

# Summary of Material

Public Hearing: Carol McCoy

## Violation

Metropolitan Code Section 2.222.020(k):

Board members/Commissioners “shall not give reasonable basis by their conduct for the impression that any person can improperly influence, or unduly enjoy their favor in, the performance of their official duties, or that they are unduly affected by their kinship, rank, position, or influence of any person.”

## Accusation 1

**Carol McCoy, as Arts Commissioner, discriminated against BIPOC and working class artists and voted to defund us on August 17, 2023, despite the vocalized wishes of the community, Metro Council, and the Director.**

Below, the items we are presenting argue that McCoy, to get on the Commission, promoted equity. Often, McCoy also speaks to being pro-equity in other commission meetings, but once asked to vote or to define, her true biases show, especially her voting patterns are directly against equity—both in July 2023 and in August 2023, being one of the only Commissioners to vote against equity twice. McCoy’s interview to the Rules Committee in early 2023 show that her definition of equity is NOT meeting BIPOC where they’re at, but rather forcing BIPOC into hours of grantwriting classes, promoting white-centered goal posts, and excluding any BIPOC who cannot meet “standards,” although they are doing the work. Her interview is the first disconcerting flag of someone unwilling to (un)learn, to listen, and to build equitable practices in Nashville. It’s worth noting that the TN Arts Commission is notoriously disliked and avoided by artists—because of their inequitable funding models. (ITEM 1)

During the August meeting, I will argue that McCoy showed that she was improperly influenced because she ignored two hours of public comments in August 2023, including the comments of a Councilmember and esteemed guests, to align with a few white men who urged prioritizing record profits for their organizations (namely: Will Schultz from the Opera, Drew Ogles from the Tennessee Repertoire, and Benjamin Smith from Southern Word; and in the crowd were Seth Feman of the Frist Museum, Nick Mullikin from the Nashville Ballet). It’s notable that McCoy, during the August 2023 vote, vocalizes discontent against Commissioner Bucy and Commissioner Edwards from the Grants Committee for even submitting the more equitable scenario as the choice of the Grants Committee (item #5). (ITEMS 1-7)

In her MHRC interview, McCoy suggests confusion. During the November 2023 Commission meeting, which was also recorded by Arts Equity Nashville (but I attended), McCoy spoke at length of the difference between malfeasance after Reverend Davie Tucker spoke at the Commission meeting, again suggesting harming without intention. As a lawyer and a judge, this is an expected excuse, but during that meeting, based on her voting patterns and speech, it’s clear that given increased funding, community advocacy, and a clear majority towards equity (even among the Commission), McCoy is determined to deny working class artists

and BIPOC artists their funding in favor of record profits for multi-million dollar organizations in Nashville. (ITEMS 8-10)

#	Material	Date	Material Type	Link	Important Timestamps/Pages
1	MHRC Title VI Report	March 4, 2024	pdf	<a href="#">Link here</a>	<b>Pg. 28:</b> Voting records from August 2023; <b>Pg,37-38:</b> McCoy's weaponized incompetence; <b>Pg,46-47:</b> McCoy's interview with Council; <b>Pg.50:</b> July 20, 2023 voting record; <b>Pg. 52:</b> McCoy's quote on the August 2023 vote
2	Mel Green Legal Memo	March 4, 2024	pdf	<a href="#">Link here</a>	
3	Arts Commission Meeting	July 20, 2023	Meeting notes pdf	<a href="#">Link here</a>	
4	Arts Commission Meeting	August 17, 2023	Video (post-public comments)	<a href="#">Link here</a>	44:38-45:46
5	Grants Committee Meeting	August 14, 2023	Meeting notes pdf	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Scenario 1 is endorsed by Committee; McCoy abstains from endorsing
6	Public Comment Script: Lydia Yousief	August 17, 2023	Google doc	<a href="#">Link here</a>	**no recording of the two hour public comment period
7	Public Comment Script: Christine Hall	August 17, 2023	Google doc	<a href="#">Link here</a>	**no recording of the two hour public comment period To understand the stakes for all involved
8	Arts Commission Meeting	November 16, 2023	Testimony	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Reverend Davie Tucker and Commission Chair Maryam Abolfayzi speak about initial findings of MHRC report; McCoy derails meeting to define malfeasance. McCoy also says that she will "ask her questions later."

9	Timeline of Metro Arts' attempts at equity	2015-present	Google doc	<a href="#">Link here</a>	To understand the stakes for all involved
10	Metro Arts Funding History	1988-2023	Excel sheet	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Over 70% of our Metro Arts funding has gone to 10 organizations (all white led).

