

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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
GRANTS COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL OFFICE
10 ST JAMES AVENUE-3D FLOOR
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Chair Victoria Marsh called the meeting to order at noon

Committee Members Present

Victoria Marsh, Chair of Grants Committee (by phone)
Nina Fialkow, Chair of Mass Cultural Council
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair, Mass Cultural Council (by phone)
Karen Barry (by phone)
Jo-Ann Davis (by phone)
Kathy Castro (by phone)
Barbara Schaffer Bacon (by phone)
Cecil Barron Jensen (by phone)
Karen Hurvitz

Staff members present were

Anita Walker, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Director
Greg Liakos, External Relations Director
Jen Lawless, Operations Director
Maggie Holtzberg, Program Manager
Kelly Bennett, Program Officer
Dan Blask, Program Officer

Prepared on 2/13/20

Victoria Marsh opened the meeting by causing the following to be read into the record

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.

Please note that this body has invited the following persons to participate in today's meeting

Staff of Mass Cultural Council

Mass Cultural Council welcomes members of the public to attend its meetings. Under the Open Meeting Law, however, this is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the chair.

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.

Victoria then called for a vote on the minutes of the August 13, 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

RESOLVED: that the Grants Committee approves the minutes of the August 13, 2019 Grants Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Grants Committee at its January 7, 2020 Meeting.

Victoria then asked Executive Director Anita Walker for her report. Anita indicated that the Council staff were off and running in brand new year. Anita highlighted the Final Deficiency budget passed at the end of 2019 which effected some technical correction to the 2011 Gaming Law thus enabling the Council to access certain Commonwealth casino tax revenues which in turn will enable the Council to implement the Gaming Mitigation Program which will be discussed later in the meeting.

Anita then asked Kelly Bennett, Dan Blask and Maggie Holtzberg to present the recommendations for Artists Fellowships in the fields of Drawing & Printmaking, Poetry and Traditional Arts. Dan gave a summary of the 45 year history of the program. Dan and Kelly described the three disciplines being voted on today and the three upcoming disciplines (Crafts, Dramatic Writing, and Sculpture/Installation/New Genres) that will be coming up for consideration at the May meetings. Maggie described the Traditional Arts Fellowships and they way they differ from the other disciplines (i.e. review is not anonymous, the panelists know the identities of the applicants). Dan and Kelly further described the panel review process.

Karen Hurvitz asked if the program ever considered the financial need of an applicant or focused on supporting "struggling artists." Dan indicated the program was focused on artistic merit and had never considered financial circumstances. Often the recognition given by the program was more valuable than any particular award amount. The blind review process had over the years worked to distribute the fellowships to applicants in a range of different financial circumstances (i.e. the famous had no advantage).

The Committee generally discussed the issue of financial need and artists. Anita indicated addressing financial need would be a different goal from the one Artists Fellowship program had. Staff agreed to look into programs based on financial need.

Karen Barry encouraged staff extend outreach efforts to all regions of the state. Kathy Castro was also interested in regional outreach. Karen and Kathy both asked for information on deadlines for programs so that they could get the word out in their hometown areas. Barbara Schaffer Bacon stated all Council members would benefit from this type of outreach.

Cecil Barron Jensen stated that in Nantucket she had put local artists associations in contact with Kelly for a webinar on the program.

In response to outreach questions, Dan mentioned they recently opened up the application process to audio/video submissions in the Poetry discipline and felt that this had brought in some new applicants.

Victoria mentioned it would be great to have an artist present at some point at a meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded it was:

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council the FY20 Artist Fellowship grant awards in the disciplines of Drawing & Printmaking, Poetry and Traditional Arts as reviewed by the Grants Committee at its January 7, 2020 meeting.

Anita reminded the members that they are all invited to attend panels for Artists Fellowships. We will make that information available.

Victoria next asked Anita to address the proposed new Gaming Mitigation Program.

Anita referred back to the earlier discussion of the Final Deficiency Budget by the legislature in December which enabled casino tax revenue funds dedicated for the new program to be forwarded to the Council and to the memo contained in the meeting books which describes the new program. Anita emphasized that the Gaming Mitigation Program was mandated by statute to address the needs of performing arts center in Massachusetts negatively impacted by the operation of gaming facilities in Massachusetts- specifically in terms of their pricing structure which had the effect of increasing the costs for touring acts. The funds dedicated for this program may only be spent on this program and may not be used to support the other operations of Mass Cultural Council (which are funded by the appropriation in annual state budget).

Anita asked Jen Lawless to describe the steps that had been undertaken to develop the new program and how it would operate. Jen went through the formulas that would be used to determine eligibility and

grant amounts under the program and referred to the working guidelines that had been developed.

Dave then explained how 75% of funds received by the Council (after a 75 allowance for expenses) would be spent directly on grants to performing arts organizations to subsidize fees paid to touring `shows or artists (explaining that the remaining 25% of the funds were to be spent on "organizational support" under the statute and that staff would be presenting a pilot program for approval and recommendation by the Committee in March.

The Committee discussed the program generally and asked about performing arts centers that might be eligible.

After the completion of the discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded , it was

RESOLVED: To recommend to Mass Cultural Council approval of the Gaming Mitigation Program as described in a memo presented to and reviewed by the Grants Committee at its January 7, 2020 meeting.

Sara Glidden, Program Manager of the Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP) then was invited to discuss potential changes to the CIP Projects program which were detailed further in a memo provided with the meeting book. The Committee had a spirited discussion about the program, generally recognizing the issues Sara had raised but unwilling to consider a wholesale change in the emphasis to the program. Before the discussion could conclude however time ran out. Anita encouraged members to contact Sara with any concerns and comments and stated we would bring the matter back at the March meeting

The stated end time for the meeting having been reached, Victoria as Chair adjourned the meeting.