



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Metro Arts Board of Commissioners
May 16, 2024, 12-2pm
Green Hills Conference Room
1417 Murfreesboro Road
Nashville, TN 37217

Commissioners: Leah Dupree Love (Chair), Janet Kurtz (Vice Chair), Heather Lefkowitz (Secretary), Tré Hardin, Timothy Jester, Dawana Wade, Beverly Watts, Campbell West

Absent Commissioners: Carol McCoy, John Nefflen, and Arlene Nicholas-Phillips,

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community Through the Arts

A. Call to Order, Welcome, and Land Acknowledgement

Commissioner Chair Dupree Love called the meeting to order at 12:05 and welcomed all guest.

B. Public Comment

1. Nicole Williams
2. Emma Supica

Note: Commissioner Chair Dupree Love proposed rearranging the agenda by moving the budget oversight committee ahead of the grant and funding committee. She invited objections to this change.

C. Approval of Minutes: April 18, 2024

A motion was made to approve minutes from April 18, 2024, by Commissioner Jester and seconded by Commissioners Lefkowitz.

D. Budget & Oversight Committee

- Commissioner Watts stated that they discussed the need to clarify existing operating procedures and identify any gaps or recommendations. They emphasized the importance of historical context provided by Commissioner Lefkowitz and outlined plans for the next 90 days, focusing on understanding the Arts Commission's operations and making

necessary improvements. They also mentioned upcoming reports and the collaborative effort of committee members in addressing these issues.

- Commissioner Watts also presented details on the FY24 and FY25 budgets. For FY24, the total budget was approximately \$5.454 million, with personnel costs of \$1.8 million and significant allocations for agency grants and professional services. There was additional projected spending of about \$1.2 million by June 30, 2024, with a projected budget availability of \$48,423, excluding supplemental funds managed by Legal. For FY25, the budget remained flat at \$5.4617 million, maintaining similar allocations across categories with minor adjustments. Commissioner Watts noted upcoming meetings, including one with the mayor's office on May 23rd at 4:00 PM.
- **Current Focus:** Understanding existing procedures and identifying.
- **FY24 Budget Highlights:**
 - **Personnel Costs:** \$1.8 million.
 - **Fringe Benefits:** \$448,500.
 - **Other Professional Services:** Revised to \$912,500.
 - **Contributor Agency Grants:** \$3.06 million.
 - **Total non-personnel Costs:** \$3.6 million.
 - **Total Budget:** \$5.4 million.
 - **Projected Expenses Through 6/30/24:** \$1.2 million.
 - **Projected Budget Availability:** \$48,423 (excluding additional supplemental dollars administered by Legal).
- **FY25 Budget:**
 - **Flat Budget:** Personnel costs remain \$1.8 million.
 - **Non-Personnel Costs:** \$3.6 million.
 - **Total Budget:** \$5.46 million.
- During discussion, Commissioner Wade raised concerns about a projected \$1.2 million deficit, questioning how the metro department will handle such a shortfall with only \$50,000 available. He also inquired about who manages the expenditures needing oversight. Commissioner Watts acknowledged that budgets are managed by various staff members and that some expenses, like benefits and salaries, are paid automatically. Commissioner West asked if the number included all grant payouts and noted that professional services seemed higher than in past years. Commissioner Watts clarified that these were part of a revised budget, and suggested absences might have contributed to financial oversight issues. Commissioner Wade emphasized the need for regular monitoring of expenses and revenues, asking if there is a monthly or quarterly engagement with finance. Commissioner Love highlighted the establishment of a budget oversight committee to address these issues. The discussion concluded with plans to prepare for the next week's meeting by reviewing budget documents and addressing any outstanding questions.

E. Grants & Funding Committee (Commissioner Jester)

1. Fiscal Year 2024 Overview

- Discussion postponed.

2. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request

- Discussion postponed.

Report Summary by Commissioner Jester:

- **Last Meeting:** March 13th.
- **Primary Topics Discussed:**
 1. **Delaying Grant Funding Cycle:** Proposed to delay until summer for better financial clarity and alignment with Metro's budget cycle.
 2. **Thrive Program Compliance:** Discussions on bringing the Thrive program into compliance after 10 years of non-compliance. No conclusions reached yet.
- **Further Actions:** No subsequent meetings held pending the appointment of an executive director. Significant decisions are delayed until Dr. Coleman, the new executive director, can provide leadership.
- **Public Feedback:** Public comments on the impact of delaying the grant cycle have been received and will be reviewed in further discussions.
- **Next Steps:** Urgent need to finalize decisions on the grant cycle and Thrive program compliance with Dr. Coleman's input.

F. Committee for Anti-Racism & Equity Updates

- **Agenda Development:**
 - Reorienting committee purpose and discussing ways to improve effectiveness.
 - Reflecting on the committee's journey and progress.
 - Evaluating turnover and current member count.
 - Aligning on goals and care guidelines.
- **Meeting Details:**
 - Scheduled at MSC in the Antioch conference room.

G. Staff / Communications Updates

1. Director Singh's Employment Status

- Director Singh came off FMLA on May 16th.
- Admin leave period started on May 17th and ends on May 30th.

- Discussion about readiness to make decisions and commitment to restorative processes.

2. Interim Director Update

- Dr. Paulette Coleman's commitment to arts transformation and community building.
- Focus on preparing for the May 23rd budget hearing and grants review process.
- Emphasis on respectful public dialogue and united efforts.

• **Financial and Operational Concerns:**

- Questionable financial processes leading to an ongoing audit.
- The Finance Director's intervention.
- Loss of confidence from the Tennessee Arts Commission in fund distribution.

H. Legislation Impacting Commission

- May 8th presentation to the Rules Committee on HR support and criteria for commission members.
- Three pieces of new legislation:
 - Adding equity promotion to the Commission's purpose.
 - Annual disclosures requirement for commission members.
 - Commission composition changes, including council member involvement.
- Encouragement for commissioners to attend legislative readings and offer opinions.

I. Chair's Updates

• **Commission Membership:**

- Commissioner Derek Bell resigned; current membership is 11.
- Mayor's office needs to appoint 4 new members.

• **Nominating Committee and Elections:**

- Acting chair to appoint a nominating committee before the next meeting.
- Elections scheduled by September for officers.

J. New/Old Business

• **Quorum and Commission Member Attendance:**

- Legal clarification needed on quorum requirements.

- Discussion on managing non-attending commissioners and impact on conducting business.
 - Debate on quorum requirements with differing opinions on whether the commission can conduct business with fewer than 15 members.
 - Legal advises that a quorum of 8 is needed based on a 15-member commission.
 - Suggestion to add a discussion on quorum rules to the next meeting's agenda.
- **Special Called Meeting:**
 - Need to discuss director and interim director status.
 - Request for legal memo on conducting business with fewer than 15 appointed members.
 - Chair ends the meeting without a formal motion due to lack of quorum.
 - Need for a meeting before May 30th to address the overlap of the Director's admin leave ending and the Interim Director's role.

K. Adjourn Meeting

- Commissioner Dupree Love ended the meeting at 1:20 p.m.