

Posted on 05/28/2026



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Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2026

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Agenda
Mass Cultural Council
Advancement Committee
Thursday, June 4, 2026

10:00 – 11:30 AM

Broadcast Meeting

The meeting will be livestreamed on
[Mass Cultural Council's YouTube channel](#)

Meeting materials will be posted online under
[Governing Council Meeting Schedule](#)
 "June 4, 2026, Advancement Committee Meeting"
 on Mass Cultural Council's website.
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>

Agenda Items

- 1. Call to Order – Open Meeting Law Notice**
- 2. Minutes** **Vote**
 - 2a. Minutes of the Advancement Committee Meeting – October 8, 2025
- 3. Co-Chairs' Report**
- 4. Acting Executive Director's Report**
- 5. Advancement Report**
- 6. Adjourn**



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Open Meeting Law Statement

(Virtual)

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 the Mass Cultural Council's website 48 hours or more 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 have asked staff to implement the following protocols for participants in online 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 on the Zoom platform may be required to enter a waiting room and digitally sign in before being admitted.
- Any attendee on 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; public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without the 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.



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Mass Cultural Council **Resolutions** Thursday, June 4, 2026

Section 2 – Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Mass Cultural Council Advancement Committee Meeting dated October 8, 2025, in the form presented.



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Unofficial Draft Subject to Approval by the Council at its next meeting

**Minutes
Mass Cultural Council
Advancement Committee
Wednesday, October 8, 2025**

Online Meeting

Council Members Present:

- Iván Espinoza-Madrugal, Co-Chair
- Diane Asadorian Masters
- Allyce Najimy
- Anika Lopes
- Tom Bernard
- Marc Carroll – ex officio
- Jo-Ann Davis – ex officio

Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Present:

- Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director
- David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director
- Cathy Cheng-Anderson, Chief Financial Officer
- Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
- Erik Holmgren, Manager of Strategic Partnerships & Advancement

Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrugal called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm and asked Deputy Executive Director David Slatery to read the Open Meeting Law statement.

Iván then asked Committee Members if they'd reviewed the minutes from their last meeting held on August 11, 2025. If they had, he would look for a motion and a second to approve those minutes. Marc Carroll moved to approve the minutes; Anika Lopes seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Committee Co-Chair Ché Anderson and Committee Members Petrina Martin, Rhonda Anderson, and David Sun Kong were absent and with Tom Bernard abstaining as he was not then a member of the Committee it was

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2025 Advancement Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Iván then gave his Co-Chair's report, stating that it was important for Committee members to continue to speak about and publicize the importance of the Agency's Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) program. He had had the opportunity along with Council Chair Marc Carroll to attend the recent CFF celebration event in East Boston at Zumix and reported hearing from grantee organizations the importance of CFF funding - especially for items which may sometimes be hard to feature in a standard fundraising appeal (like HVAC improvements) so the CFF is crucial in that it is uniquely situated to help cultural facilities with basic improvements. He felt this needed to be stressed to legislators, the CFF not only provides needed funds, it also can greatly assist an organization in kickstarting its capital campaigns but highlighting the state support.

Iván then asked Michael for his Executive Director's report.

Michael started by noting that Bethann Steiner would later be talking about our efforts around a CFF technical corrections bill currently pending before the legislature. Michael thanked Council members for attending agency events and emphasized how much it meant. Advancement work continues- the Agency's Advancement Team, Erik Holmgren and Carolyn Cole, are working with the rest of the staff on advancement goals and out meeting people across the Commonwealth and it's working. Erik will speak to it a little later in the meeting.

Michael then highlighted three trips he is taking for the Agency.

- To the American Society of Landscape Architects in New Orleans to help build arts & culture into the field of landscape architecture- somewhat akin to a LEED/green buildings model
- To the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark NJ to promote arts prescription as part of an Arts & Healthy Communities conference, and
- To Yale to join its Cultural Innovation Lab to advocate for more arts infrastructure

Michael concluded his report and Iván as Chair called on Bethann Steiner for the Public Affairs report.