Accusation 2

**Carol McCoy still led Commissioners to fire Dana Parsons in February 15, 2024 leading to the full halting of all grants management for FY25.**

Post-August 2023, it was clear that McCoy was mirroring language from Legal and Finance—to the point that in April 2024, Commissioner Wade (at 49:00) says to the privatization of Thrive: “Are we doing this because Finance tells us to?” (ITEM 11) McCoy spoke heavily in November and February—the two commission meetings she attended post-August—about 1) Thrive artists not being real artists and 2) the overpaid consultants while Singh was understaffed. (ITEMS 2-4) These are both points Amanda Deaton-Moyer of the Finance Department and Kevin Crumbo both make to the press, at the Oversight meeting, and at budget hearings multiple times. McCoy was unduly influenced by their rank (as opposed to her ignoring Metro Human Relations, another Metro department). (ITEMS 6-9, 12-13) McCoy is even so bold as to say she’s never read the grants application, despite being on the Grants Committee and working closely with Sydnie Davis, the new grants manager. (ITEM 10)

The decision to terminate Dana Parsons’ contract and place all grants-related work on a single person in Metro Arts, Sydnie Davis, has led to:

1. The lack of training of current Metro Arts staff –the majority of whom have zero institutional memory;
2. Artists being denied funding because they cannot report on funds by the end of Metro’s fiscal year while not being given their contract until June 2024 (Metro’s fiscal year ending June 30, 2024);
3. The lack of equity-based training and guidance outside of Kevin Crumbo’s office (where the DEI Office is);
4. The firing of Daniel Singh, the most equitable director of Metro Arts, on an egregious and phony audit and the signal that sent to other Metro departments (ITEM 5);
5. The possible privatization of Thrive “in order to protect Thrive,” so that more Metro Arts funding goes to white-led institutions without any engagement with anti-racist and equity standards.

I will argue that the continued dysfunction of this department, as initiated by McCoy at several meetings, will lead to the privatization of public dollars, as this is something, already, the art monopoly leadership have mentioned as a possibility. (ITEM 1, 14)

#	Material	Date	Material Type	Link	Important Timestamps/Pages
1	Nashville Arts Coalition Meeting	August 7, 2023	Testimony		NAC requested to meet with Daniel Singh privately after Metro Legal overturned the equitable vote. I was in attendance where the art monopolies' directors threatened to privatize Metro Arts if individuals and small organizations were prioritized.
2	Arts Commission Meeting	November 16, 2023	Meeting notes pdf	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Limited audio/visual available on Arts Equity Nashville instagram
3	Arts Commission Meeting	February 15, 2024	Video	<a href="#">Link here</a>	See #3
4	Arts Commission Meeting TIMESTAMPS	February 15, 2024	Meeting timestamps	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Highlighted important timestamps
5	Specially-Called Arts Commission Meeting: Director Daniel Singh Settlement	May 24, 2024	video	<a href="#">Link here</a>	4:57-8:38...No settlement agreement for months (since March)
6	Video Compilation of the "Audit" and "Deficit" Narrative	Posted May 25, 2024	video	<a href="#">Link here</a>	
7	Timestamps for Item #5 ("Video Compilation of "Audit" and "Deficit" Narrative)	May 2024	Google doc	<a href="#">Link here</a>	
8	Arts Equity Nashville's Response to Kevin Crumbo's Audit of Metro Arts	June 12th, 2024	Google doc	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Please note that this audit was released AFTER Daniel Singh accepted the settlement and withdrew his complaint in the TN Human Rights Office.
9	"Crumbolling Numbers: Unraveling the Fiscal Artistry in Nashville's Finances" by Mike Lacy	March 7, 2024	Article	<a href="#">Link here</a>	
10	Arts Commission's Grants	March 13, 2024	video	<a href="#">Link</a>	50:15-57:18...Artist

	Committee Meeting			<a href="#">here</a>	Alayna Renae asks McCoy if she's ever read a grant application
11	Prayer Circle at Arts Commission with Simone Boyd	April 15, 2024	Testimony		
12	Arts Commission's Grants Committee Meeting	April 17, 2024	video	<a href="#">Link here</a>	27:00...Angela Deaton-Moyer speaks to "how to protect Thrive" through privatization 38:55...McCoy agrees
13	"I kept waiting for the city to release Metro Arts' expense report. So I did it myself" by Mike Lacy	May 6, 2024	Article	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Access to his FOIA-requested database <a href="#">LINK here</a>
14	Porterfield Substitute Budget	June 20, 2024	Article	<a href="#">Link here</a>	Budget passes with an additional \$2.2 million to Arts (same as last year under Singh), and an additional \$400,000 for a disparity study to fund individual and small organizations (according to Metro Legal's conservative analysis of equity). <b>With increased funding, we are in the same place we were last year with the question being: who do we prioritize?</b>

## Conclusion

I argue that all of this pattern of evidence through language, voting patterns, and engagements suggest an impression of being improperly influenced to favor multi-million, white-led organizations over Nashville artists. She has not read the grants application, has not looked at the reporting measurements available online for everyone, has not engaged with anti-racist community members, does not respond to emails (unless they're from the Clerk). She has complained about the workload, yet remains in her commission seat. She has elevated privatization as a solution, simply because Finance commands it. Months of committee and commission meetings suggest that this person is determined to deny BIPOC and working class artists funding, which will further bring on lawsuits to the city and to taxpayers.