Metro Arts Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: January 16, 2025
Time: 12:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.
Location: Metro Southeast Building,
Green Hills Conference Room,
1417 Murfreesboro Pike,
Nashville, TN 37217

METRO ARTS
NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Commissioners: Campbell West (Chair), Tre Hardin (Vice-Chair), Heather Lefkowtiz, Leah Dupree Love, Evan Brown, Tim Jester, Jessie Rosenblum, Jilah Kalil, Shawn Knight, Beverly Watts, & Mayra Yu
Absent Commissioners: Janet Kurtz and Dawana Wade

A. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgment

Commissioner Chair West called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm

B. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve minutes from November 21st and approved with corrections from Commissioner Watts and seconded by Commissioner Kalil. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve minutes from December 5th by Commissioner Watts and seconded by Commissioner Kalil. Motion passed.

C. Public Comment

One public comment was submitted prior to the meeting.

D. Update from Metro Human Relations Commission (MHRC)

Director Tucker presented an update on the Title VI complaint and the related conciliation agreement. All aspects of the agreement have been met except for the grant funding criteria. The final work product was completed by Ashley Bachelder and Tessa Ortiz-Marsh, with Director Tucker expressing concerns over the lack of collaboration from Metro Arts staff. The MHRC supports the final proposal, considering it equitable, scalable, adjustable, and defensible. Director Tucker emphasized the broader significance of the Title VI complaint and encouraged commissioners to review the Boards and Commissions Manual.

E. Items for Discussion and Approval:

Chair West asked Metro Legal Tessa Marsh-Ortiz to clarify about abstention based on questions Commissioners have had in the past.

Tessa Ortiz-Marsh clarified abstentions and their impact on votes:

- Commissioners have a duty to vote.
- Abstentions are generally disfavored under Tennessee law and can functionally act as a vote for the prevailing side.
- Abstentions do not count towards the result.

Committee Reports and Action Items

1. Public Art Committee

Chair West reported:

- All public art projects are continuing.
- Arthur Avenue is continuing as planned.
- The Public Art Manager position search failed and will need to be reposted.

2. Committee for Anti-Racism & Equity (CARE)

Vice Chair Hardin reported:

- No significant updates as the committee has not met since last year.
- A meeting is planned to discuss the agenda and the CALN (Community Arts Leaders of Nashville) program.

3. Community Arts Leaders of Nashville (CALN) Program

Claudia Lawhon presented the staff recommendation to approve the final grantees for the Spring 2025 program.

12 host sites for CALN.

1. The Arts at Center St.
2. Musicians on call.
3. Satellite Dance, Inc.
4. Nashville Repertory Theatre.
5. World AfriCultural Community Project.
6. Tennessee Craft.
7. Kindling Arts.
8. Unscripted.

9. OZ Arts.
10. Turnip green creative reuse
11. Power Move Education & Development
12. Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

Each host site will receive $6,700 allocated as follows:

- $3,750 for student stipends ($500 of this is for transportation support).
-
- $450 for mentors.
- $2,500 for administrative support.

***A motion was made to approve the Community Arts Leaders of Nashville grantees for the spring of 2025 by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester*.**

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]
- **Love:** [Yes]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum:** [Yes]
- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Knight:** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes/]
- **Yu:** [Yes]

4. AmeriCorps Agreement

Chuck Beard presented a motion to continue the AmeriCorps agreement between Metro Arts and United Way of Greater Nashville Hands-On.

A motion was made to approve the continuation of the AmeriCorps agreement between United Way Greater Nashville Hands-On program and Metro Arts for FY25 and 26 with the internship beginning in February 2025 by Commissioner Jester and seconded by Commissioner Knight.

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]

- **Love:** [Yes]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum:** [Yes]
- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Knight:** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes]
- **Yu:** [Yes]

5. Grants and Funding Committee

Commissioner Lefkowitz reported on five total recommendations from the Grants and Funding Committee. The first three motions were bundled together, and the last two were taken separately. The first three recommendations regarded aspects of the Thrive funding formula:

a. Approval of Thrive Grant Funding Model Changes

b. Handling of Any Surplus in Thrive Funding

c. Rescinding Priority Funding for Underrepresented Council Districts for This Grant Cycle:

Motion (A-C Combined):

A motion was made to accept the Grants and Funding Committee recommendations to: 1) rescind the $10,000 maximum award for Thrive and adopt a funding formula that scales requests to 75%, and rank orders the application by scores, with staff completing a second review in case of any ties, and 2) in the event of a surplus or remainder in Thrive funding, remaining funds will be divided evenly among Thrive awardees and added to their total award, and 3) rescind the provision that priority funding be given to projects located in underrepresented council districts by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Jester.