Bethann began her report by welcoming new Committee member Tom Bernard with whom she had worked with in various capacities over many years. Bethann mentioned the agency has two active bills being considered in the legislature. Bethann testified last month on the so-called "STEM to STEAM" bill at the education committee and will be testifying later today on the Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF) technical corrections bill, which would remove certain size and age restrictions on municipal projects and specifically permit tribal governments to apply on the same basis as municipalities. She thanked Council Members

Ashley, Donna and Tom for writing in support of the STEM to STEAM bill and to Jo-Ann, Diane, Tom, Mark, and Donna for writing in support of the CFF bill.

Bethann then mentioned that Michael thought it would be helpful to walk the Committee members through the steps of how to write to the legislature in support of Agency actions and used the example of new member Tom Bernard's correspondence on our two bills just discussed, noting that Bethann would provide the specifics of any bill the Agency is promoting and that copies should go to the relevant committees and to the member's own legislators (which information Bethann can also provide). Tom mentioned he had done this frequently in his other positions, so it was second nature.

Bethann then mentioned that the agency was undertaking several regional convenings over the next few weeks and months. This regional approach is different from prior years when we celebrated specific programs. We will have events in Cumington to celebrate Franklin and Hampshire County grants on October 27, at the Cape Cod Museum of Art on November 3 to celebrate Cape & Islands grants and in Hopkinton on December 1 to celebrate grants in the Metro West area and all members are invited to attend and amplify.

At the conclusion of Bethann's report, Iván called on Erik Holmgren to present the Advancement report. Erik presented a Power Point slide deck outlining the team's activities in the past few months, a copy of which is available upon request. Erik highlighted the fact that the Agency was making measurable progress in the area in terms of new funds that were being spent in the creative and cultural sector. Michael and Dave also made observations during the report. At the conclusion, Erik asked for questions and members were curious about whether various health organizations were yet involved in the Arts Prescription initiative offered to make introductions. Jo-Ann mentioned Western Massa Community Health and Fallon. Tom offered to speak with Guardian/Berkshire Life (and the new DCR Commissioner on other advancement efforts) and Anika mentioned Hilltown Health. Michael and Erik promised that staff would get them all appropriate language for introductory communications.

Marc thanked Michael, Erik and the team for pushing this work and stated that maybe a standard introductory form email would be helpful to share with all the Council members.

Iván then recognized Allyce who had two questions- one was whether the Agency was thinking of "big" events to draw larger attention to the Agency's work. Michael replied that staff had been thinking of redoing the Commonwealth Awards that the agency used to hold and perhaps focusing on those outside the cultural sector who had made efforts to support arts & culture. Allyce also asked about whether staff had considered partnering with a media organization or maybe producing a PSA to attract more attention to our efforts. Michael indicated that it was something we could consider as we planned for the future.

Iván then stated that staff had presented such an impressive body of work and summarized the various things that had been discussed. He expressed that these updates were so helpful and we all need to find ways to get the members more involved so they can usefully support these efforts.

There were no further questions, and the end of the agenda had been reached. Iván, as Chair, adjourned the meeting.



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Advancement Report

June 2026

Advancing the Cultural Sector in Massachusetts

Advancement work is focused on building a statewide ecosystem of partners that advance our sector as a key pillar of economic and workforce development, housing, community development, and other areas. It is built on the idea that our sector has tremendous capacity to be part of the solution to some of the most pressing challenges in the Commonwealth. By doing so, we believe that sustainable funding for the arts and culture will not come from arts funding alone, but will come from the sectors that we have outcomes in. At the same time that we lift up our sector, this work seeks to partner to leverage the world class ecosystem we have in Massachusetts to be a force in solving the biggest problems in the Commonwealth.

Through our advancement efforts, our goals are to:

- Position the arts and culture sector as a visible, recognized resource and an essential partner in problem-solving across the Commonwealth.
- Leverage resources from outside of our sector for the benefit of those within.

