

**APPROVED VERSION**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024**

**ONLINE MEETING**

**Committee Members Present** were

Marc Carroll, Chair  
Jo-Ann Davis, Vice Chair  
Ché Anderson  
Simone Early  
Cecil Barron Jensen  
Julie Wake

**Staff Members Present** were

Michael J. Bobbitt, Executive Director  
David Slatery, Deputy Executive Director  
Jen Lawless, Senior Director of Program Operations  
Catherine Cheng-Anderson, Senior Director of Business Operations and Chief Financial Officer  
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs  
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager

Chair Marc Carroll called the meeting to order at 10:01am and asked Deputy Chief of Staff Ann Petruccelli Moon to read the Open Meeting Law statement. Ann read the Open Meeting Law statement. Marc then asked if Committee Members had reviewed the minutes of their last meeting held on August 8<sup>th</sup> and called for a motion to approve them. Julie Wake moved to approve the minutes; Cecil Barron Jensen seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Iván Espinoza-Madriral was not present all were in favor, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the minutes of the August 8, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting in the form presented to the Executive Committee.

Marc let the Committee know that the name of the Grants Committee had been changed to the Programs Committee. Jo-Ann, Cecil, and Julie all voiced support for this shift. The change will better reflect the work of the Committee and align it with the Agency's strategic plan.

The next full meeting of the Council takes place November 13<sup>th</sup> at New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston, MA. Marc is pleased the Council will have this opportunity to meet in person. He is interested in increasing opportunities for the Council to connect in person and is thinking of ways to improve Council engagement. Executive Director Michael Bobbitt and his team are continuing to reach out to Council Members with a monthly report that lists events and meetings attended by the Executive team, as well as more targeted invitations to join meetings and events. Marc recently joined Michael for a meeting with Fenway Health.

Julie finds the monthly report helpful; even if she is unable to attend meetings and events that are listed, it's helpful for her to know what is happening.

Marc concluded his report by letting the Committee know that the Governor's Cultural Policy Development Advisory Council had been established and has held its first meeting. Julie Wake is a member of that Council.

Marc asked Michael Bobbitt for his Executive Director's report.

Michael let the Committee know that fall was off to a busy start. He provided an update on the Agency's grantmaking and advancement work along with a report on his participation in the recent Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Conference in Chicago October 6-9. Michael shared:

- GIA is a national association of public and private arts funders - providing members with resources and leadership to support artists and arts organizations.
- He attended networking events with Americans for the Arts, LGBTQ+ and Black affinity groups.
- He spent time with Pam Breaux, President and CEO of NASAA, Michael Orlove of the National Endowment for the Arts, Suzan Jenkins of Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and Torrie Allen of WESTAF.
- Attended several all-conference events including the opening reception and keynote – which really put the heat on funders regarding equitable grant making; Michael felt proud of Mass Cultural Council's work.
- Also attended the closing reception at a space renovated by Theaster Gates, an American social practice installation artist, and a professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago.
- Sessions Michael attended included:
  - o Beyond Grantmaking: Impact Investing – which looks at grantmaking beyond subsidizing general operating budgets.
  - o An Inside Look at Organizers, Artists and Funders on the Front line of Political Mobilization and Social Change

- The Case for Support of Policy and Advocacy – Advancing Cultural Policy to disrupt Unjust Systems
- The Power of Harnessing Partnerships to Preserve Artistic and Cultural Real Estate Assets in Massachusetts
- The reason Michael attended was to be on a panel called Culture at the Intersection of State and Local Policies to talk about Arts Prescriptions. His fellow panelists who worked for municipal councils talked about how they are working within municipalities to support the growth of arts and culture to benefit their creative sectors and the residents of their municipalities.

Marc asked for further information about the Agency's work with arts prescriptions. Michael explained that close to 200 prescriptions have been given across Massachusetts. Art Pharmacy is still securing payers, the work is continuing to grow. Mass Cultural Council, Art Pharmacy, and the Health Equity Compact are hosting a convening focused on the work in January.

Ché Anderson shared that he has an appointment to meet with Chris Appleton of Art Pharmacy later this month to talk about bringing the work into public housing projects.

Marc then asked Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner for her report.

Bethann shared that the legislature is meeting informally, and we are still waiting for the economic development bond bill to come out of conference committee. Leadership may call for a rare informal session; the hope is this might happen before the new year. A close-out supplemental budget for the year is also still pending. There are two public events taking place this week: tomorrow in Worcester at JMAC, Coffee & Conversation with Michael Bobbitt and Friday in Amherst, a celebration of the latest round of Cultural Facilities Fund grants at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. The Public Affairs team is beginning to think about how the Agency will rebrand and launch a bi-annual awards ceremony which in previous years was called the Commonwealth Awards. Bethann knows there will be a role for the Council as plans come together. The new awards ceremony will align more closely with the Agency's current strategic plan. Julie expressed support for the awards ceremony noting that recognition from the Agency could be transformational for awards recipients.

Marc moved to the final item on the agenda, reviewing the agenda for the November 13<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. Dave shared that there was one addition: the designation of new Cultural Districts in Holyoke, Westfield, and Watertown would be considered and voted upon at the meeting so this will be added to the agenda. Cecil asked if there might be time before or after the meeting for the Council to connect; Ann is arranging a tour of New England Botanic Garden for Council Members to take place before the meeting. Marc asked for more information about the video from the Executive Branch. Bethann explained that since this is the first in-person meeting of the Council since the spring and the Council is fully appointed, the Governor was invited to attend. She cannot be there in person but will share a video message to be played at the beginning of the meeting.

There were no further questions. Simone Early moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ché seconded the motion. By roll call vote and noting that Iván was absent it was

RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee approves the draft agenda for the November 13, 2024 Mass Cultural Council Meeting as presented to the Executive Committee and amended.

That concluded the meeting agenda and Marc, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:48pm.