



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

MINUTES

Metro Art Board of Commissioners

Executive Committee

May 26, 2023, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Metro Southeast Building

Antioch Room

1417 Murfreesboro Pk.

Nashville, TN 37217

Committee Members Present: Matia Powell (Chair), Dexter Brewer (Secretary), Campbell West, Daniel Singh (Executive Director, *ex-officio*)

Staff Present: Anne-Leslie Owens

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

A. Call to Order & Welcome

Chair Matia Powell called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes: September 16, 2021

Chair Matia Powell made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Campbell West seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Executive Director Evaluation

Chair Matia Powell explained that, in past years, the chair has completed Executive Director's evaluation and met as a Commission to go over and make any adjustments to finalize. This year, the evaluation form was sent around first to all Commissioners and it was helpful to have everyone's comments.

In discussion, the Executive Committee recognized that there has been a lot of work over the

last year in bringing the team together, hiring, engaging public, revamping grant process, engaging community, providing public comment opportunities, expanding communications tools (social media takeover), and starting the cultural planning process that's been on hold for 2 years. Chair Powell commended Executive Director Singh for the amount of work completed in such a short amount of time.

When asked how it's been for him, Executive Director Daniel Singh noted there have been challenges getting his family settled. He praised his colleagues and the Commission for the work they do. Looking forward, Singh addressed challenges and opportunities related to officer elections, budget process, new Mayoral administration, Committee for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE) role and relationship to Commission, agency commitment to anti-racism, ADA request from a PAC committee member, and raising staff salaries agencywide.

Chair Powell noted that final item for the committee is a discussion of pay increase. She recognized that Ian Myers, Finance and Operations Director, would need to give advice on budget and range. Singh provided evaluation materials noting his accomplishments and asked for maximum salary of \$202,683.56. After COLA and merit raise starting July 1, 2023, this would be closer to \$210,000. Committee recognized high costs of childcare, housing, and ways in which Singh is expending himself for the Arts Commission. Currently, Executive Director salary at \$165,000. Committee noted that it would be great to have better idea of open positions and salary savings. It will be at least 3 months into fiscal year before have these new positions hired.

Executive Director Daniel Singh left the meeting and the Executive Committee went into closed session to discuss and come to consensus on a salary number. The Executive Committee discussed hiring cost savings, consultant costs, other Metro director salaries, initial salary offer, and benefits. Committee was not clear if past Executive Director raises have been completed by Executive Committee only or approved by the full Commission. Full Commission interviewed the two Executive Director finalists last year and had discussion on salary.

After extensive discussion, committee felt that \$187,500 reflected a significant raise that appreciates the work that has been done while allowing for future annual reviews and salary increases.

Secretary Dexter Brewer made a motion to approve new Executive Director salary in amount of \$187,500. Chair Matia Powell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

With additional funding information, \$187,500 feels like a good starting point. If Commission wants to raise it, that discussion can happen at a future Commission meeting.

Singh came back into the room. The committee outlined their thinking and concern over authority provided in bylaws. There is possibility of raise next year as long as there is not a salary freeze. Executive Committee wished to bring the recommendation to full Commission with more

information about financial position. Singh indicated it could be voted on at July Commission meeting and would be retroactive to July 1. Singh voiced his concern, noting that he is doing all the work the \$202,000 salary requires. He noted that needing clarity on financial situation is the same excuse provided when initial offer was made. Executive Committee recognized that they need to prepare in advance each year with Finance and Operations Director.

D. Consideration of Advocacy Committee as a Standing Committee

Staff recommend that the Advocacy Committee be approved as a Standing Committee, subject to the review and approval of the full Commission.

Chair Matia Powell made a motion to approve Advocacy as a Standing Committee and Secretary Dexter Brewer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

E. New/Old Business

Executive Director Daniel Singh reported that we are working on Bylaws review. Vice Chair Ellen Angelico met with Daniel Singh and Anne-Leslie Owens to draft potential changes. Some bylaws changes are driven by Metro Legal. Singh's recommendation is to discuss in July and vote in August. Metro Legal's concern is that our bylaws indicate the committees do not need to have quorum, which is a violation of state law and should be voted on immediately. Singh pointed out that we need public review of recommendations. Chair Powell noted that we are trying our best to have quorum at every Commission and committee meetings. Executive committee will recommend Advocacy as a standing committee in July. Singh suggested bringing draft Bylaws changes for Commission review and public comment and then voting at the August meeting. If there is significant public comment, can wait until next meeting in October.

Singh shared that we have received a request from Vanderbilt University to partner with them on a UNESCO application to be a Music City Destination. Singh insisted that we bring in Fisk University. It's a 35-page application and Vanderbilt has agreed to take the lead with this June 30 application deadline. Not a grant, we would be a UNESCO designated site on travel lists.

Singh reported that we have received a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request from author writing for the *Daily Wire* and are working on that. Public Health, and possibly other Metro departments, received a similar request around healthcare-related terms. Chair Powell suggested being proactive and hiring a crisis communication consultant. Deadline was 5/26 and we requested a 2-week extension to pull emails and redact personal information.

F. Adjourn Meeting

With no further items to discuss, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.