

### Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

A regular meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:05 p.m. at Cleveland Public Library, Main Branch, Louis Stokes Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

The roll call showed that Trustees Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, and Vernaci were present. It was determined that there was a quorum. Michele Scott Taylor was absent (excused).

Also in attendance were Executive Director Jill Paulsen and CAC staff.

Ms. Tina Ludwig, Northeast Regional Liaison from the Ohio Auditor of State's office, attended the meeting and presented CAC with the Ohio Auditor of State Award for its FY2024 Audit.

#### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: To approve the minutes of the September 25, 2025 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Motion by – Trustee Blakemore
Seconded by – Trustee Vernaci

Vote to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2025 meeting.

Discussion: None

Vote – all ayes:

The motion carried.

#### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

The following individuals made public comment:

Cyrus Taylor, Shaker Heights
Jerry Koenigsmark, Olmsted Falls
James Binfield, Lakewood
Alison Bomgartner, Broadview Heights
Steven Gubkin, Cleveland Heights
Alex Howe, Cleveland
David Sharkey, Cleveland
Ellen Schneider, Cleveland

Minor Stokes, Copley Amanda Light, Mayfield Heights Jim Ridge, Cleveland

#### 3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Paulsen thanked everyone for joining her and the Board. Ms. Paulsen's remarks can be found in the Board materials.

## 4. FINANCE AND GENERAL BUSINESS

#### **Finance Report**

Ms. Harris stated that revenue through October 31 was \$15.6M. This is \$850k (5.75%) above forecast. She added that at a per unit rate, the volume of cigarettes taxed at the wholesale level decreased 3.19% over the same period in 2024 and that at the state level the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products is down more than 6%. Ms. Harris stated that tax revenues exceed estimate for the year, and it is anticipated that tax revenues will be approximately \$18.8M, which is \$900k more than budgeted and \$10M higher than the prior year.

Interest revenue through October was \$430k, which is \$42.5k below forecast. The overall expected yield on investments, while still strong, is approximately 1% less than it was a year ago with the potential for additional interest rate cuts in the future. She stated that expenditures through October were \$829k and are tracking \$92k below budget primarily due to the timing of payments and an open staff position earlier in the year. It is expected that administrative expenses will be under budget at the end of the year.

Ms. Harris said the Board was provided with a preview of the 2026 budget which will be presented to the Board, in more detail, for approval at the December meeting.

Ms. Harris stated that the Audit and Finance Advisory Committee met on October 25 where they received an update from Ryan Nelson of RedTree Investment Advisors.

#### **Approval of Contract with Survey Monkey Apply**

Motion: To approve a contract in the amount of \$9,737 with Survey Monkey Apply for an online application and reporting system for the period of January 12, 2026 through January 11, 2027.

Motion by – Trustee Blakemore Seconded by – Trustee DiCosimo

Vote to approve a contract in the amount of \$9,737 with Survey Monkey Apply for an online application and reporting system for the period of January 12, 2026 through January 11, 2027.

Vote - all ayes:

The motion carried.

# **Approval of Grant from The Cleveland Foundation**

Motion: To accept a grant in the amount of \$25,000, for general operating support, from The Cleveland Foundation on behalf of the Educational Foundation of America (EFA).

Motion by – Trustee Blakemore

Seconded by – Trustee Vernaci

Vote to accept a grant in the amount of \$25,000, for general operating support, from The Cleveland Foundation on behalf of the Educational Foundation of America (EFA).

Vote - all ayes:

The motion carried.

## **Approval of 2026 Board Meeting Schedule**

Motion: To approve the 2026 board meeting schedule included in the meeting materials with the option to alter the February meeting date to the week of February 9.

Motion by – Trustee Vernaci Seconded by – Trustee Blakemore

Vote: to approve the 2026 board meeting schedule included in the meeting materials with the option to alter the February meeting date to the week of February 9.

Vote - all ayes:

The motion carried.

