



Minutes
Committee Anti-Racism and Equity
July 12, 2024 5:00pm –7:00pm
Metro Southeast Facility
1417 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 37217

Committee Members: Commissioner Tré Hardin (Chair), Commissioner Heather Lefkowitz, Ellen Gilbert, Teree McCormick, Lydia Yousief, and Camille Greer

Committee Members Absent: Fathiyah Shepard-Suso

Metro Staff Present: Dr. Paulette Coleman, Josiah Golson, Chuck Beard, Claudia Lawhon

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

- A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement
 - a. Commissioner Hardin called the meeting to order at 5:01pm and read the land acknowledgement
- B. Public Comment
 - a. No public comments
 - b. Commissioner Hardin mentioned that we have adjusted our meeting time to be more accessible to the public.
- C. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Minutes from May 24, 2024
 - b. *A motion was made to approve February 14, 2024 meeting minutes by Community Member Teree McCormick and seconded by Commissioner Lefkowitz.* The motion carried.
- D. Action Items/Discussion
 - 1. Confirm Co-Chair Appointment
 - a. Commissioner Hardin explained that Community Member Teree McCormick was the Co-Chair and that the Committee has had a Community Co-Chair so the community is represented in that position of power
 - b. Realigning with the guidelines and looking ahead to reviewing and editing guidelines

- c. Commissioner Hardin recommended that we pause on selecting a new co-chair while we work on updating the guidelines
- d. Josiah referred to section 2.1 in the current guidelines stating that if we change the current standing of the community co-chair, that information would need to be provided to the Commission in next weeks meeting so Chair Love can make it official. We do not currently have an identified co-chair.
- e. Community Member McCormick asked to ensure that everyone understood why there is a Community Co-chair. Commissioner Lefkowitz asked if Teree had resigned and she explained that she had stepped away for a work reason and had come back and discussed with Daniel. Community Member Yousief said that she agrees on waiting as the members continue to build relationships. Community Member Greer asked if there is clarity around what the roles and responsibilities are for the co-chair and Chair Hardin said that we are in a transition place and is in favor of taking the time to realign and he recognizes that the body was not created with him in mind to lead as a Commissioner but he has every intention in the future to look at what those responsibilities are and put the community co-chair at the forefront of leading CARE. Community Member Greer said that with that context she is fine with waiting as well. Commissioner Lefkowitz requested that in the interim we live into the spirit of the co-chair model and make it a priority to revisit. Dr. Coleman asked how long we will take to decide on the co-chair. Chair Hardin said he is not sure when we will find the alignment and clarity we need to be ready. Dr. Coleman raised that often when there is not an endpoint in mind, there is not a decision that gets made.
- f. Community member Yousief agreed and emphasized the need for defining the role and scope of CARE and opening up applications, stating that community members will want to apply if they know what the purpose of CARE is. Chair Hardin expressed that he sees his role as Chair more so as leading us through the agenda not as the sole leader of the body and that while we do not have a set date the hope is to have concrete next steps after this meeting. Community member McCormick raised that it is incumbent upon the community members to ensure the balance of power is upheld in the meantime. Josiah suggested also that once we see what comes out of section D item 2, that will inform our goals for FY25 and we will have a clearer timeline to choose a meeting to present the co-chair to the Commission.

2. Equity and Antiracism definitions

- a. Commissioner Hardin raised the need for consensus among us and the hope is to take the definition recommended by CARE to the Commission and ask the Commission to align and adopt that definition.
- b. Commissioner Lefkowitz asked to clarify why we are working on this definition while Metro Arts does currently have an equity statement. Josiah Golson responded that the equity statement is values driven but does not define what equity will look like in practice in a specific way. Chair Hardin also raised that

we want to have a clear definition in the CARE guidelines. Commissioner Lefkowitz wanted to clarify that the current equity statement on the website is from 2016 and the CARE guidelines are from 2020. Community member Community Member Yousief asked if the purpose is for the guidelines and Chair Hardin clarified it is also an example of what it looks like for this body to make recommendations to staff and Commission and how the process will look moving forward moving action items from committee to commission.

