Minutes
Metro Arts Commission Board Meeting
Thursday, August 28, 2025
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Metro Southeast Building,
Green Hills Conference Room
1417 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 37217

METRO ARTS
NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Commissioners Present: Campbell West (Chair), Heather Lefkowitz (Secretary), Evan Brown, Brittany Cole, Timothy Jester, Jilah Kalil, Shawn Knight, Mayra Yu and Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, *ex-officio*)

Absent: Tré Hardin (Vice Chair) & Dawana Wade

Metro Arts Staff: Atilio Murga, Capril Harston, Chuck Beard, Josiah Golson & Vivian Foxx

A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement

Meeting called to order by Chair West at 12:11 p.m. and quorum was confirmed via roll call.

B. Public Comment

No public comments were submitted and none in person.

C. Artist Spotlight: Martha Morales Purucker

Morales Purucker, a glass artist originally from Mexico City, shared her journey and practice. She discussed how cultural heritage and experimentation shaped her teaching and work and showed imagery and photographs several examples.

D. Approval of Minutes: July 24, 2025

A motion was made to approve July 24, 2025, minutes was made by Commissioner Lefkowitz and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Approved unanimously.

E. Action Items / Discussion

1. Public Art Committee

Atilio Murga gave an update about the selection process for the courthouse lobby of the Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment. The selection panel has narrowed the artists to five semi-finalists. Atilio provided an overview of images of samples of work from each semi-finalist. The selection panel will meet again on September 16th to select the artist. Prior to the panel, staff will conduct reference checks and. The panel will include back-to-back interviews with the semi-finalists, scoring, discussion, and selection. The panel will focus on technical skills, artist experience and management, and community engagement.

> ***A motion was made to approve the Semi-Finalists Adam Buente, Area C Projects, Ben Butler, Team Hayes + Whidbee + Wilson, and William Denton for the Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment public art project by Commissioner Lefkowitz and seconded by Commissioner Kalil.***

Other public art project updates included the passage of an MOU between Metro Arts and NDOT for the Arthur Avenue Project and a community engagement event on Saturday, September 13^{th} for the Bordeaux Gateway project.

2. Grants & Funding Committee

Ashley Bachelder provided an update on the FY26 grant cycle. The grant application deadline was August 15, 2025, and Metro Arts received 381 total applications, which is a record number of applications. There were 106 general operating support applications and 275 Thrive applications. She provided an overview of descriptive data points about the applicants, including number of applicants by category size, first time applicant status, and artist/organization breakdown. The policy decisions for the Commission in September include: allocation between Operating and Thrive, Allocation within Operating categories, and approval of recommended grantees. Commissioners asked various questions about the funding models. Ashley noted that she will send a written overview 1-2 weeks before the next Commission meeting with additional information, data, and context for the grants and policy decisions.

Next steps on the grant cycle timeline include the correction period, followed by panel reviews, and grants committee on September 22. All Commissioners will need to complete conflict of interest forms before the next meeting.

Ashley brought one action for the Commission to consider adding one question to the Thrive scoring rubric. The question is: “The purpose of the Thrive program is to support collaboration between artists and community partners and organizations, to support projects that impact neighborhoods and communities, to engage residents, and to promote cultural equity. Overall, how well does this application support these goals?” followed by a four-point scale. The inclusion of this question will help the panelist when making their evaluations.

> ***A motion was made to approve the updated FY26 Thrive scoring rubric by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Cole.***

Josiah Golson provided an update about the Community Arts Leaders of Nashville program. The Metro Council passed the criteria for the CALN program last month. Staff are preparing to open host site applications on September 3. Intern and mentor applications will be open beginning October 3. Interviews and matching will take place in November. The internship will take place from February to May 2026. It is planned to have 6-8 host sites.

3. Nominating Committee

Commissioner Jester shared a report of the Nominating Committee meeting. The Nominating Committee's role is to determine recommendations for the Commission Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary for the next year. Current officers of Chair West, Vice Chair Hardin, and Secretary Lefkowitz are eligible and willing to continue to serve in their roles. Before the Committee makes a formal recommendation, Commissioners are welcome and encouraged to reach out to Director Bachelder if they are interested in serving in a leadership role. The Nominating Committee will provide a formal recommendation for the next Commission meeting.

4. Executive Committee

Ashley Bachelder provided updates from the Executive Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed a robust finance and audit report and discussed anticipated change to the bylaws. Bylaw revision and recommendations are expected for the October meeting. Substantive changes to the bylaws include discussion of term limits and the status of and next steps about current standing committees which have been inactive (Advocacy Committee and CARE Committee).

5. Community Engagement

Chuck Beard provided an update about upcoming events, including Coffee Talk on September 3 and Metro Arts Forging Ahead on September 25.

F. Chair's Report

Chair West provided the update that she and Director Bachelder had a follow up conversation with Metro HR Director Hall about next steps for the organizational alignment process for the Commission and staff. Conversations are ongoing about working with a facilitator to guide the Commission and staff through a visioning and planning process.

G. Director's Report

Ashley provided further updates about conversations she is having with external facilitators for the alignment process. She also shared that the Council will consider the nomination of Camille Greer for the Commission's one vacancy. Work is ongoing to finalize the job descriptions and begin recruitment for three staff vacancies, including Finance Officer, Strategic Grants and Initiatives Manager, and Public Art Manager.

H. New/Old Business

No additional items were raised.

I. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting adjourned 1:49 pm.