Meeting Minutes
Arts Commission
Executive Committee
July 15, 2026,
2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Metro Southeast Building
1417 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN 37217

Committee members present: Campbell West (Chair), Tre Hardin, Heather Lefkowitz, Shawn Knight, and Ashley Bachelder (Interim Executive Director, ex officio)
Metro Arts staff: Vivian Foxx, Capri Harston
Metro Legal: Macy Amos, Kelli Woodword

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Campbell West called the meeting to order at 2:05 P.M. and confirmed that a quorum was present. Roll call was conducted by Vivian Foxx.

B. Public Comments

No Public Comments were submitted in person or online.

C. Approval of Minutes: June 10, 2026

> *A motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2026, meeting by Commissioner Hardin and seconded by Commissioner Knight. Passed unanimously.*

D. Financial Report

Capri Harston presented the monthly financial overview, highlighting the end-of-year operational budget surplus, resolution of unresolved invoices, and updates on the Metro-wide required efficiency savings (a 1.5% overall reduction on the department budget). Final true-up is underway as the new fiscal year begins.

E. Action & Discussion Items

1) Executive Director Next Steps — Action

Chair West opened the discussion by stating members from the Metro Human Resources team (Director Shannon Hall, Razel Jones, and Lisa Mason) and Metro Legal (Macy Amos and Kelli Woodward) are present at the meeting to answer legal and procedural questions about the executive director position. She noted that at the June meeting, the Committee reviewed several options regarding next steps for the Executive Director position, and that today's discussion was intended to determine a path forward.

Macy Amos outlined two general options previously discussed with the Chair and Human Resources: initiate an Executive Director search or continue the interim arrangement. Legal recommended that if the Committee chose to extend the interim period with a time bound commitment, to set a minimum rather than a fixed maximum duration.

Human Resources Director Hall affirmed that HR is prepared to support the Commission when it is ready to proceed, noted that extended interim appointments are not unusual at Metro. She noted that interim appointments can be important for continuity and stability, and also stated the Arts Commission will be a priority for HR when it is decided that the timing for a search is correct.

Interim Executive Director Bachelder presented a look ahead at departmental priorities for the coming year, describing the past year and a half as a continued effort to stabilize operations while maintaining core services at a high volume. She spoke about priority areas, including hiring a public art manager, running a smooth FY27 grant cycle, beginning planning and public engagement for the FY28 grant cycle, overseeing the audit response, moving office locations, continuing to build and restore partnerships, and continued organizational alignment. She summarized progress on other benchmarks to date, including five new staff hires, progress on five distinct grant cycles, improvement in public engagement and public perception, passage of all commission legislation, an operational increase in the mayor's budget, completion of public art projects, and overall improvement in the department's financial position, among other accomplishments.

Committee members continued to discuss, noting comments including:

- Identifying tangible measures about what working toward a director search, including benchmarks.
- Ensuring that there is space for the current team and potential new hires to bring new ideas and perspectives to the work, also acknowledging there will be challenges that any leader will face on any timeline.
- The Commission should share some responsibilities for setting benchmarks and identify what activities they may undertake regarding retreats, onboarding, reflecting, and other activities to continue coalescing as a commission.
- Priorities should be followed up on; not as a rigid checklist, but in a format that allows flexibility and a structure to check in on the progress of benchmarks and goals.

Commissioner Knight made a was made to extend the extend the interim director position with Ashley in it, for a minimum period of 24 months. As the 24 moth approaches, we assess with HR about their capacity and determine whether it is the right time to do the search. Commissioner Lefkowitz seconded the motion.

Commissioner Knight withdrew the motion, after feedback that an action on the timing of the search may be better suited. Commissioners continued discussion about structures for regular commission reports.

A motion to defer the executive director search for a period of no less than 24 months was made by Commissioner Lefkowitz and seconded by Commissioner Knight.

Committee members discussed whether 24 months is more appropriate or if it should be shorter. Clarifying information was provided by HR, explaining that initiating a director search and carrying it to execution may take up to six months. Adjusting the motion to 18 months would effectively result in the current interim director continuing to serve for 24 months, while initiating the administrative elements for a director search at the 18 month point. Director Hall and Razel Jones emphasized the importance of the commission coming to consensus and unified vision about what they want from a long-term executive director, nothing that not having this identified and clearly articulated has continued to surface and cause challenges with the Arts Commission overtime. The committee continued conversation about the need to coalesce about shared vision, and values as a policy making body, so expectations, goals, and tracking progress around stability, capacity, and vision are clear. Commissioner Lefkowitz withdrew her motion.

A motion was made to defer beginning the search for an executive director for a minimum of 18 months by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Hardin.

Additional conversation noted that this timeline would mean Metro Arts is back on the ideal fiscal year timeline for grants, and that starting the search in no less than 18 months would mean that Director Bachelder is finishing additional two years of oversight, which is a key aspect of getting the overall department in an ideal position.

Commissioner Knight called the question. Commissioner Lefkowitz seconded. Motion to call the question passes.

A motion was made to defer beginning the search for an executive director for a minimum of 18 months by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Hardin. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Chair's Report

Chair West emphasized that this recommendation and going to Commission the following month will hopefully give Director Bachelder and all the staff more stability and clarity moving forward. She asked Razel Jones to share a 2022 report completed by HR and the Office of Impact about prior observations relevant to the Commission's ongoing discussion of shared vision and values.

The committee discussed preparing information for the full commission that clearly articulates the rationale behind the recommendation. Chair West and Director Bachelder will prepare comments for the full commission meeting, and committee members will discuss in greater depth at future meetings what ongoing reports may include.

G. New Business

Commissioner Hardin requested a discussion at the next executive committee meeting about the strategies for the next two years. Director Bachelder emphasized that if there is any information commissioners want about the operations or status of work, to reach out with specific or general feedback and requests.

H. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.