

Metro Arts Commission
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
May 17, 2018
Metro Office Building 2nd floor, Davidson Conference Room
800 2nd Avenue South, Nashville

Attending Commissioners: Jane Alvis, Niki Coffman, Toby Compton, Jackie Daniel, Mohamed-Shukri Hassan, Clay Haynes, Danielle McDaniel, Marielena Ramos, Jim Schmidt, Hope Stringer and Marcus Whitney

Absent Commissioners: Manuel Delgado, Bonnie Dow, Dr. Ruth Ross Edmonds and Larry Keeton

Staff: Jen Cole, Laurel Fisher, Lauren Fitzgerald, Tré Hardin, Rebecca Peterson, Olusola Tribble, Caroline Vincent and Ian Myers

Guests: Antiracism Transformation Team members: Alandis Brassel (Arts and Business Council), Jon Royal (Professional Theatre Artist), and Sarah Bounse (Metro Health); Bryant Lamont (Artist) and Carly Elliot (Metro Legal)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Metro Arts Commission Chair Clay Haynes called the May meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

B. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A motion to approve minutes from April 19, 2018 and March 15, 2018 meetings was offered by Commissioner Ramos, seconded by Commissioner Compton, and the motion passed.

C. OPERATIONS

Executive Director Jen Cole thanked the board and Metro Arts staff for allowing her to work with them every day. With confidence, Cole announced that the agency is stronger and more respected than when she first arrived. She recounted the three things that led Metro Arts to this point: being courageous, the staff and board and listening.

Budget

Executive Director Jen Cole reported on expectations for the upcoming budget hearing. Cole explained that the budget for the Restorative Justice program will look like an increase to the Council since it will no longer be funded as a Public Investment Plan and is moving into the operational budget. Cole said for the board's purposes it is a flat budget. Cole suggested that they continue to message impact of arts on wages and stories on equity.

Haynes asked that the board please attend the budget hearing to show support for Metro Arts.

Building Security

Cole notified the board of several security changes being made to the Metro Office Building that will affect access to the public. Upon Cole's upcoming leave, Finance and Operations Director Ian Myers and Public Art and Placemaking Director Caroline Vincent will be overseeing these changes expected to be complete by mid-June.

Transition

Haynes updated the board on the pursuit of filling the role of Executive Director. Haynes ensured his steady contact with the HR department as they pull for high quality candidates.

Cole made clear that the application would be open for the next week unless the commission decided to extend.

Haynes expressed the desire to extend the application deadline in order for large organizations to continue pushing out the application.

Cole offered transition briefs to board.

D. PUBLIC ART

Art WORKS Metro Office Building – Recommended Artists - ACTION

Public Art & Placemaking Project Manager Anne-Leslie Owens reported the selected artist recommendations from the PAC for the Metro Office Building Collection Purchase.

Owens presented example artworks from the following PAC recommended artists: John Baeder, Paul Collins, Robert Durham, John Guider, Katherine Krebs, Marilyn Murphy, Michael Ray Nott, David Piñeros, Mandy Rogers Horton, Elizabeth Sanford, James Threalkill and Thaxton Waters.

This selection will be followed by artist studio visits and selection of artworks for the Metro Office Building.

A motion to accept the PAC recommended approval of 12 artists for the Metro Office Building Collection Purchase was offered by Commissioner Alvis, seconded by Commissioner Coffman, and the motion passed.

Donated Artwork Recommendation – Metro 50th Medallion – ACTION

Owens reported the PAC recommended Metro Nashville 50th Anniversary Medallion by Jammie Williams.

A motion to accept the PAC recommended approval of the donation of Metro Nashville 50th Anniversary Medallion by Jammie Williams, for installation in Historic Courthouse was offered by Commissioner Coffman, seconded by Commissioner Compton, and the motion passed.

E. UPDATE + DISCUSSION

Anti-Racism Transformation Team (ARTt) Update + Discussion

Community & Organizational Development Director Rebecca Kinslow reminded the board of the purpose and scope of ARTt. Kinslow reported ARTt consists of four Metro Arts staff members and seven community members whose purpose is to hold the agency accountable in becoming fully antiracist in its identity and working for racial equity in all policies and practices.

Community & Organizational Development Coordinator Olusola Tribble reported on the ARTt's agency assessment, which found Metro Arts to be strongest on the continuum of being an antiracist organization in its programming. Tribble expressed ARTt's identified challenge areas: programmatic direction needs to be codified through policy and the speed of Metro Arts' work at times leaves Commission vulnerable to making inequitable decisions.