- c. Community member Yousief – missing is language and class, two big categories in Nashville and she hears from her community that the Metro Arts grants application is inaccessible because it is only available in English. She raised that a conversation about class, culture, and accessibility for working class people to also create art is important and how art is defined across classes. She stated that equity is inherently exclusive and has an issue with stating “everyone.” Words she wants to include – access, accountability, justice, harm and abuse. She also stated that it would be useful in another meeting to look at what are common retorts that are racist that are used to justify racism. She also said it would be great to include something about individuals being paid by Metro Arts directly. Chair Hardin raised that that language refers to a specific program and although it is important to adopt but can we include language that catches that without being specific to grants. Community member Yousief said that this body is not hampered by the legalities the commissioners are but we can be more creative about what equity is.
- d. Community Member McCormick asked if City Council has an equity statement and Dr. Coleman replied it is frequently stated that we are the only agency that has an equity statement. Chair Hardin raised the MNPS equity packet. Commissioner Lefkowitz stated that she is thinking about the difference between the Art team and CARE and the constraints and opportunities of each. What can be advocated for, how can we hold our meetings, and thinking about if we can operationalize equity through those opportunities. She also raised “damaged-centered” research versus centering the desires of the community and artists as an equitable practice and including a short statement in our definition. Chair Hardin read the general equity statement on the Metro website and that that could be a base for us to work off of. Community Member Gilbert raised that the language needs to be simple and accessible. Chair Hardin expressed that he envisioned this as a workshop and we can look at the equity statement and go through it. Community Member Gilbert raised that communities are creating art within their communities but their art is not included in the arts ecosystem.
- e. Community Member Greer offered outcomes-centered definitions that can give us something to measure and offered that we can have an accessibility statement as well. Chuck captured in notes. Commissioner Lefkowitz offered specifically referring to art and how art can result in human flourishing. Josiah Golson invited committee members to think specifically about what Metro Arts does and the outcomes we could measure. Commissioner Lefkowitz added access to tools,

networks, and other beneficial things like creating/expanding creative community. Community Member Greer mentioned adding language around all forms of arts having inherent value to the equity statement.

- f. Commissioner Hardin mentioned looking at who is engaging with the opportunities at Metro Arts. Chair Hardin said “outcomes-centered” and “desire-focused” resonated with him while looking at the definitions. The committee members continued to work on the definition document that Chuck took notes on.
- g. Chair Hardin asked what it would look like to have representation from Metro Legal in our meetings moving forward. Chuck responded that his understanding is that we just need to request it and that we could also ask the DEI office to have a representative attend.
- h. Community Member Gilbert mentioned that in the earlier days of CARE that staff members were less involved and that the members met more frequently outside of the Committee meetings. Commissioner Lefkowitz mentioned that she has a digital drive for Commission with a CARE folder. Chair Hardin, Chuck, and Josiah raised that we will check with legal about approving a collaborative document for community members and access to that drive from community members. Chair Hardin raised that the guidelines mention consensus and that we want to have verbal consensus among members for next steps, specifically with staff editing the definition and sending it prior to the next meeting and to adopt it as an action item to finalize at the next meeting.

3. Prioritizing goals for FY25

- a. Chair Hardin stated that reviewing the CARE guidelines and officially appointing a Community Co-chair is a priority. Community Member McCormick asked to clarify if Chair Hardin is asking for a list of goals. Chair Hardin replied that the list is currently a large task and added reviewing the Metro Arts Equity Statement. Community Member Yousief asked if meeting every other month is sufficient. Chair Hardin asked if the committee would like to meet monthly. Everyone agreed that an August meeting would be beneficial. He raised that the intention of meeting at 5pm is to make the meeting more accessible and Dr. Coleman added that it is a challenge to the composition of Metro boards and commissions and appreciates that the later time is valuable. She also raised that MSE is not a convenient location and libraries might be more accessible. Community Member Yousief asked to move it to a different weekday to account for arts programming and added that we could also meet at community centers. Chuck asked Dr. Coleman if the requirement of having ITS record meetings will still apply and she said that is her understanding.

4. New/Old Business

E. Adjourn Meeting

Chair Hardin adjourned the meeting at 7:04pm