



Power of culture

COUNCIL MEETING BOOK

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

OF

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022

[blank]

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING BOOK
TUESDAY, MARCH 22,2022**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Agenda and Resolutions	1
1. Open Meeting Law	4
3. Minutes -153 RD Meeting	7
4. Agency Updates	19
8. Finance report	31
9. Memorandum re Contribution to CFF	33
10. Cultural Investment Portfolio Changes Presentation	35
10a. memorandum Regarding Gateway program	46

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022: 10:00 AM TO NOON

BROADCAST MEETING

MEETING WILL BE LIVESTREAMED AT [March 2022 Meeting of the Mass Cultural Council - YouTube](#)

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE POSTED AT
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>
UNDER "MARCH 22, 2022 COUNCIL MEETING"

AGENDA

VOTE

1. Call to Order, Welcomes and Open Meeting Law Notice
 - *Nina Fialkow, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (Open Meeting Law Notice)*
2. Mission Moment
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director (Introduction)*
 - *Precious Perez, Artist (song)*
3. Minutes of 153rd Council Meeting X
 - *Nina Fialkow, Chair*
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director (reads the roll))*
4. Chair Report
 - *Nina Fialkow, Chair*

5. Executive Director's Report
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*
 - a. Agency Updates
6. Advocacy & Legislative Report
 - *Bethann Steiner, Public Affairs Director*
7. Cultural Equity and Access Report
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*
 - *Cathy Cheng-Anderson, Director of People & Culture*
8. FY22 Financial Report
 - *David Slatery, Deputy Director*
9. Discussion Regarding State Pandemic Relief Funds
 - *Michael Bobbitt, Executive Director*
 - a. Summary of Public Input Process
 - b. Potential Uses for Funds
 - c. Contribution to Cultural Facilities Fund 2022 funding round X
 - *Jay Paget, Program Director, Cultural Facilities Fund*
10. Grants Committee Report
 - *Jo-Ann Davis, Chair, Grants Committee*
 - a. Presentation regarding Cultural Investment Portfolio program
 - *Sara Glidden, Program Manager, Cultural Investment Portfolio.*
11. Adjourn

MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022

10:00 AM-NOON

RESOLUTIONS

Minutes- January 27, 2022

RESOLVED: that the Council approves the minutes of the January 27, 2022 Council Meeting in the form presented to the Council.

Contribution to Cultural Facilities Funds

RESOLVED: that the Council approve the contribution of \$7.16 million of so-called "State Pandemic Relief Funds" made available under Massachusetts Immediate COVID Recovery Needs Act (Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021, Section 2, Line item 1599-20430 to the current round of funding under Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund program (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 23G, Secs 42-43).

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 meetings. This meeting is being broadcast to the public on a publicly available YouTube channel as described in the posted meeting notice.

Instructions on how to contact the Council with questions or problems accessing the broadcast are also included in such notice. Only Council members, staff and invited guests will be provided access to the Zoom 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 may be required to 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.

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.

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A VIRTUAL OPEN MEETING USING ZOOM OR OTHER
VIDEOCONFERENCING PLATFORMS WHEN THERE ARE SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS**

(adapted from several sources)

- In order to minimize background noise, please mute microphone when not speaking.
- Please raise hand in order to be recognized by the chair.
- In order for all members to have an opportunity to speak and be heard, please wait to speak until specifically recognized by the chair.
- If there are questions, please direct them to the chair and the chair will then recognize the appropriate person to respond.
- Please limit statements to three minutes.
- The chair will reserve the right to limit discussion in order to allow sufficient time for every member to be heard who wishes to speak.
- Modify Video Settings to “Hide all non-video participants”- this will make it easier to follow who is speaking and participating
- In the event of a service interruption during a Zoom call due to hackers, so-called “zoom bombing” or other technical difficulties, staff will indicate the call is to be terminated. Please exit the call and staff will circulate instructions by email for a new Zoom call to continue the meeting.



Power of culture

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

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED-FIFTY THIRD MEETING
OF
MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022

ONLINE MEETING

Council Members Present were

Nina Fialkow, Chair
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair
Barbara Schaffer Bacon
Karen Barry
Kathleen Castro
Jo-Ann Davis
Sherry Dong
Simone Early
Karen Hurvitz (lost connection midway through meeting)
Matthew Keator
Allyce Najimy
Troy Siebels
Cecil Barron Jensen

Also Present were Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Michael J. Bobbitt, David Slatery, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner, Kelly Bennett, Dan Blask, Maggie Holtzberg, Cheyenne Cohn-Postell, Sara Glidden, Tom Luongo, Ann Petruccelli Moon, and Carmen Plazas; and poet Krysten Hill.

Chair Nina Fialkow called the meeting to order at 10:02am and asked Deputy 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

Prepared on 2/24/22

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, 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 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.

Nina then recognized Council Member Karen Hurvitz who had requested a moment to speak about Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Karen thanked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for agreeing with her regarding the importance of the day and offering her the opportunity to say a few words. Karen stated that today is a day to remember the six million Jews who were murdered because of a systemic racist plan devised to exterminate them between 1933 and 1945. January 27th was designated by the United Nations as Holocaust Remembrance Day as this was the day in 1945 when the infamous Nazi slave labor camp Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Soviet army. Karen stated that it is important to remember the victims who do not even have graves, and it is insufficient but important to mourn. Karen stated that it is also important for young people to learn about genocide and Governor Baker last month signed a bill into law requiring middle and high schools in Massachusetts to include instruction on the history of genocide in their curriculum. She then asked her fellow Council Members to join her in a moment of silence in observation of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

After a moment of silence, Nina thanked Karen and welcomed all to the 153rd meeting of the Mass Cultural Council. She thanked Michael Bobbitt for his leadership over the past year, as he had recently marked one year as the Agency's Executive Director, and thanked Agency staff for continuing to support the cultural sector with wisdom and kindness. Nina let Council Members know that the Executive Committee met recently to discuss the Executive Director's vacation time and confirm that his vacation accrual rate had been affirmed at five weeks per year upon his hiring; that information is now in writing and is identical to the accrual rate of former Executive Director, Anita Walker had when she retired. Nina also let Council Members know that two Members had stepped off the Council since the last meeting in September: Robert Price and Susan Leff. Nina then introduced Program Officer Dan Blask.

Dan let Council Members know that Krysten Hill, a 2020 Mass Cultural Council Artist Fellow in poetry, was joining the meeting today to read some of her poetry. Krysten is the author of *How Her Spirit Got Out* and the recipient of the 2017 Jean Pedrick Chapbook Prize. Dan expressed his gratitude to Krysten not only for coming to today's meeting to share her work, but also for unveiling a new way of seeing the world through her poetry. Krysten thanked Dan and the Council Members for inviting her to the meeting and read two of her poems aloud: "Damn I Need a Minute" and "I Thought I Had My Mama's Green Thumb."

Nina thanked Krysten. She then asked Council Members if they had reviewed the minutes of the August Council Meeting and September Special Council Meeting and asked for a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Sherry Dong moved to approve the minutes; Jo-Ann Davis seconded the motion. By roll call vote, and noting that Lillian Do, Ann Murphy, and Che Anderson were absent, all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Council approves the minutes of the 152nd Council Meeting held August 24, 2021 and the September 21, 2021 Special Council Meeting in the form presented to the Council at its January 27, 2022 Meeting.

Nina then asked Michael Bobbitt for his Executive Director's report.

Michael thanked Nina, Krysten, and Karen. He mentioned that he continues to send a monthly update to the Council outlining his work and hopes this monthly communication is helpful. His current priorities include finding operational efficiencies, the new Grants Management System – Michael thanked Jen Lawless, Scott Hufford, and Evelyn Nellum for their efforts, and continuing to roll out FY22 grants. Michael is also focused on building out HR operations and mentioned that the Agency had recently hired a new Director of People & Culture, Catherine Cheng-Anderson, who would give a presentation later in the meeting. The Agency is also working to improve its fiscal compliance and hired Tom Luongo as its Fiscal Operations & Compliance Officer in the fall. Michael and the staff are continuing to pursue the Agency's new racial equity plan and recently had deep conversations led by Program Managers Erik Holmgren and Sara Glidden around its service agenda, which staff would seek to refine in FY23. Additionally, staff is focused on the Agency's ARPA allocation from the recent Immediate Covid Relief Act signed into law in late 2021 and held a public input session on January 24th which Michael co-chaired with Council Member Jo-Ann Davis. Written comments from the public pertaining to the Agency's ARPA plans are being accepted through February 7th. Staff is working to present a spending plan to the Council for such funds in alignment with the spending plan for FY23.

