

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

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM

Committee Members Present

Troy Siebels, Co-chair of Advocacy Committee (phone)
Sherry Dong, Co-chair of Advocacy Committee (phone)
Nina Fialkow, Chair, Mass Cultural Council
Marc Carroll, Vice Chair, Mass Cultural Council

Other Guests Present

Brian Boyles, Executive Director, MassHumanities
Emily Ruddock, Executive Director, MASSCreative
Tracie Konopinski, MASSCreative

Staff members present were

Anita Walker, Executive Director
David Slatery, Deputy Director
Bethann Steiner, Communications Director
Jen Lawless, Operations Director

Troy Siebels as co-chair of the Advocacy Committee called the meeting to order and asked David Slatery to read the following:

Please note that this meeting is an open meeting of a public body subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A notice of this meeting together with the agenda was posted on Mass Cultural Council's website 48 or more hours ago (excluding weekends and holidays).

This meeting shall be open and accessible to all members of the public except at such times when this body has voted to go into closed executive session under the Open Meeting Law.

Please note that this body has invited staff of Mass Cultural Council, and guests from MassHumanities MASS Creative to participate in today's meeting

Mass Cultural Council welcomes members of the public to attend its meetings. Under the Open Meeting Law, however, this is not a public hearing and public testimony will not be taken. Individuals may not address the meeting without permission of the chair.

Draft minutes of the open session of this meeting shall be kept and shall be posted on Mass Cultural Council's website no later than 30 days after the meeting provided that such minutes shall not be considered official until they have been approved by this body in open session. Individuals asserting a violation of the Open Meeting Law may file a complaint with this body within 30 days or with the Attorney General's office thereafter.

Troy asked Anita Walker for her report as Executive Director. Anita welcomes the Committee members and thanked them for attending and indicated we had sent out materials in advance of the meeting for background information (copies of which were available) and that these materials did not necessarily represent any particular point on the published agenda. Anita then introduced Communications Director, Bethann Steiner. Bethann described the annual state budget process and spoke of the consensus revenue hearing where slower growth was projected for this year. There being no more business to come before the Council, Nina as Chair adjourned the meeting.

The Committee then discussed the recent passage of the Final Deficiency Budget for Fiscal 2019 which included technical fixes to the

2011 Massachusetts Gaming Law which will allow the Council to access certain casino tax revenues for a Gaming Mitigation Program. Anita emphasized that these funds were completely separate from the Council's regular mission and budget and are dedicated for a very specific purposes different from our core programs and we should be careful to differentiate between these funds and our state budget funds which fund the basic operations of the Council. This is crucial as legislators might assume the Council had received a large boost in funding due to casino revenues which is not the case as the casino tax funds cannot be spent on the Council's traditional and are dedicated to a brand new program relating to effects of casinos on organizations.

Anita then asked Deputy Director David Slatery to summarize a memo he had circulated showing what the Agency's operations might look like under different funding scenarios in FY21. David presented a memo and spreadsheet based on certain spending assumptions showing what operations would look like under flat funding scenario, a \$1 and \$2 million increase and a return to the Council's 1998 high point of funding (\$27.4 million) in FY 1988.

Bethann reported that House Chair of the Joint Tourism, Arts and Cultural Development Committee felt bullish. Members of the legislature appreciate the grants spent in their districts and would like credit for helping making those possible (including Cultural Facilities Fund grants).

The Committee discussed strategies for formulating a FY21 budget ask for Mass Cultural Council.

On behalf of MASSCreative, Emily Ruddock reported the field is interested in a bigger ask instead of a small incremental increase in the arts and culture budget.

On behalf of MassHumanities, Brian Boyles hoped that individual MassHumanities grants could be included in the list of grants shown to the legislature that are funded by the budget appropriation.

As part of a general discussion on presenting the Council's message to the legislature, Bethann indicated we were working on emphasizing the services provided by staff along with the grants. Marc Carroll indicated the framing of the message and ask were crucial. Nina Fialkow suggested we show how the monies have been leveraged.

The Committee discussed different levels of requests from \$1 to 5 million. Emily asked if there were data that could show what could be done with larger amounts. Jen Lawless indicated we had data and we would run some scenarios

Troy asked that the Committee schedule another meeting in March to follow up on this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned