



Maryland State Arts Council Executive Committee

MEETING MINUTES
August 19, 2024
12:30 - 2:00pm
Google Meet

The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Council, make recommendations to the Council, and shall perform other duties as specified...

In attendance: Ruby Lopez Harper, Albita Rivera, Shelley Morhaim, Marva Jo Camp, Kathy Beachler; Steven Skerritt-Davis, Chad Buterbaugh, Leslie Gillard, Catherine Texeira, Laura Weiss, Emily Sollenberger, Brad Bittner, Alysha Suryah

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:32 p.m. following guiding documents.

A land acknowledgment pronunciation guide will be distributed to councilors.

Chair Remarks (Lopez Harper)

- Lauded supporters of funding for the arts pertaining to MSAC's budget.
- Acknowledged MCA's support of MSAC's work on the Strategic Plan.
- Acknowledged and thanked councilors who accepted committee assignments, and thanked MSAC staff for their support.

Ruby made a motion to approve the May 14, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting minutes. Albita and Shelley seconded. Marva Jo abstained. All in favor and the motion passed.

Executive Director's Report (Skerritt-Davis)

Staffing Update

- MSAC was allocated additional full-time (PIN) positions, which resulted in some employees being moved to full-time permanent positions.
- MSAC is approved for new positions, but not given additional funds. Haven't received approval to hire for these positions, but will hopefully hear by December.



- Liesel Fenner retired in July. As a result, Ryan Patterson accepted the role of Program Director, Public Art. Will be working to fill the vacant Arts Capital position.
- We have new hires - Leslie Gillard as the new Executive Assistant and Council Liaison, Brad Bittner as the new Fiscal Officer, and Jess Porter as the new Senior Program Director; beginning Wednesday, August 21.
- Steven reviewed the updated organizational chart.
- Question from Ruby - Do the movement of positions provide more capacity, and is there a backup plan for approved positions that weren't funded?
 - Steven - The Senior Program Director position adds capacity to what we're currently doing. Also adding Brad takes interim responsibilities from Cathy and Steven. Leslie helps with the administrative capacity.

Strategic Planning Update

- Steven revisited the Strategic Planning timeline.
- AMS worked with MSAC staff to develop strategies, at which time Marva Jo was added to the Strategic Planning committee.
- Further strategies development, and goals/objectives revisions were accomplished over the past couple of months.
- Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA) shared their data with staff in a presentation a couple of weeks ago.
- The Strategic Planning committee reviewed the final plan, which will be presented at the September 12 Full Council meeting, to include a presentation on data from Dana Parsons with MCA.
- Steven recommended the plan to be approved at the September Council meeting, to include Pillars, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.
- Steven recommended we look to implementation development without AMS going forward.
- Steven will request the Council's approval of the Strategic Plan language at the September Council meeting, and request the MSAC staff to develop an implementation plan to create actions under the Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.
- Steven stated the hope is to make the Strategic Plan language as broad as possible, to include the work MCA has done, and work with more flexibility independent of AMS' template for the Strategic Plan.
- Question from Shelley - what are the major changes from our current Strategic Plan.
 - Steven - The plan is not a big departure, but we're naming equity in this updated plan, and reorganizing to address issues from constituents and staff during the Strategic Planning process. We've added some care and wellness as well.



- Question from Albita - Are you happy with the final plan?
 - Steven - Excited about pillars and direction, and getting to the action items.
- Ruby's remarks - Once we go to the September meeting, this will be the final plan, as we no longer have the capacity to wordsmith, analyze and reflect.
- Shelley suggested Ruby send an email to Councilors with the proposed Strategic Plan to reiterate her remarks.

Budgetary Reductions

- Steven reviewed the budget cuts timeline.
- An overview of budget reduction impacts at the Special Council meeting were approved.
- The majority of the budget cuts came from the grants organization program, focusing on preserving funding for smaller organizations.
- Grant award notifications were sent to grant awardees.
- Shared budget cuts information in July Coffee with the Council.
- We received mostly positive grantee feedback from smaller organizations. A larger organization wanted more information about their cuts, and may address the Council at the September meeting during the public comment section.