Nina thanked Michael for his update, and Michael and Jo-Ann for co-chairing the public input session. She then asked Public Affairs Director Bethann Steiner for her Advocacy update.

Bethann echoed Michael's mention of the January 24th public input session to seek feedback and ideas pertaining to how the Agency should spend its \$60.1M Covid Relief allocation (sometimes also called ARPA funds because the act distributed federal ARPA funds although the Council's allocation comes from state funds) to support artists and cultural organizations in pandemic recovery. There were 253 participants in the session at its high point and everyone who raised their hand during the session was able to participate meaningfully. The average amount of time participants stayed in the session was 90 minutes. Staff is actively promoting the fact that written comments are being accepted through February 7th. Bethann then moved onto the state budget with a lot of good news to share. For the first time in eight years Mass Cultural Council is starting the state budget process not trying to get back to where it was in the previous fiscal year. The Governor released his budget proposal and included \$20.4M for Mass Cultural Council which represents the largest allocation the Baker-Polito Administration has ever proposed for arts and culture, and a 1.9% increase to Agency operations. Bethann looked at the history of funding proposed by the administration and noted that their first budget in FY16 included \$11.7M for Mass Cultural Council, proposed in FY22 (last year) \$16.3M and staff had to work with the legislature to get back to level funding. Starting out at \$20.4M which is a 25.1% increase from the Administration's last proposal is extremely positive and says a good deal about the Agency's efforts to tell the story of the cultural sector. The budget will go to the House and Senate. The Joint Committee on Ways & Means will host a hearing and Mass Cultural Council will testify at it. The Advocacy Committee meets February 15th to discuss and decide what the Agency's request should be. This is a nice start to the budget cycle.

Council Member Karen Barry commended Bethann on her efforts and stated that she wanted to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for its continued support. Karen feels the Agency is moving with great momentum and since the Administration is coming to an end, she would feel remiss if the Council did not recognize Charlie Baker and Karen Polito for the commitment they have made. Jo-Ann Davis seconded Karen's statements about Bethann and the Baker-Polito Administration.

Bethann let Council Members know that when the Agency responded to the Governor's proposal staff made sure to note their deep appreciation. Nina added the Michael has made extraordinary efforts to meet members of the cultural sector and legislators in their own communities. She then asked Michael and Catherine Cheng-Anderson for their report on Cultural Equity & Access.

Michael began by introducing the Cultural Equity & Access Initiatives team which is led by Catherine and includes Access & Inclusion Officer Charles Baldwin and Equity & Inclusion Officer Cheyenne Cohn-Postell.

Michael then asked Catherine to provide her report to the Council. Catherine greeted the Council, wished them a happy lunar new year and expressed her appreciation at having joined Mass Cultural Council three months earlier as its first ever Director of People & Culture and thanked leadership team and staff for making her feel welcome. She wished to report on her activities in the newly-constituted People Operations Unit

and also present. Along with Michael, on the internal and external progress on the Council's recently-approved Racial Equity Plan.

Catherine indicated she had rolled out the Commonwealth's Vaccine Mandate (Executive Order #585) at the agency in December which mandated a COVID-19 vaccination as a condition of employment (while offering the opportunity to request religious or medical exemption) all in alignment with the Executive Branch's policies. Although the deadline for reporting was not until January 28th, Catherine was able to report that the staff was 100% vaccinated and she thanked them for submitting attestations and vaccine cards early.

Catherine also explained she was auditing and evaluating the Agency's existing Human Resources policies, procedures, and practices including internal and external recruitment, employee retention, job design, compensation, employee benefits, employee leave, performance management, employee relations, training, and professional development. Additionally she was looking into the agency's compliance with state and federal laws and policies. These audits will help prioritize areas to better support employees, achieve the agency's goals, and advance the racial equity agenda.

Catherine reported she was also modernizing HR functions with streamlined processes and systems. One of her goals was to limit the intake and access of personal identifiable information (otherwise known as PII) and she had been modernizing HR forms and utilizing the Commonwealth's paperless self-service systems.

In addition Catherine reported on her efforts improve decision making and streamline HR processes such through deploying automated workflow software to ensure that employee requests are acknowledged, and supervisors are reviewing and approving requests in a timely manner. As an example, she mentioned developing an automated process for staff to obtain professional development funding. Catherine explained I enjoys this role as a very process-oriented person, who loves leveraging technology to increase efficiencies.

Coming up next Catherine reported that she was targeting for April 2022 as the time the Mass Cultural Council will deploy its hybrid work model. It is anticipated the staff will continue to telework and be expected to work in the office for a set number of days per month. The staff has worked remotely since March 2020; and while missing seeing each other in person, programs and services have continued to be administered with professionalism and efficiency. Currently the senior staff are working to develop a policy that strikes a balance between the benefits from working remotely while also leveraging the range of valuable collaboration opportunities when working together in physical proximity. As we further develop our policies, we will work closely with the union representing approximately half of the staff and will solicit all employees for feedback. Catherine cautioned that with many unknowns related to the pandemic, the April 2022 timeframe may change as the agency are committed to the safety of our colleagues and families.

Additionally, in July 2022 Catherine indicated that the agency is planning to deploy manager and staff evaluations. She stated that she would be focused on developing and deploying plenty of performance management training and implementation

procedures over the next few months to ensure a consistent and smooth performance management delivery.

Catherine paused and asked if Council Members had any questions about the work being done in her unit before she and Michael moved onto the portion of their presentation focused on the Racial Equity plan.

Nina asked if there was any official guidance from the Executive Branch as to how many days staff might be required to be present in the office. Catherine stated that she is working with staff to determine how many days will be required. The Administration requires one to two days per month but leaves it to the discretion of independent agencies to decide how many days to require of their staff.

Jo-Ann stated that Catherine has done a great job in the short amount of time since she joined the staff. Jo-Ann is thrilled that Catherine is bringing her expertise particularly regarding technology and data, and her organizational skills to the Agency.

Karen Barry asked if Catherine was interfacing with the Human Resources Division (HRD) or Red Book in terms of state employees or if she was working outside of HRD and Red Book. Catherine responded that she uses Red Book and HRD as her spine in terms of policy development. Anything Mass Cultural Council can do as an independent agency Catherine will typically maintain alignment with HRD, Red Book, and the collective bargaining agreement.

At this point, Catherine turned to her presentation regarding efforts around the Racial Equity Plan. The agency's goal is to recruit, hire, develop, and promote diverse talent and to achieve our internal racial equity goals, Catherine has been reviewing and updating our job postings and I've editing them to include inclusive and neutral language and to remove any bias language. Also each job posting includes Mass Cultural Council's equity statement and a link to the racial equity plan.

Furthermore, to expand on the Council's racial equity goals, job postings have been updated to only list the necessary requirements needed for the job. This demonstrates our flexibility in the job requirements and gives latitude to candidates with transferable skills.

Also Equal Employer Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action statements describing a **commitment to transparent, non-discriminatory employment practices**. Catherine has been identified as the contact person for candidates with questions regarding commitments and for candidates to request for ADA Reasonable Accommodations.

Catherine explained that she had been working to standardize the recruitment process so that it operationalizes anti-racism values intended to train and guide hiring teams in **deploying an equitable hiring process and candidate experience**, developing a an objective interview assessment that looks for a candidate **"values fit" rather than a "culture fit"** which is intended to evaluate the candidate's ability to do the job in an impartial manner and deployed mandatory training materials to hiring teams intended

to define and identify unconscious biases and identify how the biases may impact decision-making when recruiting qualified candidates.

