



MINUTES

Metro Arts Commission Board Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Metro Southeast Building

Green Hills Conference Room

1417 Murfreesboro Pike

Nashville, TN 37217

Meeting recording: [Metro Nashville YouTube recording](#)

Commissioners present: Tré Hardin, Heather Lefkowitz, Shawn Knight, Dawana Wade, Mayra Yu, Brittany Cole, and Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, ex-officio)

Commissioners absent: Campbell West, Evan Brown, Timothy Jester, Janet Kurtz

A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement

Vice Chair Hardin called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

B. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

C. Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed three sets of minutes for approval: January 16, 2025, March 3, 2025, and April 30, 2025.

A motion was made to approve Commission minutes from January 16, 2025 by Commissioner Lefkowitz and seconded by Commissioner Knight.

A motion was made to approve Commission minutes from March 3, 2025 by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Wade.

A motion was made to approve Commission minutes from April 30, 2025 by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Yu.

D. Artist Spotlight: Amber Lelli

Artist Amber Lelli introduced herself as a local interdisciplinary artist, meaning she chooses the materials best fit for her vision. She has three primary mediums – sculpture, printmaking, and marquetry, and three primary concepts – theoretical common ground, social inclusion, and historical accountability. She showed many examples of her work and emphasized her public art project, Celestial Falls, at the Donelson Public Library. Over 90% of the fabricators and creators that worked on this project were local.

She is currently working with Alan LeQuire on a project that will be unveiled on June 22nd at the Parthenon.

E. Action Items/Discussion

1. Executive Committee – Ashley Bachelder

The Executive Committee did not meet in May due to priorities focused on the audit and onboarding the new Finance Administrator. Ashley brought attention to the standing meeting schedule in the packet. A Commission retreat date will be set for July. Shannon Hull from Metro HR will come to the next Commission meeting to talk about the process and timeline for ED search. Next meeting for Executive Committee is June 11.

2. Public Art Committee – Atilio Murga

Atilio Murga updated the Commission about the call for artists the Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment. It will close June 23rd. It is a national call for artists with a budget of \$400,000 for a wall sculpture in the lobby. The call for community members for the panel will open in the next couple weeks.

3. Grants & Funding Committee - Commissioner Heather Lefkowitz & Staff

Commissioner Lefkowitz and Ashley gave an update from the recent Grants Committee meeting earlier in the week. The FY26 timeline will be pushed back one month, but we will still be on track to get grant funds out by the end of the calendar year. The delay is to ensure the policy decisions are carefully considered and discussed before they are brought to the full Commission. Thrive and Operating guidelines will be brought for a vote for the June meeting.

Director Bachelder gave updates on FY25. 159 of the grants have been paid out with 6 remaining due to issues with missing contracts or incorrect payment information. Funds must be disbursed by the end of the fiscal year, or they will be returned to the general fund.

Director Bachelder presented proposed policy changes for FY26 – improve background check policy, add a 3-day curing period after technical reviews, first-time applicant support, clarify arts organization definition, and remove appeals process and replace it with a process for applicants that are denied meeting with staff. Other proposed changes will require more discussion – Thrive maximum request \$15,000, remove “public art” Thrive category, Thrive fiscal sponsor fee structure, operating grant funding formula, dual eligibility (Thrive & Operating). Director Bachelder asked for discussion from the Commissioners, especially members that are not on the Grants and Funding Committee. Director Bachelder answered questions from Commissioners and offered to share out the materials that have been sent to Grants Committee members with all Commissioners.

4. Audit and Finance Committee Update – Commissioner Jester & Interim Director Bachelder

Director Bachelder gave updates on the budget timeline. There was a successful budget hearing with Council on May 14. The public hearing on the budget is June 3. Director Bachelder mentioned that it is a tough budget year and presented the original budget request for increased grants funding (25%) and a more modest option (10% increase). She also provided a summary of the updated audit implementation plan. New Finance Administrator, Capri Harston, gave a brief update on her onboarding process and her role in the audit implementation. She has met with key stakeholders in Metro and has key trainings

underway. She confirmed that we will likely meet the targets in the audit plan through updating policies and procedures, training staff, operational accountability, and partnerships.

5. Restorative Arts Update – Josiah Golson / Claudia Lawhon

Josiah Golson gave introductions for Restorative Arts and Equity staff, followed by an update on Community Arts Leaders of Nashville and Arts Programming for Court Involved Youth. Community Arts Leaders of Nashville (CALN) places students with host sites and a mentor for students to gain experience in arts administrative roles. There are 8 CALN students in this current semester. The Arts Programming for Court Involved Youth (APCIY) has been on pause for the current fiscal year, but the Restorative Arts team is undergoing planning to reestablish the program during FY26. APCIY provides art programming in partnership with the Davidson County Juvenile Court.

6. Community Engagement Update - Chuck Beard

Chuck Beard gave updates on Community Engagement events. There are two Coffee Talk events in June, June 4 in collaboration with Music City Murals and June 25 at the 37208 Community Building in collaboration with Urban Housing Solutions. The next Metro Arts Forging Ahead taping is May 29.

F. Interim Executive Director's Report – Ashley Bachelder

Ashley announced Jesse Ross's, Public Art Coordinator, resignation. The Public Art team is working a on transition plan. Other hiring updates – Public Information Manager position interviews are being scheduled for the first few days in June, with the goal to identify the candidate by the end of June. The Public Art Manager position will be prioritized after that. Legislation passed through Council to change Commission size from 15 to 11 is finalized, 6 is the new quorum. Ashley's follow-up from this meeting is to compile the grants information and send that to all Commissioners. If there are other types of information or updates, please give that feedback to Ashley at any time.

G. New Business

No new business.

H. Adjourn Meeting

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:57 was made by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Knight.