

Posted on 10/08/2026



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Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2026

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Agenda
Mass Cultural Council
Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 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](#)
"October 15, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting"
on Mass Cultural Council's website

Agenda Items

1. Call to Order – Open Meeting Law Notice
2. Minutes **Vote**
 - 2a. Minutes of the Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee Meeting – August 13, 2026
3. Chair's Report
 - 3a. Executive Director Search Update
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Legislative and Public Affairs Update
6. Advancement Update
7. Programs Update
8. Draft Agenda: 171st Meeting of Mass Cultural Council, October 29, 2026 **Vote**
9. Adjourn

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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Resolutions

Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee

Thursday, October 15, 2026

Section 2

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Mass Cultural Council Executive Committee Meeting dated August 13, 2026, in the form presented.

Section 8

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the draft agenda for the 171st Meeting of Mass Cultural Council, October 29, 2026, as presented to the Executive Committee.

Posted on 09/18/2026



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

**Minutes of the Meeting of Mass Cultural Council's
Executive Committee
Thursday, August 13, 2026**

Online Meeting

Council Members Present:

- Ché Anderson, Chair
- Jo-Ann W. Davis, Vice Chair
- Cecil Barron Jensen
- Simone Early
- Iván Espinoza-Madrigal
- Julie Wake

Mass Cultural Council Staff Members Present:

- David Slatery, Acting Executive Director
- Ann Petruccelli Moon, Acting Chief of Staff
- Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations
- Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
- Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:03am and asked Acting Chief of Staff Ann Petruccelli Moon to read the Open Meeting Law statement. He then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of their last meeting held on June 17, 2026. If they had, he would entertain a motion and a second to approve them. Julie Wake moved to approve the minutes; Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis seconded the motion. By roll call vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented.

Ché welcomed Committee Members and staff to the meeting. He shared that he has regularly spent time in the Agency's administrative offices in recent months, meeting with staff and the senior leadership team. He thanked everyone for being so accommodating; he thinks the staff is fantastic.

Ché said the Executive Director search process would be slightly different from what was initially discussed. Rather than issuing a large RFP for a search firm and conducting a six-month process, the Council will move toward a more targeted 16- to 18-week process and hire an individual consultant, if needed, to manage the search. The goal is to leverage partners, work efficiently, and find the right person to lead the next chapter of the organization.

Ché shared that many people have agreed to serve on the search task force, but those who are not on the task force should not feel excluded. He envisioned a group made up of Council Members, partners, and a wide range of other stakeholders. The task force will help narrow the field to semifinalists, who will then be brought before the Council and staff so they can ask questions. Ché said the next Executive Director will need to be comfortable being out in the community engaging with people, and the search itself should reflect that approach rather than happen in a silo.

He also highlighted a planned survey of the sector, which he said would be conducted alongside the search process. There are many people with thoughts, concerns, and questions about the Council, and that it is important to hear directly from the field about what is happening, where there are opportunities, what the Council is doing well, and where it could do better. He said the goal is to cast a wide net and ensure that people across the Commonwealth have an opportunity to participate.

Ché said initial work on the process would take place over the next two weeks, with a larger meeting of the task force and partners planned for September. The initial goal is to have a new Executive Director in place early next year. In response to Simone's question, Ché confirmed that a written description of the process would be shared with the Board.

Julie asked for more information about the survey and who would be included. Ché said that since taking the role, it has been important to him to meet with as many stakeholders as possible. He said the survey would give everyone—from the smallest artisan to the largest organization—an opportunity to have a voice. He emphasized the importance of reaching people throughout the Commonwealth and asking what they are hearing, what they are seeing, what best practices the Agency may not yet be engaged in, and what the Agency is doing well or could do better.

Julie emphasized the importance of ensuring that the survey reaches every part of the Commonwealth, including the Berkshires, the Cape and Islands, and other areas outside Boston. Ché said the Council's leadership and members represent different parts of the state and can help broaden the reach. He also said the Agency's mailing lists and partnerships would be important tools.

Jen said the survey will be distributed through the Agency's Grants Management System (GMS) to approximately 30,000 people with active email addresses. The Public Affairs team will also distribute it through the e-newsletter, creating an overlapping audience. Jen noted that the Agency received approximately 3,000 responses to a previous search-related survey and has conducted large-scale surveys in connection with pandemic recovery grant

programs and strategic planning. She asked Council members to help share the survey within their communities.

