used Americans for the Arts' economic impact calculator to determine this in the past. With all of the new information this project will provide, it will be a fun challenge to determine how we might extrapolate the economic impact of the sector as we will come to understand it. The thinking is that the sector is far larger than any of us currently understand it to be.

There was no further discussion. Dave reminded Committee Members that a draft meeting schedule for FY25 was included in their materials; there were no comments on the schedule from the Committee.

The end of the meeting agenda had been reached and Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:34am.