In addition, she explained that the agency had acquired new online software to intake employment applications and automate the hiring process with the idea that, over time, it will provide data to make actionable insights to improve our hiring process and attract a diverse candidate pool.

Catherine concluded by reiterating that it is the goal of the Agency to recruit, hire, develop, and promote diverse talent at Mass Cultural Council. She let Council Members know if they had any questions for her regarding the work that has been done for internal racial equity goals, they should feel free to ask them at this time. There were no questions.

Michael stated that since the Racial Equity Plan launched there have been no negative responses. He has done several media interviews and given many presentations including one to the Joint Committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights, and Inclusion and another to Philanthropy MA. The Agency has hired four BIPOC Outreach Coordinators: Tran Vu, Erika Slocumb, Erin Genia, and Ana Masacote. Erin Genia recently arranged a meeting between Michael and Jim Peters, Executive Director of the Commission on Indian Affairs. Ana Masacote is working hard on panelist recruitment and getting more people into the new Grants Management System. Michael then asked Operations Director Jen Lawless to speak about demographics.

Jen explained that this is very much a work in progress but a couple of weeks ago she pulled a snapshot of individuals the Agency has data for in the system including applicants, grantees, vendors, panelists, anyone who might interact with Mass Cultural Council and shared a table outlining the information via PowerPoint. That PowerPoint presentation is attached to these minutes. There are currently 3,252 individual records in the system, and there is not demographic information for all entries yet. Michael reminded Council Members that the Agency was not collecting demographic information prior to the launch of the new GMS. Jen added the previously information was in multiple systems and each one was different. The Agency has never had this volume of information centralized.

Michael stated that next up would be an internal pay equity assessment reviewing manager and union salaries, and a full review of all grantmaking processes through an equity and customer service lens. The Agency has invested in translation services and is beginning to use real-time language interpretation called Kudo. Staff is also hard at work building the base level anti-racism training with Cultural Equity Learning Cohort (CELC) for the cultural sector; the hope is that training will be available next year.

Karen Barry asked if providing demographic information was optional or required and if, thus far, people have been receptive to the idea.

Jen responded that providing demographic information is optional however, when users register, they are required to indicate either a response or a desire to skip the question.

Nina then asked Jen to continue and give her full Operations report.

Jen reiterated that the Agency has all information in one Grants Management System (GMS) for the first time. This has been a big lift internally for staff and they have done an excellent job and exhibited a positive attitude throughout the process. The feedback from applicants, grantees, and reviewers is that the system is clear visually, very simple, and applicants love having one spot for all applications. Staff is still running FY22 grant programs. 329 Local Cultural Council cycles were run with the new GMS along with 32 of the Agency's own programs and four programs for FY23 are already set up. There are three cycles still open in the system and one about to open, so staff is in the thick of it. A good deal of data was brought over from the legacy system. More than 13K applications have come in since the fall and things have largely gone smoothly. So much of this is due to the commitment of the team to customer service. At the end of the grantmaking cycle staff will do a report and a breakdown of geographic and demographic information.

Karen Barry thanked Jen for her help earlier in the week finding information about grants to organizations and individuals in Brockton and then asked if as the new system is integrated if the page including a search by district feature return to the Agency's website. If so, will it include who LCCs chose for awards? Jen responded that LCC funding lists are in progress and that a connection needs to be built between this new system and the old system. Eventually, everything that is typically on that page will again appear on that page.

Cecil Barron Jensen congratulated and thanked Jen and the staff for the enormous amount of work on the GMS and stated that she is sure the system will be incredibly useful for analytics and gaining an understanding the Agency's impact.

There were no further comments or questions for Jen. Nina asked David for his Financial update.

David let Council Members know that a midyear update is included on page 61 of their meeting materials. This year the Agency is back to a more normal cycle of spending after a delayed and compressed cycle the year prior due to the pandemic. Most spending happens later in the year based on the grant cycles, and the Agency is currently where it should be. Council Members may notice that there is a new format for the presentation of financial material. Input from the Budget Task Force led staff to hire Tom Luongo as the Agency's Fiscal Information & Compliance Officer. Tom is working to present the Agency's financial reports in a stronger, more easily read format. If Council Members have feedback on the new format, they should let David know.

There are two things to note in the report: after the spending plan was approved, statewide increases on union and manager salaries were approved. Also, the STARS grant program was heavily impacted by the pandemic and although we allocated \$1.265M for the program, \$1.158 was applied for and so \$106K was reallocated to

programs in the budget. There are also two programs funded by the Klarman and Linde foundations for teaching artists. Those are now reflected in the financial report.

The Agency is continuing to collect gaming funds and projects a healthy return. Thus far expectations have been exceeded and the Agency has received \$2.44M in casino tax revenues. This is 30% ahead of where staff expected the Agency to be, and this translates into more money being available to meet need.

Finally, David reminded Council Members that the Agency had undergone a state audit in the last 8 months. The auditors spend a good deal of time talking with staff and were focused on the \$10M in federal CARES Act funds from the Baker-Polito Administration that the Agency distributed via the Cultural Organization Economic Recovery grant program (COERG) at the end of 2020 as well as the two individual artists relief programs that were run in 2020 and 2021. The audit is now complete and an exit meeting in mid-December. The results were overall very positive although auditors noted a few items such as they felt staff could have done more to verify residency and loss in the artist relief programs and questioned the \$39K in funds leftover from COERG that went into artist relief. Staff took that note and has updated internal control processes – including hiring Tom. Staff is also taking cybersecurity training. David noted that both Nina and Vice Chair Marc Carroll along with himself and Michael Bobbitt were present for the exit interview with the state auditor.

Marc Carroll stated that he felt the exit interview was positive as audits go. David asked if Council Members had any questions, and they did not. Nina then asked Grants Committee Chair Jo-Ann Davis for her report on FY22 Artist Fellowships.

Jo-Ann stated that the Grants Committee met on January 13th to review proposed artist fellowship and finalist awards in choreography, poetry, and Traditional arts and voted to recommend them to the full Council. She then asked Program Officers Dan Blask and Kelly Bennett and Program Manager Maggie Holtzberg to review the recommendations for the Council.

Dan introduced himself and stated that since 1975 the Commonwealth has awarded fellowships to individual artists. Thanks to the support of the Council, the Agency's support for artists will reach a new peak with the awards about to be shared and the ones staff will bring to the Council in May. The Agency is positioned to 150 fellowship grants in FY22, doubling last year's total. Never has the Council awarded this many artists with such a high amount of funding. Dan expressed that he has true gratitude to the Council for this. Artist fellowship grants are \$15K and finalist awards are \$5K. The program is currently comprised of twelve categories, three of which have recommendations for consideration today: choreography, poetry, and traditional arts. Dan and his colleague Kelly Bennett convened panels that reviewed applications and as part of the Agency's Racial Equity Plan and with the direct support of Michael Bobbitt worked to have more equitable representation on them. Dan was pleased to note that approximately 70% of panelists and readers for this latest round of panels were BIPOC. Dan is pleased and proud of the group of artists the panelists are recommending, and staff would love to share a sampling of their work right now. Dan then shared a PowerPoint presentation

including slides of work by recommended artists and he along with Kelly Bennett and Maggie Holtzberg walked Council Members through the recommendations. At the end of the presentation Dan again expressed his appreciation to the Council for supporting artists and asked if they had any comments or questions.

Barbara Schaffer Bacon stated that it is wonderful to see the range of work included in the recommendations and that she is thrilled about Finalist awards increasing to \$5K as it is a far more meaningful recognition.

Kathleen Castro echoed Barbara's comments and commended Dan, Kelly, and Maggie on a job well done adding that Dan would be doing a workshop for artists in Bristol County next month.