Julie said the approach was smart because artists and organizations would feel like they were part of the process if they had an opportunity to provide feedback. She said the timing was also appropriate, given the amount of time that had passed since Michael's departure.

Cecil asked how the survey would be integrated into the search and whether the information would be provided to the consultant. Ché said the survey would go out as any consultant is brought into the process. He envisioned having weeks of survey data before semifinalists are selected. The information would help shape the search documents and inform the eventual selection.

Cecil asked how a search consultant would be selected. Ché clarified that the Council would not be hiring a traditional search firm but rather looking at individual consultants to manage the search operations. He said the Council was considering several options and had received recommendations and offers of assistance.

Julie asked whether the survey would be conducted after the final candidates were identified. Ché clarified that it would begin as soon as any consultant is brought on. Julie noted that the survey could also serve as a search tool and asked whether the job description would be part of the process. Ché said the job description would help inform the survey. He said he did not expect the survey to reveal anything completely unexpected, but that it could help identify more specific traits and would also be a useful tool for the new Executive Director.

Simone asked how the Agency would assess potentially thousands of survey responses. Ché said he had experience with a similar survey for another board, where community feedback helped identify both expected and surprising findings and led to deeper conversations with staff about areas for growth. He said the survey presents an opportunity to understand how impactful the Agency is across different communities and to identify opportunities for the organization as a statewide entity.

Simone asked whether any consultant would simply be selected directly. Ché said that, based on the scope of work, he did not believe the Council needed to go through a traditional procurement process. He said the work would be structured as a focused scope rather than a large procurement.

Dave added that the search task force would develop the scope of work. He said the consultant would effectively serve as staff to the Council to conduct the search, rather than as a large search firm under a large contract. He noted that funding already exists in the budget for an executive search, which would be sufficient to cover the consultant.

Ché then turned the meeting over to Dave for the Acting Executive Director's report.

Dave said it had been a very busy period, with staff working both externally and internally. He said that after 14 years at the Council, he restated that he considers working for a state arts agency the best job in the world, but that karmically one had to pay for that because July and August are the busiest months due to the state budget timing. He noted that his role has shifted over the years from directly preparing all of the spending plan materials to reviewing and presenting materials that were created by other staff, and gave credit to the staff for the significant amount of work involved. He specifically recognized Ann for pulling the process together, Jen in her role as Acting Deputy Director, and the Fiscal, Public Affairs, and Advancement teams.

Dave said the Agency had fared well during the current budget process, then went on to highlight the work underway around STEM to STEAM. He said the initiative is making significant inroads in communities and that the Council has learned a great deal about the continued strength of arts and culture as a desired career choice for teens in Massachusetts and nationally. He also noted that the Agency's MITx arts entrepreneurship course had strong reach, with over 1,400 participants, mainly from Massachusetts but also representing 81 different countries.

He then took a moment to share that, concurrently with this meeting, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' LEAD Conference was in the process of presenting Program Officer Charles Baldwin with an award for excellence for his career-long efforts to promote and enhance accessibility.

Dave also highlighted his recent engagements and visits to the Concord Museum, the Berkshire Museum, and a public reading of Moby-Dick at Herman Melville's Arrowhead estate in Pittsfield.

Dave concluded, noting this is his second time serving as Acting Executive Director and his second time presenting a spending plan.

Cecil thanked Dave for his work, and Julie thanked him for his participation in the Moby-Dick event. Dave noted that Brian Boyles had also attended.

Ché then asked Bethann Steiner for her Legislative and Public Affairs update.

Bethann shared that Mass Cultural Council entered the 2025–2026 legislative session with four priorities: securing strong annual state funding for arts and culture, maintaining capital investment in the Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF), expanding CFF eligibility, and formally recognizing the connection between arts, creativity, and STEM by changing STEM to STEAM in state law. The biggest success was funding: Mass Cultural Council received just under \$27 million in FY26 and a record \$28.1 million in FY27, the largest state appropriation in the Agency's history. In addition, both the FY26 and FY27 capital spending plans included \$10 million for CFF, supporting cultural organizations and municipalities in maintaining, improving, and modernizing cultural facilities across the Commonwealth.

On policy, legislation to broaden CFF eligibility advanced, and language requested by Mass Cultural Council was incorporated into the Senate version of

the Mass Wins Act. If retained in the final bill and signed into law, primarily cultural municipally owned facilities would be eligible for CFF assistance regardless of the building's age or size, although tribal government facilities did not get included in the provision. The STEAM legislation also received a favorable committee report and attracted 51 House co-sponsors. Meanwhile, the Mass Wins Act also has brought arts and culture more directly into the state's economic development agenda, with proposals for a \$1 million cultural, entertainment, and nightlife microgrant program, a new downtown vitality capital grant program, and capital funding for arts, culture, and the creative economy, including public art, cultural wayfinding, performance spaces, and historic district improvements.

