

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

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

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2019**

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

Chair Nina Fialkow called the meeting to order at 10 AM

**Committee Members Present**

Nina Fialkow, Chair of Executive Committee and Mass Cultural Council  
Victoria Marsh, Chair of Grants Committee  
Troy Siebels, Co-chair of Advocacy Committee  
Jo-Ann Davis, Member At Large

**Other Council Members Present**

Karen Barry

**Staff members present** were

Anita Walker, Executive Director  
David Slatery, Deputy Director  
Greg Liakos, External Relations Director  
Jen Lawless, Operations Director

Nina Fialkow opened the meeting by reading the following

I, Nina Fialkow as chair of Mass Cultural Council's Executive Committee, hereby call this meeting to order.

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 Mass Cultural Council's Executive Director and senior staff to participate in today's meeting

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.

Nina then asked Executive Director Anita Walker for her report. Anita reported that we had been selected for an audit by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and that a federal auditor had been onsite in the past week. Anita reminded the Committee that we receive around \$900,000 in annual funding from the NEA. She further related how in the past few years, the NEA had been begun auditing its state partnership programs (in addition to individual project grants) and the state arts agencies and regional arts organizations receiving larger amounts had been audited. Anita asked Dave to report on his meeting with auditor. Dave reported that he and the fiscal staff had met with the auditor at an exit meeting on the previous Friday. Dave reported that while the auditor had found certain reportable items, the findings were somewhat "light" and the auditor further noted the high degree of professionalism and

dedication of the staff to their work and reported that the grantees she spoke with also held the agency in high regard.

Anita next floated a suggestion as to moving Council meetings next year from Tuesdays to Thursdays (which they had been previously until moved to accommodate a now-departed member's schedule) and changing the start time from Noon to 1:00 pm. The Committee Members were in general agreement with changing the start time but thought changing the meeting day might be more of a problem with existing schedules.

Nina then called for a vote on the minutes of the July 22, 2019 Executive Committee meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the July 22, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Executive Committee at its August 13, 2019 Meeting.

At this point Nina asked Anita to make a presentation on the proposed FY20 Budget and Spending Plan. Anita indicated that this presentation and plan had been developed internally with staff and was today presented as a draft to the Executive Committee. Anita then proceeded with a 45 minute PowerPoint presentation, copies of which are available upon request.

At the end of the presentation, the Committee members offered the following comments on a revised presentation for the full Council on August 27

- Please spell out all acronyms or provide a list of frequently- used ones for Members who are not as familiar with them;
- Explain in detail what the "grants management system" will consist of;
- Please provide further data showing the amount and impact of the Cultural Facilities Fund;
- Describe the Hireculture.org jobs board that the agency maintains in greater detail
- Generally condense and streamline the presentation as there is a great deal to cover.

At this point Nina asked Deputy Director Dave Slatery to summarize the detailed financial report for FY 20 included with the meeting materials. Dave referred to the memo and attached spreadsheet contained in the materials and asked if there were any questions.

Jo-Ann Davis indicated that she thought today's presentations and reports were very helpful. Nina indicated that she found the financial plans for FY20 to be sound and noted the breadth of work being done and believed the staff to behave been strategic about deploying the financial resources in support of the Council's mission and appropriately maintaining its operations. Jo-Ann echoed these sentiments and stated the efforts were innovative and visionary. Victoria Marsh added that she believed it was very impressive.

At this point, Nina asked for a vote to recommend the presented FY20 Budget and Spending Plan to the full Council. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously held

**WHEREAS,** the General Court of the Massachusetts State Legislature has appropriated a budget of \$18,180,000 to the Mass Cultural Council for FY20;

**WHEREAS,** Mass Cultural Council staff has presented a recommended FY20 Budget and Spending Plan (the "Plan") to the Executive Committee at its August 13, 2019 Meeting,

**NOW THEREFORE,** it is hereby

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council approve the Plan presented to the Executive Committee at its August 13, 2019 Meeting

Nina then asked for a vote to approve the agenda submitted for the August 27 Council Meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously held

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Committee approve the draft August 27, 2019 Mass Cultural Council Agenda presented to the Executive Committee at its August 13, 2019 Meeting.

Nina then asked Council Member Karen Barry who had been attending the meeting as an observer if she had any questions or comments she wished to make. Karen had previously asked Nina for the opportunity to meet with the Committee and ask questions. Karen indicated she was concerned that with language that was contained in the Council's state budget line item this year and that it indicated a closer scrutiny of the Council's spending and its reputation. Karen was concerned about implementation of a 2% across-the-board adjustment of manager salaries which was referenced in the FY 20 plan presented and whether said increase should apply to the Executive Director. Karen referred to language in the Council's Enabling Act regarding annual compensation approval and referring to the Council's practice of following Executive Branch action on manager salaries and stated that the most recent Executive Branch action did not include Secretaries and Agency-heads so she felt that the 2% increase should not apply to the Executive Director. In a general conversation that followed, staff (Anita and Dave) indicated that 1) the Council had always voted on across the board adjustments for all managers including the Executive Director thus following the language in the Enabling Act and 2) that the Council had a practice of following or being guided by Executive Branch practice in terms of across-the-board manager salary adjustments but not all aspects of their program (because they did not apply) and 3) the Executive Branch agency-heads and secretaries who did not participate in the recent 2% adjustment had received a 5% raise last December in which the Council's Executive Director did not participate- the Council's Executive Director had over the years since 2009 simply received the same adjustment as all managers.

There being no more business to come before the Council, Nina as Chair adjourned the meeting.