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]
- **Love:** [Yes]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum:** [Yes]

- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Knight:** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes]
- **Yu:** [Yes]

d. Approval of an Accelerated Timeline for Thrive Grants:

A motion was made to accept the grants and funding committee recommendation for the updated grant timeline by Commissioner Watts and seconded by Commissioner Kalil

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]
- **Love:** [Yes]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum:** [Yes]
- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Knight:** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes]
- **Yu:** [Yes]

e. Authorizing Commissioner Lefkowitz to Work with Staff on Legislative Edits:

A motion was made to accept the grants and funding committee recommendation that Commissioner Lefkowitz serve as the commission's delegate to work with staff to make necessary edits to the legislative packet in order to meet the January 17 deadline by Commissioner Knight and Commissioner Jester.

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]
- **Love:** [Yes]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum:** [Yes]
- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Knight:** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes]

- **Yu:** [Yes]

F. Old Business/ New Business

Executive Committee Update and Interim Director Appointment

Chair West provided an update on the Executive Committee meeting:

- Dr. Paulette Coleman resigned as Interim Executive Director, effective January 12, 2025.
- Human Resources Director Shannon Hall recommended Ashley Bachelder for the role.

  A motion was made to accept the recommendation of the Executive committee to appoint Ashley Bachelder as Interim Executive Director of Metro Arts by Commissioner Lefkowitz and seconded by Commissioner Hardin.

Roll Call Vote Tally:

- **West:** [Yes]
- **Hardin:** [Yes]
- **Lefkowitz:** [Yes]
- **Love:** [No]
- **Brown:** [Yes]
- **Jester:** [Yes]
- **Kalil:** [Yes]
- **Rosenblum** [Yes]
- **Watts:** [Yes]
- **Yu:** [Yes]

Commissioner Watts asked if Ashley Bachelder could give the Commission her qualifications.

Ashley Bachelder introduced herself and shared her qualifications. She has served as the Director of Policy and Research at the Metro Human Relations Commission for over two years, leading key reports, and policy initiatives. Ashley has supported Metro Arts over the past year, notably contributing to the Title VI report and working with the last two Executive Directors. Her background includes work in public health, nonprofit advocacy, eviction prevention, and community partnerships. She holds dual Master's degrees in Public Health and Public Service from the University of Arkansas. Ashley emphasized her understanding of the challenges facing Metro Arts, her commitment to supporting the agency and community, and her readiness to help stabilize operations and prepare for a new Executive Director.

A motion was made to delegate the tasks associated with the start date and administrative items for Ashley Bachelder to become the Interim Director, to Chair West and Director Hall by Commissioner Lefkowtiz and seconded by Commissioner Kalil.

Committee Assignments & Schedules

- Committee assignments and scheduling were discussed during the meeting. Vivian will poll Commissioners to determine their availability for upcoming committee meetings.
- Commissioner Hardin expressed continued interest in holding a Commissioners Retreat.
- During the discussion of new and old business, it was proposed—pending Tessa's approval—that Vivian provide an update on assignments and scheduling via email.
- Vivian will be responsible for sending a scheduling form to all Commissioners. The form will:
  - Request your availability, offering several time slots and an option to mark when you are not available.
  - Ask which days of the week (Monday through Friday) work best for you.
  - Inquire whether your respective committee and the full Commission should meet monthly.
- Considerations for scheduling:
  - Legal team availability must be checked when planning meetings.
  - Historically, the Commission has alternated meeting months (e.g., January, February off, March, April, May on, June off, etc.).
- Vivian has already prepared the form and will send it out immediately following the meeting. Commissioners are asked to return it by **end of business on January 24 at 4:30 PM**.
- All **Committee Chairs** are reminded to **communicate with Vivian well in advance** of your scheduled meetings to coordinate agendas and support materials.

G. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Jester at 2:30 P.M.