Other Updates

- The Arts Incubator Workgroup was approved by the General Assembly.
 - We are finalizing the appointments.
 - A September meeting is scheduled.
 - A report is due to the General Assembly in January.
- The Poet Laureate has been appointed, and events are being finalized for the announcement, with the participation of Maryland's First Lady.
- We've onboarded new Councilors, made committee assignments, and will reach out about mentoring opportunities.
- Procedural cleanup - Steven will work with Leslie to review Robert's Rule of Order to bring more structure to meetings, and have staff as a resource for Councilors for voting and procedures for meetings.
- Steven recommended no committee meetings happen before the first Executive Committee meeting of a new fiscal year.

Line Items Discussion

FY25 Legislative Line Items

- Steven reviewed the line items that the legislature instructed MSAC to pay direct grants to certain organizations.
- Steven reviewed the line item policy that was approved by the Council for FY24, which will be implemented for the FY26 grants cycle.



- Steven requested a vote from the Council to a policy for FY27.
- Question from Shelley - Were the line items affected by the budget cuts or preserved as they are?
 - Steven - Budget cuts affected MSAC's general fund.
- Question from Marva Jo - Should we consider revising the policy that takes line items into consideration?
- Question from Albita - What is the procedure to approve a more stringent decision for a line item policy?
 - Ruby - Budget cuts created an opportunity for conversation, along with new Council member changes. Also need to consider what the political capital is if we have a more stringent policy.
 - Ruby suggested adding this discussion to the PPE committee meeting agenda.
 - Steven stated staff will prepare items for the PPE committee meeting.
 - Steven reviewed the steps to approve a more stringent decision for a line item policy with the Commerce Secretary. Will do as much as possible prior to the September Council meeting.

Equity and Justice Statement Updates

- Steven shared the history of the Equity and Justice Statement.
- Steven broke down the Equity and Justice Statement by components:
 - Connection to the arts
 - Commitment of Collaborators
 - Commitment of Grantees
- Steven reviewed a possible process for a suggested revision of the Equity and Justice Statement.
- Steven suggested removing "collaborators" from our grounding documents, and any adjustments for grantee commitment should go through the Assistant Attorney General's office.
- Ruby shared the thought behind the suggested revision, stemming from Joel's suggestion to change accessibility wording.
- Ruby and Shelley suggested letting the Governance Committee take ownership of the revision.
- **Ruby made a motion to move the Equity and Justice Statement Revision discussion to the Governance Committee. All in favor and the motion passed.**

Bylaws Update Status

- Steven provided Bylaws review/update, and asked for interest in chairing the Governance Committee.
- Steven provided proposed amendments.
- A Governance Committee will be scheduled upon chair confirmation.



Panelist Geographic Diversity

- Steven solicited suggestions from the Executive Committee on approving panelists from more diverse geographical locations.
- Steven stated some work done by MSAC staff to diversity our panels:
 - Process updates using Smartsimple
 - Posted a schedule on website
 - Updated call language
 - Worked on awareness
 - Panelist advocacy
 - Videos of black and brown panelists
 - Included more social media distribution
 - Panelists are paid for their work
- Question from Marva Jo - Is there a matrix showing the breakdown of panelists on a geographic basis.
 - Ruby - The panelist list includes a column of their county.
 - Cathy - Can pull data/report from Smartsimple
- Remark from Kathy - Suggested using CAAM to work with other arts councils in the Western and Eastern Shore areas to get them more involved.
- Remark from Marva Jo - Work with MCA as well.
- **Ruby motioned that MSAC will work to get data over the last year. All in favor and the motion passed.**
- Laura stated the matrix is noted on the website and added the link to the Google Meet chat.

September 12, 2024, Council Meeting Agenda Review

- Call to Order, Guiding Documents, Agenda Review
- Creative Assignment (Howell)
- Remarks, New Councilor Welcome, Approval of June 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Executive Director's Report
- Staff Reports
- Executive Committee Report
- Fiscal Report/Finance Committee Report
- Program Policy and Evaluation Committee Report
- Strategic Plan Committee Report - AMS Presentation
- Maryland Citizens for the Arts - Strategic Planning Data Presentation
- New Business



New Business

- Marva Jo thanked the Executive Committee for adding her to the group. Ruby thanked her for being a member.
- Ruby reviewed the updated Committee Assignments
- Ruby thanked the MSAC staff and Councilors.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:58 p.m.