In the last three months, here is how we have achieved these goals:

Workforce Development

Tufts' Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) Field Project

- Students from Tufts' UEP program completed a report to identify recommendations and opportunities for the Creative Workforce Pipeline for MA.

MassChallenge

- MassChallenge, a non-profit business incubator, will complete a study in the coming months, identifying opportunities for our sector to more closely align with industry.

Higher Education

- We convened, for the second time this year, leaders of higher education institutions in the arts from across the Commonwealth to work together to build bridges to connect students with employment opportunities in the Commonwealth. We heard stories about successful people, and our aim is to systematize those stories in the future.

The Commonwealth Summit

- We were invited to attend The Commonwealth Summit from April 9-11. This three-day retreat brought leaders from the public and private sectors to tackle the biggest challenges facing Massachusetts. This year's retreat focused on Economic Competitiveness and Housing and was perhaps the most valuable three days of networking and relationship-building we have had all year.

Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism

- We presented on a panel at the Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism, introducing the Mass Lodging and Mass Restaurant campaign and providing 'how-to' insight and resources.

Education

Early Education and Care

- With the support of Mass Cultural Council, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), and the Executive Office of Education (EOE), all worked together to curate a list of discounts for early childhood

educators to attend cultural organizations. This was unveiled during Teacher Appreciation Week in early May.

- The Mass Cultural Council was appointed to the K-12 graduation council that will determine graduation requirements for Massachusetts students following the dissolution of MCAS as a requirement.
- On May 26, we convened the first STEAM Subcommittee meeting of the STEM Advisory Council. This subcommittee is tasked with making recommendations to the full Council for the inclusion of creativity into the STEM ecosystem of the Commonwealth.

Health Care

Arts Prescription

- The Communities team reached out to every municipal Opioid Relief contact in the Commonwealth that had a minimum of \$75,000 in funding available. SocialRx (formerly Art Pharmacy) is currently in conversations with at least 18 municipalities to utilize this funding.
- SocialRx has expanded to include arts prescriptions at five different clinics at Mass General Brigham and is in conversation with five universities and two other health insurance companies around expansion.
- On April 10, we facilitated a panel with the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Robbie Goldstein, and the Director of Health Policy and Strategic Initiatives at a statewide conference focused on arts and health at UMass Amherst.

Climate

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)

- Mass Cultural Council co-hosted an interactive webinar with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in March to integrate our sector into their 2050 Environmental planning process.

Housing

MassHousing

- We have a cross-team group of Program staff supporting the MassHousing Conference on June 16, 2026, that will be focused on the role the arts can play in public housing.
- Both the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and MassHousing are providing grant funding for artists and arts organizations on Creative Placemaking projects, bringing new funding to our field.

Community Development

Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)

- We have partnered with MACDC to work with cultural districts and creative entities through their annual Community Investment Tax Credit (CITC) program funding.
- We've been invited to present at the upcoming annual summit, as we did last year, and to offer –and receive- learning opportunities through their Mel King Institute.

Downtown Interagency Initiative Partnership (Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), MassDevelopment)

- We have joined the review Committee for MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Districts and this year's Rural Development Fund, informed guidelines for the Mass Downtown Initiative (MDI) Capital Grant program and are working to make Small Business Technical Assistance Grants accessible to our sector through MACDC and MassDevelopment.
- We are meeting with EOED Undersecretary, Patrick Field, to work with their office on statewide downtown support recommendations made through our Downtown Interagency Initiative Partnership work.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council, MASSCreative

- Along with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, we will be presenting on advancement at the MASSCreative Creative Sector Summit in New Bedford, offering municipal and regional opportunities for non-arts funding and how to access them.

FY27 Advancement Planning

Given the success we have had in building partnerships across state government, our plan in FY27 is to leverage these partnerships, go on offense, and push the competitive advantage our sector has in making Massachusetts a thriving ecosystem for all of its residents, driven by the arts. We will discuss some of our ideas for that work in FY27 during our meeting.