



# METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

## **Metro Arts Commission**

Minutes of the Committee for Anti-Racism and Equity

June 2, 2021

**Committee Members Present:** Ellen Angelico (Commissioner), Aaron Doenges, Megan Kelley, Ellen Gilbert, Teree McCormick, Paula Roberts (Co-chair, Commissioner), Jon Royal

**Committee Members Absent:** Sarah Bounse, Alandis Brassel, Will Cheek (Co-chair, Commissioner)

**Staff:** Janine Christiano, Tré Hardin, Grace Wright, Ian Myers

### **METRO ARTS MISSION:**

**Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts**

A. Administrative – Facilitator: Paula Roberts

1. Call to Order & Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. Co-Chair Roberts recognized the CARE group norms.

2. Approve Minutes: April 7, 2021

***A motion to approve the CARE Minutes from April 7, 2021 was offered by Teree McCormick, Jon Royal seconded, and the motion passed***

3. Introduce: Commissioner Ellen Angelico

Chair Roberts introduced Commissioner Angelico as a new member of the Committee.

B. **Review agenda**

1. Equity Lens Update

Janine Christiano gave an overview of staff work on the Equity Lens language and the test application of the lens during the development of the FY22 Thrive Guidelines. Janine met with all Metro Arts teams for their input and also incorporated community feedback from Emily Habeck's project on the Thrive funding programs in FY21. Staff also met with an external partner about their experience implementing an equity lens.

The Committee asked for clarification about whether staff was also reaching out to people and communities who have not applied to Thrive. Staff let the Committee know that is the plan and that previously collected feedback was mostly anecdotal but that the hope was that the Equity Lens would help Metro Arts build authentic relationships that could help identify and address that group more deeply. There are limitations, but staff is interested in continuing to pursue that.

She highlighted staff insights and continuing questions:

- The equity lens will provide a great program design tool for Metro Arts and the Arts Commission.
- To fully apply the lens, a lot of staff time and planning is necessary. Additionally, the timeline needs to take into account coordination of community meetings and interviews as well as Commission and Committee review and approvals.
- Staff will continue to respond more completely to lens throughout Thrive Process
- How can this tool be implemented for "smaller" or "quicker" decisions and across agency?
- How will we "roll out" lens to staff, Arts Commission, and community.
- How do we hold ourselves accountable to the work and findings?

The Committee suggested that instead of setting up community rows, staff should consider incorporating the feedback into an interactive art practice. This would additionally allow for potentially more local artists to be hired. Insights could be gleaned through arts-based qualitative analysis.

The Committee asked for clarification regarding whether the Equity lens would be applied agency-wide or would it be limited? Staff confirmed that the intent was to apply it agency wide, but there were some limitations to be addressed first. Also, final approval by Commission would be necessary.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of the public facing aspect of the Equity Lens and suggested that it might inform funding and granting relationships.

The Committee asked for a proposed timeline for the implementation of this tool. Staff suggested this a further topic for the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Committee also asked to be sent materials from the test review and that FY22 Guidelines draft for review before the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting

The Committee recommended discussing staff's Equity Lens findings further at the Committee's June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## 2. Metro Arts Employee Policy Draft

Aaron Doenges facilitated discussion around the Metro Arts Employee Department Guidelines and the related work of the Internal Analysis & Development Working Group.

The Committee asked for clarification about the author of the document. Ian Myers clarified that he is the staff author but that the policy is based in the Civil Service Guidelines. This policy is meant to make department-specific additions and provide clarity where needed.

The Committee also expressed concerns about the language used in the guidelines about approaching difficult conversations related to equity. They asked for further clarification about whether additional practices could be incorporated to support an individual who has been harmed in an internal, restorative way. The Committee further clarified that there was concern about language in the document being twisted against those with concerns as there is some subjectivity. Staff clarified that some of the language was directly from the Civil Service Guidelines and would update the Committee about what language must stay the same because of that and what could be updated.

The Committee also expressed concern about Human Resource departments potentially being biased to the organization they serve at the potential expense of individuals. Staff clarified that Human Resources was a separate department from Metro Arts and not obligated in that way.

Staff further clarified that this document was a revamp of older guidelines, and there would be room for comment. It was created prior to the formation of CARE and the Equity Lens.

The Committee requested time for a full review of the document to make comments and suggestions. It would also allow for the addition of compassionate support procedures and the application of the developing Equity Lens.

The Committee asked about possible issues with hierarchy and power structures. Staff clarified that this applies to all employees but that it could be formalized in the document.

The Committee also recommended additions to the Definitions section and more specific and clear language throughout.

Staff will provide the Committee with any documents needed and will also arrange a meeting with a representative from Human Resources to speak with the Committee.

### 3. CARE Planning Retreat Agenda

Tré Hardin presented a draft agenda put together by staff for discussion and approval of the Committee.

The Committee requested the following changes and materials:

- An updated report on priorities from last planning retreat
- Adding retention, succession planning, and auxiliary roster to the agenda
- Increasing time devoted to establishing action steps and timelines

4. Additional topics of discussion – (ad hoc)

Chair Schmidt brought up the Executive Committee's interest in developing a communications policy to react to events and crises in our community. The Committee updated him to let him know the Internal Analysis & Development Working Group are working on it and will bring in Emily Waltenbaugh from staff soon.

Staff will provide an update following the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The TYAUSA Recharge, Recalibrate, Restart, and Reimagine conference were suggested as further training opportunities.

The External Analysis & Development Working Group requested that more members be assigned due to changes in roster.

C. **Working Group Update**

There were no additional working group updates.

D. **Staff Update**

There were no additional staff updates.

E. **Set next meeting and action steps**

The next meeting will be the Planning Retreat on June 12, 2021. Staff will provide requested materials to the Committee before then.

F. **Adjourn meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.