



One City for All People

**Full Commission Meeting – Minutes  
Monday, March 4, 2024, 4:00pm - 5:30pm  
Lentz Public Health Center  
Centennial Rooms B and C  
2500 Charlotte Avenue Nashville, TN 37209**

*The mission of the Metro Human Relations Commission is to protect and promote the personal dignity, peace, safety, security, health, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Abolfazli.

Commissioners in attendance:

Chair Maryam Abolfazli, Genma Stringer-Holmes, Marcus Buggs, Irwin Venick, Jeff Teague, Dr. Ben Tran, Charles Traugher, Alecia Wynn, Dakota Galban, Deaconess Garlinda Burton, Ariel Safdie, Kosar Kosar, Larea Kwakye

Commissioners absent:

Eubina Arce, Pratik Dash, Dr. Amy Charlton

MHRC Staff in attendance:

ED Davie Tucker, Ashley Bachelder, Cathy Carrillo, Crystal Cockrill, Mark Eatherly, Mel Fowler-Green (independent legal counsel)

Meto Legal in attendance:

Matthew Garth

**2. CONFIRM QUOROM**

Quorum was confirmed at 4:06 pm.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Name – Topic)**

Molly Secours – Metro Arts (Time ceded to Tim Wise)

Michelle Flynn – Metro Arts (Time ceded to Tim Wise)

Tim Wise – Metro Arts

Alyana Anderson – Metro Arts (Time ceded to Lydia Yousief)

Christine Hall – Metro Arts (Time ceded to Lydia Yousief)

Lydia Yousief – Metro Arts

Commissioner Tran made a motion to extend the public comments period for 10 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kwakye. The motion passed.

Princella Smith – Metro Arts

Robert Jones – Metro Arts (Time ceded to Tim Wise)

Matt Shaw – Metro Arts  
Craig Bardeaux – Metro Arts  
Jamel Campbell-Gooch – Metro Arts

**4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Teague. They were approved; no edits needed.

**5. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The financial report was reviewed. There were no changes in the budget.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

- Presentation of Metro Arts Title VI fact-finding report findings
  - Ashley Bachelder, MHRC Director of Policy and Research provided an overview of the Fact-Finding report. The presentation included a review of the MHRC complaint and investigation process, a summary of the complainants’ allegations, and a review of pertinent events that occurred from December 2022 to August 2023 with regard to Metro Arts grant cycles. The presentation included direct quotes from each Arts Commissioner, as obtained through interviews, on two topics: 1) the reasons that commissioners voted as they did on the July and August grant scenarios, and 2) Commissioners’ understanding of the legal advice provided to them by representatives of Metro Legal. Bachelder concluded that the facts obtained through the investigation justify a finding of probable cause in the allegations.
  - A copy of the [presentation slides](#) and [Title VI Fact-Finding report](#) are available on the MHRC website.
  - Independent legal counsel for the MHRC, Attorney Mel Fowler-Green, presented a legal memorandum that addressed two questions: 1) Did the Metro Nashville Arts Commission violate the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution in its July 20, 2023 funding allocation decision?, and 2) Does the Metro Legal Department have an obligation to comply with Title VI; or can the Metro Legal Department be properly named or held liable in a Title VI complaint?
  - In the first, Fowler-Green presented an analysis that justifies the ways in which public entities can undertake efforts to eliminate racial disparities through race-neutral means that consider racial impacts, without trigger strict scrutiny, concluding that Metro Arts process was not unconstitutional.
  - In the second, Fowler-Green presented three potential scenarios under which Metro Legal may be properly named or held liable in a Title VI complaint.
  - The [Legal Memorandum](#) is available on the MHRC website.
  - Executive Director Davie Tucker recommended the Commission hold a public hearing as a result of the findings of the report. He presented the following recommendations, documented in the Fact-Finding report, needed to obtain “fair and just” resolutions:
    1. Metro Human Relations Commission convene a public hearing,
    2. Award the complainants the initial grant amounts voted on in July 2023,
    3. The Metro Council approve a funding model established by the Metro Arts Commission used to ensure that future funds are distributed equitably,

4. Metro Legal produce a procedure guide to distribute to all Metro Boards and Commissions detailing the roles and authority that Metro Legal occupies in the operation of the city and Boards and Commissions with emphasis placed on potential conflicts and resolutions that arise between Metro Legal and the Boards and Commissions.
- A motion to hold a public hearing for the Metro Arts Title VI complaint was made by Commissioner Kwakye and seconded by Commissioner Teague.

Roll call vote:

Buggs – Aye  
Kwakye – Aye  
Teague – Aye  
Venick - Aye  
Traughber - Aye  
Abolfazli - Aye  
Tran - Aye  
Galban - Aye  
Wynn - Aye  
Burton - Aye  
Stringer-Holmes - Aye  
Safdie - Aye  
Kosar – Aye

The motion passed.

- Executive Tucker requested a moment of privilege where he made the Commission aware of a notification he received from Metro Human Resources stating that he was the subject of an investigation alleged by 3 Metro Arts employees.
- New commissioner nominee process – DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING
- Compliance officer search – DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING
- Community engagement updates – DEFERRED TO NEXT MEETING

#### 7. **OLD BUSINESS**

#### 8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### 9. **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16pm

The meeting recording can be accessed [here](#).

#### **Appeal of Decisions from the Metro Human Relations Commission**

If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, you may appeal the decision by petitioning for a writ of certiorari with the Davidson County Chancery or Circuit Court. Your appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of the entry of the Human Relations Commission's decision. We advise that you seek your own independent legal advice to ensure that your appeal is filed in a timely manner and that all procedural requirements have been met.



If any accommodations are needed for individuals with disabilities who wish to be present at the meeting, please contact MHRC at 615-880-3370 or [MHRC@nashville.gov](mailto:MHRC@nashville.gov). Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting for the entity to provide such needed aid or service.