Jo-Ann thanked Dan, Kelly, and Maggie and stated that it was time for the Council to vote. Jo-Ann is asking for approval of the recommended FY22 grant awards in poetry, choreography, and traditional arts as they have been presented today. Karen Barry moved to approve the recommendations; Kathleen seconded the motion. By roll call vote, and noting that Lillian Do, Ann Murphy, Che Anderson and Karen Hurvitz were absent, all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: To approve the FY22 Artist Fellowship grant awards in the disciplines of Poetry, Choreography and Traditional Arts as presented to the Council at its January 27, 2022 meeting.

[Karen Hurvitz contacted staff after the meeting and let them know she had had connection problems and if she had been able to be present would have voted for the grants.]

Jo-Ann then let Council Members know the Grants Committee had also reviewed recommendations for the Gaming Mitigation program and the Executive Committee had also reviewed a request for an increase to that funding. She then asked Program Manager Sara Glidden to further explain.

Sara began by stating that she was stepping in to support Cheyenne Cohn-Postell who is doing a wonderful job administering the Gaming Mitigation program but who is out sick today. Cheyenne created systems to help applicants through the process and worked to revise the definition of "touring artist" as it pertains to the program. It is important to note that applications were based on calendar year 2019 data since 2020 was so heavily disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff received 39 applications and all 39 were eligible. Three applicants were new to the program, and 12 grantees from the first round of the program did not return to apply for this second round. Staff will follow up with those 12 grantees to learn more about why they did not reapply. The goal once staff looked at the applications was to maintain level funding for the applicants, hence the request for the additional allocation of \$675K that Jo-Ann previously mentioned.

There were no questions and Jo-Ann stated that it was time for a vote to approve the

allocation of an additional \$675K and to approve the grant recommendations for this round of the Gaming Mitigation Program.

Sherry Dong moved to approve the allocation and grant recommendations. Barbara seconded the motion. By roll call vote, and noting that Lillian Do, Ann Murphy, Karen Hurvitz and Che Anderson were absent, and that Troy Siebels had recused himself from the vote, all were in favor, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve the allocation of an additional \$675,000 in monies to the next round of the Gaming Mitigation Program and approve grants under the Gaming Mitigation Program to the 39 organizations described in the memorandum presented to this meeting.

[Karen Hurvitz contacted staff after the meeting and let them know she had had connection problems and if she had been able to be present would have voted for the grants.]

Nina thanked Jo-Ann and moved to the final item on the agenda: a discussion of preparations for a new strategic plan for the Agency. Nina asked Michael to lead the discussion.

Michael reminded Council Members that they had voted to extend the 2018-2022 plan for one more year as there was a good deal left to be accomplished in the plan. Next fiscal year the Agency will begin the design phase for its next strategic plan. This means that Nina, as Chair, will appoint a task force comprised of Council Members to support the yearlong process. The task force will help to distribute an RFP that will be drafted by staff to strategic planning professionals and will help staff vet candidates. The goal will be to have a kickoff launch with the strategic planning consultant next fall. Council Members will be contacted by Nina if she will be inviting them to serve on the task force.

Barbara asked if we are looking at calendar years or fiscal years and Michael responded that we are looking at fiscal years. Late winter/spring the task force will be assembled and will review the RFP and interview prospective candidates.

Nina noted that while some of the Council participated in crafting the current strategic plan, it might be helpful to circulate the plan to the full Council as a reminder. She added that while she will be appointing a task force, she will welcome input from all Council Members.

David reminded Council Members that while strategic planning is something all organizations do; the Agency is required to do this as part of the terms of its federal grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The Agency has already reported to NEA that the current plan would be extended. That concluded the discussion on strategic planning.

Kathleen Castro stated that she missed holding Council Meetings in person but greatly enjoyed hearing from Krysten Hill at the beginning of today's meeting and would love to

hear from artists at future meetings. Michael responded that it is the hope to have a "mission moment" at all meetings going forward.

Nina agreed that it was uplifting to hear from Krysten and looks forward to making this a regular part of Council Meetings moving forward.

Jo-Ann asked if there were dates available for the next set of meetings and David stated that the dates had been determined previously and staff knows that meetings will remain virtual through at least April. Staff will circulate a list of the meeting dates again in the weeks ahead

Karen Barry asked if it would be possible to receive meeting materials a bit earlier so that the Council could have more time to review their packets before the meeting and Michael responded that staff would aim to get Council Members their meeting books one week prior to each Council Meeting.

That brought the Council to the end of its Meeting agenda and Nina, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:34am.

To: Mass Cultural Council
Fr: Staff
Dt: March 22, 2022
Re: Agency Updates

EXECUTIVE

Committees. The Executive Committee met on March 8 to review and approve the agenda for today's Council meeting and also the request on today's agenda to make a contribution of so-called "State ARPA" funds to the current round of funding of the Cultural Facilities Fund. The Grants Committee met on March 15 to preview a presentation of proposed future changes to Cultural Investment Portfolio program. Additionally, the Advocacy Committee met on February 15 to discuss the Agency's proposed request for funding as part of the FY23 state budget process.

Upcoming Meetings. Due to number of scheduling conflicts, we have needed to update several the upcoming Committee and Council Meetings for the rest of 2022. The current schedule of upcoming Council Meetings is set forth below. In the event that any further changes are needed, Ann Moon will contact the members with updated information and zoom links.

May

Executive Committee: Tuesday, May 3rd, 10am

Grants Committee: Tuesday, May 3rd, 1pm

Council Meeting: Monday, May 23rd at 10am

June

Grants Committee: Tuesday, June 14th, 10am

July

Executive Committee: Monday, July 25th at 10am

August

Executive Committee: Monday, August 8th at 10am

Grants Committee: Tuesday, August 9th at 1pm

Council Meeting: Thursday, August 25th at 10am

LEGISLATIVE, ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FY23 State Budget Update: Mass Cultural Council testified during the FY23 budget hearing on the [Governor's H. 2 spending proposal](#) on Tuesday, March 1, 2021. Executive Director Michael J. Bobbitt, Deputy Director David Slatery and Public Affairs Director Bethann Steiner [presented testimony](#) before members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means outlining the Agency's funding request for the coming fiscal year, \$27.4 million. The Committee had no questions and did not outline any concerns, however four members (Rep. Ferrante, Rep. Schmid, Rep. Barrett, and Sen. Gobi) all shared their support for the Agency's programs and work. This figure was reached after a meeting of the Council Advocacy's Committee and in consultation with our advocacy partners MASSCreative and Mass Humanities. A \$27.4M appropriation, if enacted, would represent roughly a \$7 million increase to Mass Cultural Council's operating budget, enable the Agency to increase both the sizes and the number of grants made to artists and cultural organizations in FY23, and would match the state's highest ever investment made through the state budget into the cultural sector, which occurred in 1988.

Following the hearing Michael and Bethann met with Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development Committee Chair Rep. Fiola to discuss the hearing and our testimony, the Chair felt our presentation was "well-framed" and "not outlandish." We agreed to stay in touch as the budget building process continues.

As such, Mass Cultural Council is now prepping to launch a budget advocacy campaign to "Go back to '88". During March, April, and May we will meet with members of the House and Senate to build support for this budget ask and secure commitments to co-sponsor any necessary amendments. Stakeholders will be encouraged to reach out to their legislators at key steps, and MASSCreative and Mass Humanities will amplify all efforts to build support as well.

The House budget debate is in late April; the Senate budget debate is in late May. FY23 begins on July 1, 2022.

Legislative Reports: On March 1, 2022, Mass Cultural Council submitted two reports to the Legislature and Executive Branch, as directed by state law: an annual report on the Gaming Mitigation Grant Program and an update on the Agency's efforts to develop pandemic relief grant programs for the cultural sector. Both reports have been shared with Council Members and staff. Should you require an additional copy please reach out to Bethann.

Public Affairs: The Public Affairs team works to amplify the Agency's grant making and grant opportunities via the Agency's website, social media, e-newsletters, legislative outreach, and press releases to media outlets. This continued and coordinated outreach strategy generates several dozen social media mentions from cultural sector leaders, stakeholders, grantees, and legislators as well as stories celebrating these investments in media outlets statewide. Further, we are working with program staff to employ new applicant recruitment tools, such as posting a [form to request language translation services in various languages](#) online, supporting a virtual Info Session conducted by AAPI COVID relief program staff in [Cantonese](#), and exploring the use of additional motion graphics ([example](#)) to further raise awareness about the Agency and its programs online. Recently Communication Manager Carmen Plazas worked to produce a new "We Are Mass Cultural Council" [intro clip](#) for the Agency which will be used across our social media platforms.