Tribble briefed the board on the systems language studied by ARTt, informed by the works of Gloria Anzaldua. Tribble reported Metro Art's position within the construct as an institution allocating resources into the community.

ARTt member Jon Royal communicated ARTt's intent to continue regular meetings to provide analysis and support as well as continued availability during board meetings.

Royal recommended for discussion ARTt's recommendation for the Executive Director selection process.

The following recommendations were based on both Metro Art's Cultural Equity Statement, past actions with Grantees around Staff/Board Equity and the initial analysis of ARTt.

- The screening process be attentive and inclusive of race, gender, religious practice, and LGBTQIA diversity.
- The Subject Matter Expert and Interview panels be comprised of at least 50% people of color and maintain gender balance.
- At least one member of each search panel has participated in antiracism training.
- At least one of the three final Executive Director candidates be a person of color.

Haynes expressed being honored to join Crossroads and ARTt for recent meetings.

Cole explained the opportunity to be role models and to never ask the community to do things that Metro Arts does not do themselves.

Commissioner Ramos expressed her concern about speed and referred back to a decision made by the board that she felt Commissioners not present should have been included in.

Cole and Haynes agreed upon the importance of the intentional long-term commitment and accountability to having conversations around this tough subject matter.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if HR was made aware of the recommendations. Cole answered that intentions were to send the formalized recommendations to HR.

A motion to approve ARTt's recommendations to HR for the Executive Director identification process was offered by Commissioner Ramos, seconded by Commissioner Coffman. A final vote was not made for the purpose of further discussion by the board.

The following is a summary of the discussion:

- Commissioner Coffman asked about the viability of having one member of the panel that has done anti-racism training to which Tribble expressed confidence in this condition being achievable.
- Tribble and Cole reported that a list of suggested panelists from ARTt had been send to HR.
- Commissioner Whitney asked if the full staff was made aware of these recommendations before presentation to the board. Kinslow explained that informal conversations had been initiated with the staff.
- Commissioner Daniel asked when dates for the Crossroads anti-racism training would be available. Kinslow answered that they would send out an email with these dates.
- Haynes suggested that two or three dates be made in consideration of the board's schedules so that they can attend.
- Whitney expressed that he personally was excited about the work of ARTt but did not feel aligned with how they arrived at the recommendations since he had not had the training that ARTt has had. He expressed a concern for the board lacking training as a requirement moving forward. He felt compelled to support ARTt out of personal views but did not feel he was informed as a board member. He felt that there would be a significant dissonance in the board and the staff if they do not make this work a priority.
- Cole explained that the presentation was an introduction to this work and that the transition of Executive Director gave an unexpected immediacy to make these recommendations to HR. Cole suggested that this conversation would be a starting point for mapping out how the board and staff could come together on this issue.
- Commissioner Stringer opposed a vote being made as she felt it was too soon.
- Whitney emphasized that the board should be able to explain why they voted in favor.
- Commissioner Schmidt expressed discomfort in the language of the recommendation as it seemed that a quota was being set for people of color. He addressed that there are other minority populations that face discrimination that the recommendations did not take into consideration. He felt that the language could be refined to do so.
- ARTt member Alandis Brassel, asked the board what ARTt could do to help. He offered one-on-one conversations to answer any questions.

- Whitney expressed a need for an opportunity for the board to meet with ARTt to ask questions and truly understand the whys of these recommendations.
- Commissioner McDaniel explained that voting in favor would be out of trust of ARTt but that responsibility as a board is high. McDaniel pointed out that these recommendations were not an action item on the agenda.
- Haynes stressed that this was a vote that they should hold themselves accountable for. He ensured to the board that he would continue his work with HR and with ARTt to ensure equity in the transition process.
- Metro Legal representative Carly Elliot suggested that a vote only be made by the board if they felt they had sufficient notice and information on the item.
- Coffman asked that they leave extra time in the June board meeting to continue discussion.
- Ramos offered her reasoning for previously making a motion as she had an understanding that this racial equity work has been focused on for some time. She agreed with previous points made by Whitney. She suggested more time be taken instead of rushing so a confident vote can be made.
- Cole discussed the issue being a deeper training need.
- Whitney said that the board should not confuse the recommendations with the overall need for equity. He suggested that in order to make a real change the board must understand what they are doing. Whitney asked for more time with ARTt.
- Clay thanked the board for a great conversation.

Inaugural Temporary Public Art Exhibition Overview + Discussion

As time was running out, Cole asked board to look over information on the Temporary Art Exhibition and to continue asking questions.

Public Art & Placemaking Coordinator Tré Hardin quickly pointed out the artist and program summaries in the packet.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:24 pm.