

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

ONLINE MEETING

Committee Members Present were

Ché Anderson, Co-Chair
Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, Co-Chair
Rhonda Anderson
Diane Asadorian Masters
Anika Lopes
Marc Carroll – ex officio
Jo-Ann Davis – ex officio

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
Bethann Steiner, Senior Director of Public Affairs
Ann Petruccelli Moon, Manager of Executive Affairs
Carmen Plazas, Communications & Community Engagement Manager
Erik Holmgren, Program Manager, Creative Youth Development & Arts Education

Co-Chair Ché Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:02am and asked Deputy Executive 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 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, 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 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 that 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

Ché thanked Dave. This was the first meeting of the newly created Advancement Committee. As such, Ché asked all Committee Members and staff to introduce themselves. After introductions and noting that two Committee Members – Petrina Martin and Allyce Najimy were unable to attend today's meeting – he asked Executive Director Michael Bobbitt for his report.

Michael shared his thoughts on the formation of the new Advancement Committee. Because Mass Cultural Council is an independent state government agency, it is uniquely positioned to pull together parts of the public and private sector and infuse the

cultural sector into all parts of life in the Commonwealth. The Agency can build relationships across government and broker deals between the private sector and cultural sector, acting as a concierge of sorts. In thinking about this, Michael has identified core competencies needed by the staff as well as infrastructure the Agency will need in terms of staffing and existing job descriptions – some of this will be reflected in budget conversations the Executive and Grants Committees and the full Council will have with staff this summer. Michael has identified five key focus areas for advancement work in the coming year – education, healthcare, economic development, workforce development, and affinity groups. The work began this year with the implementation of the Agency's new strategic plan, and there have already been a lot of wins.

Co-Chair Iván Espinoza-Madrigal then reviewed the Advancement Committee Charter noting that meetings of the Committee will be 60 to 90 minutes long, materials will be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and the Committee will be comprised of between five and ten members.

Michael then shared a bit more about his vision for the Committee and the Agency's advancement work with the goal of infusing the cultural sector into the whole of the Commonwealth. Michael believes a strong focus of the work must be building relationships. He attended the Commonwealth Summit recently and much of the agenda was focused on Housing and Transportation – both areas impact our sector, and we must be part of those conversations – Michael and staff are beginning to determine what that looks like. Right now, there are webinars and events with agencies and groups outside of the cultural sector planned approximately once a month. Agency staff members Colin Baylor and Ann Petruccelli Moon have worked together to create a tracking mechanism in the Grants Management System that can help us track our advancement-related relationship building efforts. Michael also plans to come to meetings of the Advancement Committee with lists of individuals and organizations he and other staff members are about to meet with to see if Committee Members can offer insight, guidance, or make connections to additional contacts. As staff begins to think about cultural policy this fall, the plan is to bring policy and proposed amendments before the Advancement Committee for their input. To illustrate these points, Michael asked Program Manager Erik Holmgren to explain his recent efforts as they pertain to advancement and Erik provided a brief update on the Agency's work with Arts on Prescription in collaboration with Art Pharmacy, the Executive Office of Education's STEM Council, and ongoing conversations with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Council Vice Chair Jo-Ann Davis asked if the Agency has a relationship with the Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association. Senior Director of Public Affairs Bethann Steiner confirmed that the Agency does have a relationship and that the Association's President & CEO, Steve Walsh is a good friend. Erik added that Program Officer Käthe Swaback was co-presenting a webinar to the Mass Health & Hospital Association with Dr. Lisa Wong that morning.

Committee Member Anika Lopes shared that she is impressed with the Agency's Arts on Prescription work and that the Chief Operating Officer of Mt. Auburn Hospital has had art installed on the ceilings of exam rooms and is thinking a lot about how best to infuse the arts as a way of enhancing the patient experience at the hospital. Michael added that part of the Arts on Prescription work will be to encourage the cultural sector to

share this intel outside of the cultural sector – Michael feels the sector has a tendency to self-segregate and part of the work is encouraging members of the sector to, for example, attend a healthcare convening and share how the arts can have a positive impact on health.

Michael then shared a brief PowerPoint presentation outlining a new idea the Agency is developing – an arts benefit that could be offered by Massachusetts employers. Reimbursement for participation in cultural activities could be added to existing employee benefit programs, or employees could be reimbursed for the cost of participating in arts-related activities using existing HR mechanisms. Adding this benefit would improve employee retention and well-being, reduce loneliness and isolation, cultivate an appreciation of diversity, and even provide a new avenue for child and senior care for employees. A copy of the presentation is available upon request.

Iván expressed strong support for the idea of framing participation in the arts as a wellness benefit. Jo-Ann shared that she believes there is also most likely a cost benefit to employers – incorporating the arts could translate into retention and engagement and into health, but there is also a potential positive impact on the bottom line. This could resonate with employers. Jo-Ann suggests staff incorporate data on how this initiative translates into a return-on-investment into the presentation. Anika also expressed strong support adding that as a student and employee at the Parsons School of Design and The New School, she was offered a reimbursement program like the idea presented today. Ché agreed this is a strong way to further establish that the arts are essential to daily life and have the potential to be an incredible benefit to the workforce.

Council Chair Marc Carroll asked, if the Agency is successful in convincing employers to implement this benefit, how it would become part of benefits packages. Senior Director of Business Operations & Chief Financial Officer Catherine Cheng-Anderson shared that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is one option, another option is through insurance. Jo-Ann added that Human Resources leaders at organizations can add any type of incentive; this was part of Jo-Ann's work at Baystate Health.

Marc asked if this initiative might be an extension of Arts on Prescription; staff responded that this would be separate. Marc added that staff should consider approaching unions with the idea.

The Arts Benefit initiative was the final item on the agenda.

There was a brief discussion about the work of the Committee in general. Michael reiterated that it is important for the arts to be infused into areas we may not have thought about yet, and to bring about a new revenue stream for artists and cultural organizations. This will require the cultural sector to step up and begin relationship building in rooms that are new to them. Anika shared that there is a new exhibition at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut called *Entwined: Freedom, Sovereignty, and the Sea* that has incorporated curriculum for K-12 students and that there is a focus on incorporating the arts into public school curriculum. Michael thanked Anika for sharing that and added that he hasn't yet encountered a state with a full STEAM plan baked into government; this is an opportunity for Mass Cultural Council.

Co-Chairs Ché and Iván commended Michael and the staff team for thinking about the

advancement of the sector in this way. Iván noted that this is a good example of Agency responsiveness and represents a strong approach to Massachusetts staying competitive and committed to growth. Michael thanked the Co-Chairs and encouraged Committee Members to be in touch with ideas of other agencies, companies, and individuals with which the staff should begin pursuing relationships.

Ché thanked Michael and the staff for their efforts to position the Committee to have this first meeting and creating a runway for the work. There was no further discussion. Ché adjourned the meeting at 11:03am.