She recognized the Public Affairs team – Dawn Heinen, Christian Kelly, and Carmen Plazas, as well as the Programs and Fiscal teams for their hard work in preparing the FY27 spending plan. The Public Affairs team is preparing website updates and print materials and will share the news broadly following the August Council Meeting, pending the Council's approval of the FY27 spending plan. Public convenings are also planned for the fall.

Julie asked about the Council's STEM to STEAM work, noting that the initiative had been discussed by the Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council previously. She said she understood the rebranding as a first step but wanted to know whether there would be a second step that would establish a more concrete framework for what the addition of the arts means in practice. She said she was particularly interested in whether there would be strategic planning around implementing the arts component.

Dave stated that the immediate goal is to get STEM to STEAM on the map. The Agency is working with several partners to broaden the idea that arts and creativity are an essential part of STEM. Dave cited research from the World Economic Forum identifying creativity as one of the most desirable traits in new hires. He said that due to AI, analytics and technical skills were less needed, but creativity is an important missing element, and that creativity can be taught and strengthened through use.

Dave said the Council has an opportunity to encourage greater use of arts and creativity throughout the broader economy. He noted that STEM has a significant spending profile and said the arts could benefit from being more closely connected to that work. Dave invited anyone interested in participating to join in the effort. He said the STEAM Subcommittee, which currently includes approximately eight or nine people, would develop recommendations for the statutory STEM Advisory Council.

Julie said she would like to participate and expressed particular interest in the connection to the creative economy.

There were no further questions, and Che asked Dave and Jen to present the FY27 Budget and Program Allocations Plan.

Dave and Jen gave the FY27 Budget and Program Allocations Plan presentation. The plan outlines anticipated revenue sources, key investment

areas, and grantmaking priorities for the Agency in FY27. After the Executive Committee meeting, the FY27 grant recommendations for most Mass Cultural Council grant programs based on this plan will be presented to the Programs Committee, and Advancement spending will be presented to the Advancement Committee. Pending Committee approval and recommendation, the plan and the recommendations will be voted on by the full Council on August 27, 2026. Dave shared that a more detailed memo was included in the meeting materials and that the presentation provided a broad overview. He said the work is connected directly to the Agency's Strategic Plan and referred members to the spending plan memo for additional detail. There were no questions for Dave or Jen, and Ché asked for a motion and a second to recommend that the Council approve the FY27 Budget and Program Allocations Plan. Julie moved to make the recommendation; Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis seconded the motion. By roll call vote, it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee recommends that the Council approve the recommendation to the Programs Committee, Advancement Committee, and full Council the FY27 Budget and Program Allocation Plan presented to the Executive Committee on August 13, 2026.

Ché then asked Dave to present the next agenda item: approval for an out-of-state travel request. Dave explained that travel by the Executive Director that exceeds a cost of \$1,000 must come before the Executive Committee for pre-approval. He requested authorization to attend the annual National Assembly of State Arts Agencies conference in Washington, D.C., in October at a cost of at least \$1,900. Dave said he has attended 11 of the past 14 years and finds the conference valuable. There was no discussion. Jo-Ann moved to approve the travel request; Julie seconded the motion. By roll call vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve the staff-recommended Out-of-State Travel Request presented to the Executive Committee on August 13, 2026.

The Council then moved to the final agenda item: reviewing and approving the agenda for the August 27, 2026 Council Meeting. There were no questions or discussion. Iván Espinoza-Madrigal moved to approve the agenda; Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approve the draft August 27, 2026 Mass Cultural Council Agenda presented to the Executive Committee.

Ché, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Committee

October 2026

Activities Report

Earlier this month, Chief of Staff Ann Petruccelli Moon shared the October Executive Department update detailing recent activities.

Conferences & Engagements

As noted in the August Council meeting materials, Dave Slatery and several staff members attended the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) gathering in Washington, DC, October 7-9. Chair Ché Anderson also attended and was elected to the NASAA Board. A summary will be provided at the Council Meeting.

Staff Updates

As Committee members are aware, our former Senior Director of Business Operations, Cathy Cheng-Anderson, departed the Agency over the summer. This has necessitated a reworking of staff roles and how we do business.

Earlier this month, I expanded the composition of the Senior Staff at the Agency to include Ann Petruccelli Moon as Chief of Staff and a full-fledged member of the group (previously, her position was a support role). Ann will directly oversee the Agency's people operations functions (HR, office operations, and records management). She will continue to be your primary contact and manage executive affairs. Also, recognizing how very important the advancement and strategic partnerships work has been in the past year and how key it will be to the future to the Agency's business, I have added Erik Holmgren as the Senior Director, Strategy & Partnerships, a full and co-equal member of the group.

Jen Lawless's role will be expanded to the Deputy Director role, in which she will oversee our Finance Department, which will be directly run by our Controller, Kate MacDougall. Bethann Steiner will continue her crucial work as Deputy Director, Policy & Public Affairs.

In addition, we have adjusted the titles and salaries of certain staff to better reflect the roles and responsibilities people have been carrying out. This also has helped to distribute many of my duties and roles in advance of my planned retirement later next year. These adjustments were crafted to put the Agency on a stronger foundation for the future and to assure that the next executive director will come into a smooth-running organization with an efficiently organized team.

All of the matters I have discussed above are within the FY27 Spending Plan approved at the August Council meeting. The Agency is scheduled to undertake a salary review in FY28.

Executive Director Engagements

Recently Completed Engagements

- STEAM Subcommittee Meeting – September 8, 10am, virtual
- "Courage Can Save Us" with Senator Mark Kelly – September 8, 6pm, JFK Library & Museum
- Speaking Engagement: Boston University Arts Administration graduate course – September 9, 6pm at BU
- The Latino Equity Fund's annual celebration ¡Pa'lante! – September 10, 6pm, Termeer Square, Cambridge
- Panelist at The Creative Economy as Common Ground – Philanthropy MA presentation -September 14
- Jess Dugan: Love Pictures exhibition opening reception – September 15, 5pm, MassArt
- Newton Cultural Council Grantee Celebration – September 17, 5pm, Newton City Hall
- Creative Labor: Boston Cultural Policy Summit – September 18, noon, Boston Public Library
- STEM Advisory Council Meeting – September 18, 1pm, Mass Maritime Academy

- Tour of The Company Theater with Senator Pat O'Connor – September 21, 11am, Norwell
- Shah Family Foundation Roundtable Discussion with MFA Boston Director Pierre Terjanian – September 22, 5pm, Boston
- AIM Annual Economic Outlook – September 24, 9am, Boston
- North End Music & Performing Arts Center Annual Event – September 24, 5pm, The North End, Boston
- Designing for Belonging: A Massachusetts Summit on Connection & Community – September 25, 10am, UMass Boston
- Philanthropy Massachusetts' 57th Annual Conference – September 29, 8am, Big Night Live in Boston

Upcoming Engagements

Please let Ann know if you'd like more information or if you are interested in joining any of these upcoming engagements.

- Assembly 2026, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies – October 7-9, Washington D.C.
- MassHumanities Storyteller Awards – October 15, 6pm, Mill 1 in Holyoke
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) Celebrate the Arts Conference – October 27, location TBD
- Mass Book Awards, October 28, Massachusetts State House
- Mass Art's Creative Entrepreneurship Conference- November 7



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Draft

Agenda
One Hundred Seventy-First Meeting
of Mass Cultural Council
Thursday, October 29, 2026

Noon – 3:00 p.m.

In-Person Meeting

Concord Museum
53 Cambridge Turnpike
Concord, MA 01742

Meeting materials will be posted online under
[Governing Council Meeting Schedule](#)
"October 29, 2026, Council Meeting"
On Mass Cultural Council's website.
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/about/board/>

Agenda Items

- 1. Call to Order – Open Meeting Law Notice**
- 2. Welcome: Concord Museum**
- 3. Minutes** **Vote**
 - 3a. Minutes of the 170th Meeting of Mass Cultural Council – August 27, 2026
- 4. Chair's Report**
 - 4a. Update: Executive Director Search
- 5. Executive Director's Report**

6. Legislative and Public Affairs Report

6a. Legislative Update

6b. Department Updates

7. Programs and Finance Report

7a. Department Updates

7b. Programs Committee Report

7c. Finance Update

7d. Out-of-State Travel Update

8. Conflict of Interest Notifications

9. FY27 Social Prescription, Arts & Health Grant Recommendations **Vote**

10. Advancement Report

10a. **Creative Wealth Fund** – Presentation and Discussion

11. Adjourn