**Minutes**
**Metro Arts Commission Board Meeting**
**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**
**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**
**Metro Southeast Building**
**1417 Murfreesboro Pike**
**Nashville, TN 37217**

**METRO ARTS MISSION:**
**Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts**

**Commissioners present:** Campbell West (Chair), Tré Hardin (Vice Chair), Heather Lefkowitz (Secretary), Evan Brown, Timothy Jester, Dawana Wade, Mayra Yu and Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, ex-officio)
**Commissioners absent:** Brittany Cole, Camille Greer, Jilah Kalil, Shawn Knight
**Staff:** Kelli Woodward (Metro Legal), Vivian Foxx (Arts), Capri Harston (Arts)

## A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement

Chair West called meeting. Vivian Foxx called roll and confirmed quorum. Chair West read the land acknowledgement.

## B. Public Comment

No public comments were submitted prior to the meeting and none in person.

## C. Featured Artist: Emma Supica

Chuck Beard introduced featured artist Emma Supica, founding executive director of Unscripted, a Metro Arts Operating Support grantee. Supica described the work and mission of Unscripted, which uses improvisational theater to heal, empower, and connect communities. She described examples of unique partnerships and initiatives, broader context of improv theater, and her own role as a performing artist herself. She led the Commission through two interactive improv exercises.

## D. Approval of Minutes

***A motion was made to approve April 15 meeting minutes by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Motion passed.***

## E. Action & Discussion Items

### a. Public Art Committee Update

#### i. Approval of NYCE Empowerment Collection Artists and Proposals (Action)

Chair West stated that the Public Art Committee did not meet this month, so the staff are bringing recommendations for the Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment (NYCE) Empowerment Collection directly to Commission for approval. Atilio Murga provided an overview of the selection process, Chaired by Commissioner Brown, which included a competitive pool of proposals. Twenty wall-hung artworks measuring 30" x 40" were selected by the selection panel with an artist commission of $5,000 each.

Kelli Woodward of Metro Legal reviewed conflict-of-interest standards, advising commissioners that they must vote and act independently and impartially. Commissioners who have close personal or financial relationships with any artists being considered for approval should recuse themselves from voting and participating in discussion on those specific artists. Director Bachelder stated that Commissioners' conflict of interest forms were collected and reviewed, and for any artists that commissioners noted a conflict for, those artists' proposals would be approved individually to allow for abstentions.

Atilio Murga reviewed the artist names and proposals of 20 artworks being recommended for approval.

> ***Motion to approve the selected artwork proposal from Ashley Larkin for the Empowerment Collection by Dawana Wade and seconded by Tim Jester. Evan Brown abstained. The motion passed.***

Before additional approvals, Murga informed commissioners that next steps after approval include contracting, a progress check-in, and that the deadline to complete the work is September 1. He explained there will be five alternates if any of the 20 selected artists cannot complete the commission. The NYCE facility is anticipated to open in summer 2027. Commissioners asked additional questions about the staff process for ensuring timely completion and other logistics.

> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork from Daniel Arite for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Hardin, seconded by Commissioner Jester. Motion approved.***
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> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork from Elisheba Mrozik for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion approved.***
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> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork from James Threalkill for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Wade and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion approved.***
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> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork proposal from LeAndra Crystal for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion passed.***
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> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork proposal from Sai Clayton for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion passed.***
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> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork proposal from Trey Calfee for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. Motion passed.***
>
> ***A motion to approve the selected artwork proposal from Ellen Bibb for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Wade. Motion passed.***

***A motion to approve the selected artwork from Jairo Prado for the Empowerment Collection by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Yu abstained. Motion passed.***

The remaining artist names and their proposals were taken for consent approval:

***A motion was made to approve the selected artwork proposals for the following artists as part of the Empowerment Collection: Martha Morales Purucker, Anna Wallace, Georganna Greene, James Worsham, Martica Griffin, Megan Hall, Richard Greathouse, Sam Angel, Thandiwe Shiphrah, Tony Sobota, and Zach Duensing by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Motion passed.***

Murga presented five additional artist proposals as alternates, in the ranked order in which they scored, as follows: Jennifer Folsom, Rhonda Wernick, Andrew Wieland, Jernicya Onyekwelu, and Cristalynne Dupree. Alternates will be selected if any of the 20 approved artwork proposals cannot be completed according to the project needs.

***A motion was made to approve the designated alternate artwork proposal from Jernicya Onyekwelu by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Jester. Commissioner Brown abstained. The motion passed.***

The remaining four names were taken for consent approval:

***A motion was made to approve the designated alternate artwork proposals, authorizing staff to implement them in the scored ranked order, as needed, should any of the selected collection artists be unable to complete their proposal: Jennifer Folsom, Rhonda Wernick, Andrew Wieland, and Cristalynne Dupree by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Jester. The motion passed.***

**b. Grants & Funding Committee Update**

Commissioner Lefkowitz stated that the Grants Committee did not meet this month and asked staff to provide a brief update. Jackie Hansom shared that recruitment for grant applicants and grant panelists are underway. The panelist deadline to apply is June 15 and the grant deadline to apply is June 26, with an optional preliminary review deadline of June 5. She shared plans for a number of completed and scheduled grant activities, including virtual information sessions, Fiscal Sponsorship Food and Fellowship, in-person co-working and drop-in sessions, and one-on-one virtual meeting options. Additionally, staff are conducting eligibility meetings for grant compliance and monitoring purposes.

**c. Executive Committee Update**

Chair West shared updates from the Executive Committee’s most recent meeting. She stated that the committee will perform the annual evaluation of the Executive Director and provide a report to the full Commission the following month. Chair West shared that Capri Harston, Finance Administrator, has created a new financial report that is now available monthly for commission review. Harston provided an overview, stating that the format shows the annual budget, annual spend to date, and remaining budget amount. The report shows that the Commission is in good financial standing, and that surplus funds exist from salary savings. The monthly financial report will be provided each month to the Commission.

Chair West additionally shared that the Executive Committee discussed FY27 budget updates, which Director Bachelder will share in her report. She encouraged commissioners to think about any interests in leadership roles for the upcoming year, as the nominating committee will convene in coming months. Chair West shared that the committee discussed logistics for the executive director search, sharing that the process may begin in June. Commissioners discussed questions regarding timing options for a director search, stating the desire to understand all possible options, determine the best alignment with staff workflow and priorities, and how to incorporate and build on the alignment work completed with the organizational consultant. A desire for additional strategy work was shared.

Staff shared that they will be checking with Commissioners for their summer schedules, as they anticipate challenges with meeting quorum during summer months.

**d. Advocacy & Engagement Committee Update**

Director Bachelder shared that the Advocacy Committee met in May and discussed the budget process, Arts' council budget presentation, and ways community members may engage in the process. Darius Barati is working on storytelling with grantees and incorporated a short video in the budget presentation.

Atilio Murga shared details for upcoming community engagement opportunities with NYCE public artist William Massey. The meeting lost quorum during this item.

**F. Chair's Report**

N/A

**G. Director's Report**

Director Bachelder stated she will send her report via email and recognized and thanked Commissioner Wade, whose last meeting is today.

**H. New Business**

**I. Adjourn Meeting**

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**Certification of approval of the minutes:**

*The Secretary shall certify the minutes of full Commission meetings. The Secretary shall sign and date full Commission minutes upon affirmative approval by the Commission. If the Secretary is not present at the time of approval, the Vice Chair shall assume this duty.*

Certified by:

**Heather Lefkowitz** Heather Lefkowitz

Name Signature

Date of approval: July 22, 2026