Minutes
METRO ARTS COMMISSION
Grants & Funding Committee Meeting
April 6, 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)
Metro Arts Staff: Jackie Hansom, Vivian Foxx
Metro Legal: Kelli Woodward

A. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome

Chair Heather Lefkowitz called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. and reviewed the Metro Arts mission and appeals process. Vivian Foxx conducted roll call and confirmed a quorum.

B. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

C. Approval of Minutes

> ***A motion to approve the March 16, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Jester and seconded by Commissioner Knight. Unanimously approved.***

D. Action/Discussion Items

1. FY27 Grant Review Panelist Guidelines (Action)

Jackie Hansom and Director Bachelder provided a presentation of the FY27 Grant Panelist Guidelines, including a recap of points from the last commission meeting, panelist eligibility, panelists expectations, application questions, and other logistics. They shared details about the processes staff use to review applications, select panelists, and provide training. Commissioners provided comments and asked questions on topics including the structure and scale of the rubric, recruitment and nominations, training logistics, training resources, and multi-year service, among other topics. A request was made to add a check box in the Submittable application about whether the applicant would like their application to be saved for year-round use, in anticipation of moving to a rolling application process. Commissioners were invited to observe any part of the panelist selection process.

> ***A motion to approve the FY27 Grant Review Panelist Guidelines was made by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Unanimously approved.***

2. FY27 Grant Guidelines Review – General Operating & Thrive

Jackie Hansom shared that the rest of the meeting will be to review the proposed Operating and Thrive grant guidelines, and to have preliminary conversation about each. She shared an overview of the approach that staff took in developing the guidelines, focused on prioritizing clear information and predictable timelines, addressing consistency in scoring, and providing more thorough information about fiscal sponsorship requirements.

Director Bachelder provided an overview of the proposed General Operating grant guidelines, including criteria, expenses, grant categories, time frame and schedule, award amount calculations, and additional procedural details. She explained changes to the application questions, noting that changes to the questions were minimal, but emphasized the new structure of the scoring rubric, now on a 10-point scale. Applicants and panelists will be provided with a resource guide with definitions, key concepts, and other materials to support during the application process. Jackie Hansom provided an overview of the proposed Thrive guidelines, highlighting updates to applicant eligibility requirements, project requirements and ineligible project types, and allowable expenses, among other details.

Commissioners shared comments and discussion including topics of eligibility, core programming definitions, and rubric content. Suggestions were made about what to include in the resource guide and fiscal sponsorship information.

Staff will continue refining the guidelines and incorporate feedback prior to the next committee meeting. A request was made to have an outline and/or table of contents for the resource guide. The next committee meeting is April 13th and the committee will be asked to make recommendations to bring to the full Commission.

E. New Business

- Request for future discussion regarding the impact of and potential policies about AI.

F. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:51 p.m. by Chair Lefkowtiz.