Meeting Minutes
Metro Arts Commission
Grants & Funding Committee
March 16, 2026 | 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Metro Southeast Building, Conference Room A
1417 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN 37217

Committee members present: Heather Lefkowitz (Chair), Tim Jester, Shawn Knight, Dawana Wade, Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, ex-officio)
Staff Present: Jackie Hansom, Vivian Foxx

A. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome

Chair Lefkowitz called the meeting to order. The legal notice regarding appeals was read into the record. Roll call was conducted with a quorum present.

B. Public Comment
No public comments were submitted in advance or offered in person.

C. Approval of Minutes: January 12, 2026

> ***A motion to approve the January 12, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Jester. The motion passed unanimously.***

D. Action / Discussion Items

1. Staff Reports

Director Bachelder welcomed and introduced Jackie Hansom as the new Strategic Grants and Initiatives Manager. Jackie shared a brief introduction about her background and excitement for the role.

a. FY26 Community Arts Leaders of Nashville (CALN)
Jackie shared updates on the FY26 CALN program, including:
- Completion of all 8 contracts and grant payments.
- Kick-off lunch was held in February. Planning for professional development workshops is underway.
- All interns are on-site and staff will monitor and engage through scheduled check-in meetings throughout the semester.

b. FY26 General Operating and Thrive Grants
Ashley and Jackie shared updates on the FY26 grant cycle, including:
- Status of one outstanding payment
- Progress on 19 grantee check-in meetings, which are scheduled during day and evening hours at virtual and in-person locations across the city. Check-ins are scheduled through March and Commissioners are invited to attend. Some examples of topics that have come up in check-in conversations include challenges securing venues, earlier timing for check-ins in future cycles,

peer connections and networking, and the need for more fiscal sponsorship information. Staff will prepare a summary report after the all check-ins are completed.

Other priorities for the grants team include ongoing training with Jackie, upcoming recruitment for a new Grants Coordinator position, and upcoming events including FY25 Operating Support grantee celebration and an event that will highlight three Metro Arts Thrive grantees at an event called Thriving in Community in partnership with the Artist Thrive Summit.

2. FY27 Grant Review Panelist Guidelines Approval (Action)

Ashley provided an overview of the proposed FY27 Grant Panelists Guidelines. Some highlights included:

- Panelist stipend of $500
- More detailed language about characteristics and backgrounds of prospective panelists
- Expanding eligibility to include residents of counties bordering Davidson County
- Adjusting estimated review hours to approximately 25 hours
- Revising application questions and rubric language for clarity

Additional discussion included discussion of plans for a longer recruitment period for this cycle and plans to move to a rolling application period after, how staff will evaluate applicants for eligibility and through the established criteria, the planned use of a nomination form, and discussion of the application questions. Suggestions for rewording the application question about collaboration were provided.

> ***A motion was made to approve the FY27 Grant Review Panelist Guidelines as amended by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Wade. The motion passed unanimously.***

After the guidelines are approved by Commission, staff will launch applications via Submittable and begin recruitment.

3. FY27 Planning: Parking Lot Review and Timeline

Ashley reviewed the planned timeline for the FY27 grant cycle, noting a goal to open applications in May and approve grant allocations in August. She noted that each phase of the grant cycle has more time built in at each step. Ashley stated that the team is working to bring guidelines for review at the next meeting, and gave an overview of the anticipated changes, including but not limited to:

- General Operating
    - Adding clarity and definitions for key concepts in the application questions
    - Adjustments to the scoring rubrics for total points and rubric structure
- Thrive
    - Clarifying lead artist and project lead, especially for proposals from organizations
    - Restrictions on executive-level, paid staff eligibility
    - Strengthening guidance related to fiscal sponsors
    - Inclusion of non-eligible project types such as workforce development

Staff discussed that the FY27 cycle will be the third cycle using these guidelines, all of which have been on shorter than normal timelines. Moving into the FY28 cycle will provide more time to explore more significant changes and different program structures with community feedback and engagement.

E. New Business

- The April 13th grants committee meeting will be moved to April 6th to give staff more time for grant guideline preparation.
- There is a request to have a join grants and advocacy committee after grant guidelines are approved.

F. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 2:30pm was made by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Wade. The meeting was adjourned.