CULTURAL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO (CIP)

Projects Grant Program

CIP Project grants are one-year grants of \$2,500 for specific cultural public programming. The Projects category includes organizations whose missions are not fully cultural, and organizations that do not receive Gateway or Portfolio grants. As of November 16, 2021 deadline, 220 organizations submitted applications. Of those, 176 organizations are being awarded Projects grants. A list of grantees is available on our Power of Culture blog at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/projects-grants-to-support-173-cultural-organizations-across-the-commonwealth/>.

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Arts & Culture COVID

Recovery Grant. The FY22 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) COVID Recovery Program was established through a legislative earmark sponsored by the Members of the House Asian Caucus, funded in the Mass Cultural Council's FY22 line-item of the annual state operating budget. The goal of the program is to provide pandemic recovery funds to entities that focus on one or more Asian ethnicity and conduct cultural events, cultural education, or cultural performances. Mass Cultural Council will award a total of \$970,000 in grant funds to this purpose. The number of grants and the size of grants will be determined as part of the application review.

The application opened on February 7, 2022. Sara Glidden and Jay Wong presented an information session in English, and then re-recorded the session with Cantonese translation. This is the first time that Mass Cultural Council has provided an information session in a language other than English. The application deadline is March 23, 2022.

Other Activities. Although the CIP team has not been conducting site visits, we continue to provide consultations with CIP organizations and potential applicants through online platforms. This has included supporting current grantees and applicants in the use of our new grants management system.

Grantee FY21 Year-End Reporting & Compliance. At the end of FY21, twelve Portfolio or Gateway grantees had 'holds' on their FY22 grant contracts, due to delays in fulfilling annual requirements, or other concerns. All but three of the organizations have cleared the hold, and CIP staff is working with grantees to address the remaining concerns.

On February 17, Kalyn King and Sara Glidden hosted a webinar to guide CIP grantees through annual reporting requirements and processes. Over 140 organizations participated in this webinar.

CIP Staff. We are happy to welcome our new Program Officer, Lillian Lee. Lillian joins us from her position as Director of Grants and Campaigns at Berkshire Theatre Group in Pittsfield. She will be working with the mid-sized CIP organizations and taking over the Gaming Mitigation program.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

The Community Initiative includes the LCC program, Festivals Program and the Cultural Districts.

Local Cultural Councils. The Community team is working with the 329 cultural councils across the state to complete the FY22 Local Cultural Council grant cycle. The majority of councils have submitted their final reports and have received their FY22 Allocation. Officers are working with other councils who are in the process completing the reports. The pandemic has created another challenging year for councils and the team has been working with councils to continue to support their needs and help them complete the grant cycle and get funds out to the approved applicants. In addition, we have provided resources to the councils that have included a series of webinars, office hours and community check ins.

Festivals. The Festivals Grant Program is now in its' 13th grant round and has supported close to 1,000 festival producers in the Commonwealth. The spring/summer grant cycle opened on January 10th with a deadline of March 1, 2022. We have received a total of 244 festival applications the highest number in a grant cycle to date. The grant amount has changed from \$500 to \$1500 for this fiscal year and is one of the causes of the increased number of applications. This grant cycle, we have continued to allow for recovery and rebuilding grants for festivals in addition to producing festivals, working off of the information we gathered through the Festival Lab that was conducted in FY20. That unique

cohort program focused on helping festivals understand how to better market their festivals and how to further engage audiences beyond their festival program. The Festival Program successfully completed the fall/winter grant cycle in November and awarded 99 festivals for a total of \$148,000.

Festival applications are reviewed through an in-house review process, based on the eligibility requirements of the program. Regional diversity is taken into consideration.

Cultural Districts Initiative (CDI)

FY22 CDI Grant. Currently 49 Districts have been approved for grants of up to \$7500 for a total of \$367,500. A blog post and release on these grant announcements was posted and released in February.

New Cultural Districts. Currently we have two districts that are on track for a designation vote at the next council meeting: Lexington and Cummington. The team will work with the new CDI manager structure a formal site visit for those stakeholders based on our approved COVID protocols. East Somerville's application is currently paused. The Executive Director of their proposed management entity has moved to a new job and a replacement has not yet been selected. Additionally, we hope to have one of Harwich's two proposals moved forward before the end of the fiscal year.

Preliminary Discussions. Brookline has picked up momentum on a District designation. The community was previously torn over which area in town to propose, Coolidge Corner or their Town Center. They have finally decided on the Town Center and have moved their focus to that. We have also been approached recently by the town of Adams. They have scheduled their community meeting and plan on meeting with staff soon after that to get a better picture of what is next.

Re-designation Process. Eight Districts are up for renewal in 2022: Arlington, Maynard, North Adams, Provincetown, Roxbury, Shovel Town, Turners Falls, and Wellfleet. We are in the process of getting letters of interest from the chief elected/appointed officials.

ARTISTS

FY22 Artist Fellowships: The deadline for applications to the FY22 Artist Fellowships in Drawing & Printmaking, Fiction/Creative Nonfiction, and Painting was January 24, 2022. Staff is engaging panelists and readers in the review process.

Panel meetings for these categories will take place via Zoom in April, and those panel's recommendations will go to the May Grants Committee and Council meetings.

ArtSake: We continue to support the field with online artist resources on ArtSake. So far this fiscal year, the site has had 94,982 pageviews, averaging just under 12,000 per month. Popular features include the weekly "artist opportunities" roundups and the "creative space classifieds" page which lists available work and live/work spaces for artists, as well as artist discussion posts like "How Do Social, Environmental, and Political Issues Impact Your Art?"

In the Field: On March 12, Dan Blask will speak about Mass Cultural Council support for artists, via Zoom, to the Independent Artists' Workshop on the South Coast. This workshop was arranged by Council Member Kathleen Castro. Dan continues to serve on the New England Foundation for the Arts grants panel for the New England States Touring Program, which will meet in May to award grants supporting New England organizations and artists.

Apprenticeships: We launched the FY23 cycle of Traditional Arts Apprenticeships in early February. Maggie Holtzberg is busy counseling applicants and monitoring applications. To help spread the word about this grant opportunity, Maggie met with BIPOC Outreach Coordinators Ana Masacote and Erin Genia and introduced Carmen Plazas to two previous Apprenticeship grantees, fluent in Spanish, for a live interview on El Mundo/ Channel 7.

As part of our film project work, Maggie has been making site visits to interview and film some of our FY22 apprenticeships. When complete, these short films will tell the story of how an ancient music tradition (North Indian tabla) and two craft traditions (boot making and bird taxidermy) are being successfully passed on through dedicated, one-on-one mentoring.

Public Programming Partnerships: Our work with Revels, Inc. Continues. Maggie has recorded three interviews that are part of the companion podcast to Revels' [Musical Connects Series](#). The next interview will take place this month with Christiane Karam, a Balkan and Middle Eastern vocalist.

Lowell Folk Festival. We have heard this will return this summer after a two-year hiatus. The theme of the Folk Craft area is "Crafting Sound: Making and Restoring Musical Instruments." Maggie is identifying potential craftspeople, interviewing them, and drafting content for web and tent signage.

EDUCATION & CREATIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (CYD)

The first three months of 2022 have seen the rollout of virtual site visits to 61 organizations as part of the YouthReach grant cycle, as well as our continued

work with teaching artists in the META and CYD Fellowships and the continued exploration of the role that youth can play in our agency and in our field. STARS school residencies are bringing creative learning to schools in whatever format (virtual, in-person, hybrid) the schools choose. Poetry Out Loud and National History Day–MA contests are reaching their final contest phases, to be run virtually for the second year.

