

Minutes

Advocacy & Engagement Committee

May 12, 2026

5:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.

McCabe Park Community Center

101 46th Ave N., Nashville, TN 37217



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

Committee members present: Brittany Cole (Chair), Tre Hardin, Mayra Yu, Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, ex-officio)

Committee members absent: Camille Greer

Metro Arts staff present: Darius Barati, Jackie Hansom

A. Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chair Cole. Staff confirmed attendance and quorum.

B. Public Comments

There were no public Comment in person or submitted online.

C. Approval of Minutes: April 14, 2026

A motion was made to approve April 14, 2026 meeting minutes by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Yu. Motion passed.

D. Discussion Items

1. FY27 Budget Update

Director Bachelder provided an update on the FY27 budget process. The Commission's scheduled presentation to the Metro Council is the following evening. The mayor's recommended budget includes \$37,500 in one-time funding to catch up grant panels that were not held in FY25. Staff noted the importance of these funds in order to keep commitments to paying panelists. Director Bachelder has submitted adjusted budget requests to the council, including a 10% increase to the grant budget (approximately \$324,000) and \$85,000 to support a planning process to redevelop restorative arts programming. The committee discussed previous restorative arts programming and some goals for the potential relaunch. The budget presentation will include a 2-minute video highlighting two grantees, intended to show the impact and reach of Metro Arts funding.

Following department hearings and presentations, the Council's Budget and Finance Committee will hold work sessions to support the development of the substitute budget. The public hearing on the budget is scheduled for June 2 and is an opportunity for community members to address the council about what they would like to see in the budget. Director Bachelder noted that with the FY27 grant application cycle launching and significant hiring activity overlapping with the budget timeline, capacity

has been limited to build out a more robust advocacy plan. Four staff members will be at the Americans for the Arts national conference the first week of June and will therefore also miss the council's public hearing.

2. Continued Discussion of Committee Goals and Scope of Work

The Committee continued discussion of advocacy and engagement strategies, including:

- Ideas for shareable advocacy content including short social media video clips from commissioners, grantees, and advocates responding to simple prompts that can be shared on virtual platforms.
- Longer-form grantee interview videos are in-progress that center artist stories and impact.
- Storytelling should focus on how funding directly benefits artists' careers and artistic growth, the value of arts and culture in bringing diverse communities together, and the broader positive impacts.
- The Committee discussed fiscal sponsorship as a pain point: Metro Arts cannot issue grants to individuals and must work through fiscal sponsors; this is a legal limitation, not a departmental choice. The Committee discussed ways that staff can continue communicating about this so that the constraint is not mistakenly perceived as a Metro Arts preference. Staff provided examples of working with local partners on this type of education. Director Bachelder also shared an excerpt from a publication titled "Arts Data in the Public Sector: Strategies for Local Arts Agencies" that includes information about how municipal arts agencies navigate eligibility for unincorporated entities through fiscal sponsors, or alternatively, how some agencies instead contract with a nonprofit intermediary to administer funds as a regranting model that operates as an independent nonprofit outside the local government. Director Bachelder noted that this model was briefly explored in 2024, but would take considerably more engagement and research to determine if this is a better path than the current model of fiscal sponsorship.
- Staff noted several information and engagement sessions for prospective grant applicants scheduled over the next several weeks, including a Fiscal Sponsor Food and Fellowship event on May 20, led by four returning fiscal sponsors representing different models.

E. New Business

No new business was raised.

F. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.