



# GRANTS

METRO ARTS / NASHVILLE

## MINUTES

### Arts Commission Grants + Funding Committee

August 14, 2023

12:30 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Metro Southeast Building

Antioch Conference Room

1417 Murfreesboro Pike

Nashville, TN 37218

If you have any questions, please e-mail [arts@nashville.gov](mailto:arts@nashville.gov).

**Committee Members:** Sheri Nichols Bucy (Chair), Clarence Edwards, Marianne Byrd, Carol McCoy, and Matia Powell (Ex-Officio)

**Metro Arts Staff:** Daniel Singh, Chuck Beard, Jonathan Saad, Dana Parsons & Vivian Foux

**Guests:** Commissioner Jim Schmidt

### METRO ARTS MISSION:

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

#### A. Call to Order & Welcome

12:30-12:35

#### B. Public Comment

12:35-12:45

1. **Lydia Dinkler:** The speaker recently returned to town and expressed her eagerness to contribute to the community in any capacity. She conveyed her readiness to actively engage and assist in various ways.
2. **Isabel Tipton-Krispen:** The speaker began by acknowledging the commission's steps towards achieving funding equity that the arts community had advocated for over the years. However, she expressed frustration over the lack of transparency in the process. Despite numerous

emails and requests, transparency had not been achieved. She presented the FY24 grant rubric, which had been recently removed from the website but was approved by the commission on December 15, 2022. Isabel shared statements from Metro Arts' guidelines about funding formulas and cap allocations, highlighting the disconnect between these principles and the recent drastic changes that were voted on July 20th. She mentioned her attempt to verify these claims by listening to meeting recordings and referred to Metro Arts' suggestion to file a Freedom of Information Act request for access to these recordings. Isabel emphasized the importance of Metro Arts keeping their promises and adhering to their stated objectives and guidelines for the betterment of the arts community.

#### **C. Approval of Minutes: July 10, 2023**

12:45-12:50

***Commissioner Clarence Edwards offered a motion to approve the July 10, 2023 minutes, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Marianne Byrd. The motion passed.***

#### **D. Action/Discussion Items**

12:50-1:15

##### **1) Review Commission Memo + Next Steps**

- a) The memo outlines the recent developments and considerations regarding Metro Arts' funding approach, particularly focusing on anti-racist strategies and equity enhancement. The Commission established the Committee for Anti-Racism and Equity (CARE) to advance these principles and initiated a disparity study. However, the study revealed that the organization was granting so few funds to BIPOC-led organizations that it couldn't quantify disparate treatment. An individual, Daniel, was hired in 2022 to address allegations of racism and public concerns about funding guidelines. The memo discusses how Grant makers in the Arts (GIA) has advocated for racial equity in arts funding since 2008, culminating in the Racial Equity in Arts Funding Statement of Purpose in 2015.
- b) In the recent July 17 meeting, the Metro Arts Commission decided to implement a more equitable funding scenario for the upcoming fiscal year (FY24). However, a review by Metro Legal deemed this approach unconstitutional as it referenced the racial impacts of various funding

scenarios, straying from the organization's cultural equity values. Consequently, Metro Arts is shifting towards an equity-centered framework focusing on fairness. This new model prioritizes support for individual artists, small to mid-sized arts organizations, and those historically underfunded by Metro Arts. The document presents different funding scenarios and their allocations, considering organization size and historical funding access. The aim is to promote community-building, equity, and justice through the new approach while complying with legal constraints. The memo concludes by expressing anticipation for a collaborative discussion to determine the optimal funding scenario, reinforcing Metro Arts' commitment to equity and fairness.

- 2) Vote on Grants/Recommendations
  - a) Chair Sheri Nichols Bucy expressed her brevity after reviewing clarifications on scenarios one through five.
  - b) The committee decided to present at the Joint Commissioners and Committees Meeting on August 18, 2023, their endorsement of Scenario One (also called Scenario A).

***Commissioner Clarence Edwards made a motion to recommend Scenario 1 to the full commission while presenting all scenarios, the motion was seconded by Chair Sheri Nichols Bucy. Commissioner Carol McCoy abstained from the vote. The Grants and Funding Committee recommends Scenario 1 (also called Scenario A).***

#### **E. New/Old Business**

1:15-1:20

1. The Executive Director, Daniel Singh, informed the group that the grants position will be closing tomorrow, and they are hopeful to fill the position within the next 6-8 weeks.
2. Chuck Beard and Vivian Foxx also brought attention to the upcoming Joint Commissioners & Committee Meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 18th, 2023.

#### **F. Next Meeting**

1:20-1:25

The next meeting will be held during FY24 and is to be announced at a later date. The Joint Commissioners and Committees Meeting will be held on August 18, 2023.

## G. Adjourn Meeting

1:25-1:30

1. Chair Sheri Nichols Bucy sought to adjourn the meeting at **1:21** PM, with Commissioner Carol McCoy moving the motion and Commissioner Marianne Byrd seconding the motion for adjournment.