STARS Residencies. While schools have been back in person for quite some time, a number have been or remain closed to visitors, so residencies are taking place virtually, in-person, and in hybrid format. We asked all applicants to be prepared to carry out their residencies virtually just for this contingency. Cultural partners are holding sessions outside when feasible, particularly the environmental science residencies. We are also hearing from some cultural partners that some schools have decided not to go forward with their residencies due to the continuing challenges that educators are facing. Those grant funds will be returned to us and re-programmed in this fiscal year. Virtual site visits are taking place in March, April and May to see the work in action.

Poetry Out Loud – Massachusetts. [Poetry Out Loud](#) is the national poetry recitation contest for high school students sponsored by the NEA and the Poetry Foundation. Now in its 17th year, our Massachusetts program is implemented by the Huntington Theatre Education Department in partnership with Mass Cultural Council. March is the time for the regional semi-final contests for school champions, followed by the state finals. Once again, the contest is all virtual to stay consistent with the national finals. Extensive recruiting by the Huntington Theatre Education Department this fall was very successful: 47 schools, 2 organizations and 9 individuals (no school sponsor) registered to compete. Most important, teacher and student participation increased significantly: the number of teachers increased by 50% to 339 and the number of students participating doubled to 14,391. Three regional semi-finals will be broadcast via Zoom on March 12 (at three different times.) The state finals will be broadcast via Zoom on Sunday March 13 at 9:30AM. These are rare opportunities to hear young people bring poems to life. For viewing times and to register to watch any or all broadcasts, click [here](#).

National History Day – Massachusetts. March brings another statewide national competition, [National History Day – Massachusetts](#) for middle and high school students. This is an affiliate of National History Day, sponsored by the National History Day organization and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The program is implemented in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). For the second year, this state competition is also completely virtual. This year's theme is timely: "Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences." Mass Cultural Council provides a grant to MHS to increase access to the program for students and teachers statewide. Deputy Director Dave Slatery volunteer serve as judge in the March 6 Greater Boston

Regional competition for Massachusetts History and reports that the projects he viewed were quite impressive.

YouthReach. Beginning in late January 2022 the Creative Youth Development team began the site visit component of the YouthReach grant cycle work. In all we will be visiting 61 organizations alongside panelists who will be evaluating each program. For the first time in the 27-year history of the program we are doing these visits virtually. The creativity of our field has been on full display as organizational staff, youth and partners have found ways to connect authentically and create impactful visits. The panels for YouthReach will take place in June and will continue to be public panels, meaning applicants may listen in on the deliberations.

We are also continuing to convene monthly conversations with the national Creative Youth Development field in partnership with the Clare Rose Foundation and with the Heinz Endowments in Pittsburgh. These conversations, which began during COVID, continue to be a place to share effective practices, challenges, and pivots in the Creative Youth Development field. Our next meeting in late March will be a youth led meeting that will be led by youth working with us in the CYD BIPOC Alumni Council.

The META Fellowship and the CYD Fellowship. Our work with just over 70 Teaching Artists from schools and organizations throughout the Commonwealth is continuing with sessions focused on youth development training for artists as well as the roll out of the first grants of the program. Each Fellow is eligible to apply for professional or artistic development funding for experiences they feel will support their growth as artists and educators. These experiences, alongside site visits to peer programs and workshops, continue to represent the largest teaching artist support programs in the United States.

CYD BIPOC Alumni Council

Our Youth Ambassador, Rajaiah Jones, has been having discussions with many CYD organizations and state arts councils, including Arizona, Washington, and Michigan, around youth leadership and alumni relationships. Our research is being presented at the CYD community call at the end of March and will be spotlighting six organizations and six topics, such as 'Alumni on Boards.'

Tomorrow our Alumni Researcher, Wize, will be helping facilitate and representing the Alumni Council at a Mental Health & CYD Think Tank conversation with three CYD researchers, [Ivonne Chand O'Neal](#), [Niccki Pearce Dawes](#), and [Arielle Brown](#). We are going to investigate the role that CYD organizations play in tandem, collaboration, and place of mental health sector.

Finally, our Alumni Communications lead, Bendu, is working on writing pieces that reflect on phase one's work, such as the zine and the convenings, while also raising alumni needs and resources for phase two.

CultureRx. Beginning on January 4, 2022, all 12 organizations in the Social Prescription cohort are set to begin their individualized evaluation plans that were designed based on interviews between [Social Prescription Task Force](#) members, the organizations, and with the guidance and expertise of Evaluation Consultant, Dr. Tasha Golden. Unfortunately, for several organizations, programming was stalled due to the resurgence of the Omicron virus, making it difficult for some to finalize their referral systems when health centers were closed. Mass Cultural Council staff met with all 12 of the orgs during the last two weeks of January to assess their challenges and successes, address their evaluation questions, and to be able to report notes to the Task Force. February continued with following up, offering updated resources (see Dr. Golden's article [From Absence to Presence: Arts and Culture Help Us Redefine 'Health'](#)), and meeting with the Task Force. Dr. Golden and the Task Force have formed plans for focus groups, a survey, analysis of evaluation findings, and the reporting on individual projects that will all inform the best practices and next steps for recommendations. Some of these projects include researching how technology and platforms can help link the provider, patient, and cultural organization. Others are investigating more deeply how social prescription is working in other countries and how we can be more aware of equity and inclusivity issues regarding referrals, access, and experiences across all 12 cultural organizations. The final report will be available at the beginning of June 2022.

CULTURAL FACILITIES FUND (CFF)

On January 14th, the Cultural Facilities Fund received 138 applications for the 14th Round of the Cultural Facilities Fund. The requests by grant category were as follows:

- Capital Grant requests: 115
- Feasibility and Technical Assistance requests: 14
- Systems Replacement Plan requests: 9

The total dollar request to the Fund is \$22.1 million. The combined total development costs of all the projects in this round is \$260 million. This round the Fund has about \$7 million to grant. *(In addition, as presented elsewhere in these meeting materials, at the March 22 Council Meeting, staff will be requesting the contribution of up to \$12 million of so-called "State ARPA" funds be contributed to the current round of funding do that most , if not all, of the eligible applications will be able to be funded.)*

Application Review Process. From March 1 through 11, the Mass Cultural Council will convene six panels on Zoom to review and score the applications. Staff enlisted 24 expert panelists drawn from a variety of fields including: non-profit business planning, real estate development, capital fundraising, community development, arts administration, architecture and historic

preservation. 58% of the panelists are people of color. To give panelists sufficient time to review the materials, applications were sent to the panelists four weeks in advance of the meetings. Each panelist was carefully instructed to assess the materials in accordance with the published CFF guidelines and review criteria.

The panelists numerically score each application. Cultural Facilities Fund Program Director, Jay Paget will facilitate each panel discussion to ensure that all applications received a thorough review based on the criteria in the published guidelines. CFF Program Officer Miranda Cook will facilitate the online presentations and note taking during each panel.

Grant Approval Process. The next step in the process is to bring the panel recommendations to the CFF Advisory Committee for discussion and approval. After the Advisory Committee, the final step is a vote by the MassDevelopment Board, scheduled for mid-May.

Following the MassDevelopment Board, the Mass Cultural Council and MassDevelopment will issue grant notifications, press releases, and legislative notifications.

UP: UNIVERSAL PARTICIPATION INITIATIVE.

GRANTS

LEAD stipend. The LEAD stipend is a \$1000 professional development grant available to organizations with UP Designation. The grant supports sending a staff person to the LEAD Conference (Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability) hosted by the Kennedy Center. A total of 7 grants were awarded. The LEAD Conference will be in Raleigh NC August 1-5, 2022

PROGRAMS

Universal Participation Initiative (UP) 2023. In partnership with Open Door Arts (ODA), an access assessment survey was conducted with cultural institutions across Massachusetts. A committee from the field of Disability justice is reviewing the data to identify institutional need, service gaps, community practice, and recommend next steps for strengthening current resources.

Along with ODA, working with the Institute for Human Centered Design, several artists with disabilities, and Dr. Marian Taylor Brown (Cultural Equity Learning Community (CELC)) to evaluate efficacy and accountability of the UP Designation badge, now held by more than 100 cultural organizations.

Innovation and Learning Network (ILN) 2022. On Tuesday January 25, the UP Learning Network will kick off with featured keynote Monique Holt from Gallaudet University and Monkeyhouse (Malden) dance videos with live audio description. Peer learning sessions will occur weekly, February 1 - May 10 on

Zoom. The 45 current participants represent the 11 organizations selected for the cohort in 2022. Sessions are open for staff from all UP Designated organizations to attend starting in March. Presenting partners include the Institute for Human Centered Design, Cultural Access New England, Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Museum of Science Boston, National Center for Accessible Media, Easter Seals, RAMP'D, and the New England ADA Center.

UP office hours. Concurrent to the weekly ILN peer learning sessions, UP office hours occur weekly Thursdays Feb 3 through May 12. Cultural workers, staff from UP Designated organizations, and the 2022 ILN cohort are invited to join in topical conversations on Access.

Learn.PYD. Through Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), a supplemental online learning module is provided to the 2022 ILN cohort and staff from UP Designated organizations.

OTHER

Cultural Equity and Access. We are working on designing an Accessibility plan that ties Disability Justice to the practices of the Racial Equity Plan, beginning in FY23.

UBUNTU Research and Development. Phase 2 of the anti-bias training offered to the 3 Learning Networks of the Mass Cultural Council (UP, RX, and Card to Culture) have been scheduled for March 16-22, 2022. Phase 2 consists of two Leadership Advising sessions, grouped by organizational tier; Public-facing staff, Management, and Board leadership.

Other State Activities. ADA coordinators from the organizations of the Cultural Investment Portfolio received the ODA survey and will be the recipients of the stories and steps that emerge from the data.

The UP Initiative continues to be a consultant on emerging access issues for sector events and programs in Spring 2022 including Historic New England, the Lenny Zakim Foundation, Guerilla Opera, Mount Grace Land Trust, RISCA, Somerville Art Museum, and the Broad Institute.

National Activities. Shuttered in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID health protocols and travel restrictions, the LEAD conference is scheduled to occur Aug 1 - 5 in Raleigh NC prior to moving to Boston in 2023. The LEAD conference is a national model for developing learning modules, accessible practices, and knowledge networks. The National Endowment for the Arts, the Smithsonian Institute, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has requested the participation of the UP Initiative's leadership and constituency in developing and enacting several proposals in response to DEI efforts, long term COVID data, trauma informed practices, and State Arts Agency and Regional Arts Organization

needs. Additionally, up to four Mass Cultural Council staff members are hoping to attend the 2022 LEAD Conference and are planning to apply to the Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee in May for approval per the travel policy.

To: Mass Cultural Council Board
Fr: David Slatery, Deputy Director
Date: March 22, 2022
Re: FY22 March Financial Update

At this point we are eight months through the fiscal year, and our spending is on target or below in most accounts. Spending always catches up in the final quarter of the year. Any funds unspent in this fiscal year will be applied to the annual allocation we pay as prepayments on FY23 obligations (such as to Mass Humanities (per our Memorandum of Agreement)).

After a mid-year review of the Spending Plan by the fiscal team, we have reclassified a number of items in report to the Council to insure they reflect the subaccount from which they will be paid from. With the addition of new staff, we continue to update our periodic financial reports at the Council meetings. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there are any questions or comments.

We recently submitted our annual report to the legislature on March 1 regarding of casino tax revenues under the Massachusetts Gaming Law and a copy was distributed to the Council Members by Public Affairs Director. As can be gleaned from the report, casino tax revenues remain robust. After collecting \$3.12 million in FY 21 in which the casinos were limited in operations due to COVID, we can report that in just 8 months of FY 22, collections have surpassed that amount at \$3.17 million. We will report the results of the March 15 report at the Council Meeting on March 22.

Please note we are still waiting for publication of an audit report of Mass Cultural Council from the State Auditor. As reported in January's update, we attended an exit conference in mid-December and had expected a written report by February. We have continued to receive small factual questions from the audit staff over the past several weeks, so we assume work is ongoing and we can expect the report at any time.

	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET
FY22 MCC BUDGET by LINE ITEM	FY22	FY22	FY22	FY22	FY22	FY22
						%
					VARIANCE- Actual	VARIANCE- Actual
	BOARD APPROVED	PROJECTED	EXPENDED	Budgeted	expenses compared to the	expenses compared to the
Category	as of August 24, 2021	as of 02/28/2022	as of 02/28/2022	as of 02/28/2022	Council Approved Budget	Council Approved Budget
AA-SALARIES, etc.	\$3,334,290	\$3,442,695	\$1,959,628	\$2,222,860	-\$263,231.58	58.77%
BB-TRAVEL / DPA STAFF DEVELOPMENT	\$21,000	\$21,551	\$6,075	\$14,000	-\$7,924.76	28.93%
CC-INTERNS	\$99,540	\$34,618	\$17,896	\$66,360	-\$48,464.00	17.98%
DD-MEDICARE / UNEMPLOYMENT	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$49,757	\$33,333	\$16,423.55	99.51%
EE-ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$179,950	\$165,700	\$29,374	\$119,967	-\$90,592.22	16.32%
FF-PROGRAMMATIC FACILITY EXP	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.00	0.00%
GG-RENT/UTILITIES	\$354,010	\$354,010	\$221,340	\$236,007	-\$14,666.67	62.52%
HH-ADMIN CONSULTANTS	\$214,610	\$314,500	\$188,558	\$143,073	\$45,484.17	87.86%
HH-PROGRAM CONSULTANTS	\$104,000	\$104,000	\$0	\$90,333	-\$90,333.33	0.00%
JJ-AUXILIARY CONSULTANTS	\$269,820	\$323,601	\$61,092	\$179,880	-\$118,788.25	22.64%
KK-OFFICE EQUIPMENT (Non-IT)	\$1,860	\$2,780	\$920	\$1,240	-\$320.00	49.46%
LL-EQUIPMENT LEASES / MAINTENANCE	\$25,500	\$11,500	\$3,370	\$17,000	-\$13,630.26	13.21%
UU-IT/ TELECOMMUNICATIONS	\$146,580	\$196,128	\$63,712	\$97,720	-\$34,007.84	43.47%
PP-GRANT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES	\$21,679,112	\$21,775,612	\$11,690,212	\$14,421,075	-\$2,730,863.11	54.04%
PP-PARTNERSHIPS AND RE-GRANT PROGRAM	\$834,886	\$834,886	\$0	\$556,591	-\$278,295.33	0.00%
PP-SERVICE PROJECTS	\$130,000	\$130,000	\$0	\$86,667	-\$43,333.33	0.00%
SP-LEGISLATIVE EARMARKS	\$1,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$0	\$916,667	-\$458,333.33	0.00%
PREPAY	\$140,048	\$161,868				
TOTAL	\$28,960,206	\$29,298,449	\$14,291,934	\$19,202,772	-\$4,130,876.30	
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS PER SOURCE	\$24,532,866	\$24,527,099	\$11,690,212	\$15,980,999	-\$3,510,825.11	47.88%
+ TOTAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS PER SOUR	\$4,427,340	\$4,713,320	\$2,747,124	\$3,367,175	-\$474,649.19	61.25%
= TOTAL OBLIGATIONS AMOUNT PER SOURCE	\$28,960,206	\$29,240,419	\$14,437,336	\$19,348,174	-\$3,985,474.30	49.95%
AVAILABLE FUNDS PER SOURCE	\$28,960,206	\$29,298,449	\$29,298,449	\$29,298,449		

To: Mass Cultural Council

From: Michael Bobbitt, Dave Slatery, Jen Lawless, Bethann Steiner,
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Jay Paget

Date: March 22, 2022

Re: Contribution to Cultural Facilities Fund

Under the Commonwealth's Act Relative to Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Needs enacted last December (Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021, Line item 1599-2043), Mass Cultural Council was provided \$60,147,000 to administer grant programs to assist cultural organizations and artists to recover from the pandemic. (While this Act did allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the funds provided to Mass Cultural Council are not ARPA funds and actually come from surplus state revenues so we refer them here as the "**State Pandemic Relief Funds.**") Among the permitted uses of State Pandemic Relief Funds, the legislation specifically provided that such funds could be transferred to the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF), a capital grant program existing under state law (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 23G, Secs 42-43) which Mass Cultural Council administers in partnership with MassDevelopment.

As a reminder to the Council, because of CFF statutory requirements, while Mass Cultural Council staff administers the outreach and evaluation of funding requests to CFF, approvals for awards to be made under the program are not brought to the Council but are reviewed by the statutorily-created Cultural Facilities Fund Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of MassDevelopment

Mass Cultural Council Staff has just completed the panel process for FY 22 round of CFF funding. As of the deadline for applications in January, we had received 138 applications seeking more than \$20 million in CFF awards. After panel review, Mass Cultural Council staff is ready to recommend CFF grant awards based on the rankings provided by the panel scores. There is currently \$8.66 million available (including the expenses reserve) from the Governor's annual allocation from the state's

capital plan. Using such funds, staff could recommend \$8.05 million in awards to 83 project applicants. With an additional \$7.16 million in State Pandemic Relief Funds, we could recommend up to an additional 57 awards.

As the Commonwealth's COVID Recovery Needs statute specifically permits the contribution of State Pandemic Relief Funds to the CFF and we would be able to make additional CFF awards in this funding round, **staff is recommending the Council, approve the contribution of \$7.16 million of State Pandemic Relief Funds to the current CFF round.** These additional funds will permit all of the eligible CFF applicants to be funded. This will also permit some of the State Pandemic Relief Funds to be awarded now while new programs are being developed for the balance of the State Pandemic Relief Funds in FY 23. Please note that the requested funds are based on current estimates will change slightly downward when the "eligible budget" line item review of applications is complete (this is typical and happens with each round of funding).

Staff previously brought this request to the Executive Committee on March 8 who voted unanimously to recommend a contribution of State Pandemic Relief Funds to the current CFF round of funding.

Culture Supports

Current State of Cultural Investment Portfolio

Current Values

2

- Transparency in calculation of grant amounts
- Trust that honesty about a grantee's struggles is not used against them in funding decisions
- Multi-year funding that is predictable
- Building relationships with organizations through education programs and convenings

Current Program

- 313 Portfolio Grantees – most of them moved from our old operating support program
- Gateway program as the 'on ramp' to the Portfolio2
- 31 FY21-22 Gateway grantees – 9 in their 2nd cycle, 21 in their 1st cycle. 13 not funded in the current cycle, but successful in the previous (FY19 – 20) cycle

Our Approach to Portfolio Re-design

Priorities:

3

- Maintain values, **value aligned practices** and philosophical approach to support of organizations
- Center equity throughout our process
- Consider staff capacity to manage the new process

Goals:

1. Define funding period for Portfolio grantees, and review process for renewal of funding to grantees
2. Review current CIP Gateway process
3. Redesign how funding amounts are determined to emphasize Equity Impact in the Formula

Concerns/Problems with existing program⁴

- Most current grantees are in the Portfolio based their success in competitive grant programs prior to 2010.
- These programs were based on values and criteria that we no longer prioritize.
- Grantee's expectation that funding is unending – no process for removing grantees from the program unless they fold.
- Long term/unending commitment to existing grantees locks out new applicants.

Summary of Major Changes

5

1. Portfolio becomes a 5-year grant program

2. Gateway Program is discontinued.

3. Grant amounts are formula-based

- Equity Impact points increase grant amounts to BIPOC, Gateway city, and under-resourced rural organizations (below median educational attainment and median household income). Grant amounts to be finalized with FY23 budget information.

1. Reviewing the current Portfolio

6

- Once every 5 years, Portfolio orgs complete a simple application
- Applicants are reviewed in panels based on budget size, which ensures that orgs of all sizes will be successful
- Current Portfolio grantees will be randomly assigned to a year (1 – 5) for their review/reapplication
- Reviewed by a diverse group of readers
- Applicants complete full application, and are reviewed side-by-side with new applicants in the SAME process which includes an interview

2. CIP Gateway Program is eliminated

7

- 9 Gateway orgs eligible for Re-classification are moved to Portfolio in FY23, and notified in spring of 2022. These grantees have 2 successful Gateway applications.
- 22 Gateway orgs that would have been reapplying for Gateway for FY23 and FY24 have their grant extended through the next 2 years, and then apply in FY24. These grantees have 1 successful Gateway application.

3. Add Equity Impact Points into funding formula

8

In addition to a three-year average of an organization's cash expenses, funding will be influenced by Equity Impact Points for organizations that meet one or both of the below characteristics.

1. BIPOC organizations (Opt in – information needed by June 30, 2022)
2. Organizations in under-resourced cities & towns (Not Opt in. Definitions set by Mass Cultural Council. Rural and Gateway Cities)

How the points will be applied to optimize financial impact is still being determined.

4. New Portfolio Guidelines, criteria, and application

9

- Updated criteria/questions/rubric to center public value and community impact
- Align with the priorities in the Council's Racial Equity Plan
- Emphasis on service and impact to Massachusetts artists, residents and communities

Timeline

FY22 – inform current Portfolio & Gateway about changes

10

FY23 - 'grace' year one for current Portfolio to be funded

FY23 – Inform orgs which year (1 – 5) they assigned to

FY23 – Implement Equity Impact points in FY23 grants

FY23 – Reclassify 9 Gateway organizations

FY23 – Drop DataArts requirement for small orgs

FY24 - 'grace' year two for current Portfolio to be funded

FY24 – start review/application process for 1/5 of Portfolio

for

FY25 – FY29 5-year grant

FY25 – First year of re-designed Portfolio, with all orgs on
a 5-year schedule



TO: Mass Cultural Council
FR: Sara Glidden, Cultural Investment Portfolio Program Manager
DT: March 15, 2022
RE: Organizations in the Gateway program

In response to a question at the March 15 Grants Committee Meeting, below please find some current information about our Gateway Program in light of the proposed changes to the Cultural Investment Portfolio discussed elsewhere in these meeting materials

The following organizations have two successful applications in the Gateway program and are eligible to be moved to the Portfolio. We would recommend that these organizations are moved to the Portfolio in FY23

1. A Far Cry
2. Grown Native Massachusetts
3. Hopkinton Center for the Arts
4. JFK Library Foundation
5. Nantucket Historical Association
6. New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center
7. Now + There
8. Special Needs Arts Programs
9. Worcester Historical Museum

The following organizations are currently funded in the Gateway program and have one successful application. We would recommend that these organizations are funded in the Gateway program for FY23 and FY24, until they are able to apply to the new Portfolio for FY25 funding.

1. Berkshire Botanical Garden
2. Cotuit Library
3. Creative Haverhill
4. Dream Out Loud Center
5. Easthampton City Arts
6. GreenRoots

7. Happier Valley Comedy
8. Lawrence History Center
9. Kids 4 Harmony (parent org: 18 Degrees)
10. Metalwerx
11. Mosesian Center for the Arts
12. Nantucket Book Foundation
13. Nantucket Community Music Center
14. Nantucket Dreamland Foundation
15. National Yiddish Book Center
16. New Bedford Historical Society
17. Pao Arts Center (parent org: Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center)
18. Payomet Performing Arts Center
19. Springfield Central Cultural District
20. Sustainable Cape
21. True Story Inc
22. Wellfleet Preservation Hall

The following organizations have one successful Gateway application, but were not funded in FY21/FY22, either because their application was not successful, or because they did not apply. We would have no recommendations for extending funding to these organizations.

1. Assabet Valley Mastersingers
2. Berkshire Film and Media
3. Berkshire Playwrights Lab
4. Boston Book Festival
5. BSA Foundation
6. Buttonwood Park Zoo
7. Concord Chorus
8. Design Museum of Boston
9. Falmouth Chorale
10. Heritage Museums & Gardens
11. Newburyport Choral Society
12. OrigiNation Cultural Arts
13. Transformative Culture Project