## 5. BOARD ACTION - 2026 Grantmaking

Mr. Sinatra, CAC director of grantmaking strategy and communications, provided an overview of the 2026 grant application and panel review process, including the recommendations for 2026 grantmaking totaling \$12,343,477 for 308 organizations. Mr. Sinatra provided summary comments which were included in the grants memo in the Board materials, provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.

### **Approval of General Operating Support 2026 Grant Amounts**

Mr. Sinatra presented the Board with the slate of 2026 General Operating Support grantees and highlighted 152 organizations recommended for funding.

The following actions were taken:

Motion by Trustee Vernaci, seconded by Trustee Isenhart, to approve the 2026 General Operating Support grant (below).

Vote - Ayes: DiCosimo, Isenhart, Vernaci

Abstain: Blakemore

Organization	Grant Amount
Western Reserve Historical Society	\$ 224,188

Motion by Trustee Blakemore, seconded by Trustee Vernaci, to approve the 2026 General Operating Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes. Blakemore, Isenhart, Vernaci

Abstain: DiCosimo

The motion carried.

Organization	Grant Amount
BlueWater Chamber Orchestra	\$ 18,500
Cleveland Ballet	\$ 20,000
Cleveland Chamber Symphony	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Institute of Music	\$ 513,690
Cleveland Jazz Orchestra	\$ 26,246
Cleveland Play House	\$ 340,598
Great Lakes Theater	\$ 179,454
Local 4 Music Fund	\$ 18,500
The Cleveland Orchestra	\$ 1,000,000

Motion by Trustee Isenhart seconded by Trustee Blakemore, to approve the 2026 General Operating Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes. Blakemore, Isenhart Abstain: DiCosimo and Vernaci

The motion carried.

Organization	Grant Amount
Cleveland Pops Orchestra	\$ 67,555
Playhouse Square	\$ 1,000,000

Motion by Trustee DiCosimo, seconded by Trustee Vernaci, to approve the 2026 General Operating Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes. Blakemore, DiCosimo, Vernaci

Abstain: Isenhart

Organization	Grant Amount		
Beck Center for the Arts	\$ 149,846		

Motion by Trustee Blakemore, seconded by Trustee Isenhart, to approve the 2026 General Operating Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes. Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Vernaci

Organization	Grant Amount
Abrepaso Flamenco	\$ 6,000
AfricaHouse International	\$ 5,000
Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra	\$ 128,500
Aradhana Committee	\$ 20,000
Art House	\$ 38,308
Art of Me Productions	\$ 18,500
Art Therapy Studio	\$ 45,192
Artful	\$ 15,000
Artists Archives of the Western Reserve	\$ 25,863
Arts Impact	\$ 51,896
Arts Without Borders	\$ 5,000
Assembly for the Arts	\$ 52,769
Baseball Heritage Museum	\$ 20,000
Bay Village Community Band	\$ 5,000
BAYarts	\$ 54,077
Berea Arts Fest	\$ 6,000
Blazing River Arts Group INC	\$ 5,000
BorderLight	\$ 36,953
Brite Cleveland	\$ 20,000
Broadway School of Music and the Arts	\$ 32,867
Carolyn L. Farrell Foundation	\$ 16,500
Cassidy Theatre Inc.	\$ 20,000
Center for Arts-Inspired Learning	\$ 91,979
Chagrin Arts	\$ 10,000
Chagrin Documentary Film Festival	\$ 37,916
Chagrin Valley Little Theater	\$ 30,896
ChamberFest Cleveland	\$ 33,337
Children's Museum of Cleveland	\$ 110,088
Choral Arts Cleveland	\$ 5,000
City Ballet of Cleveland	\$ 10,000
CityMusic Cleveland	\$ 29,809
Cleveland Arts Prize	\$ 18,500
Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Botanical Garden	\$ 196,311

Cleveland Chamber Choir	\$ 10,000
Cleveland Chamber Collective	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Chamber Music Society	\$ 16,500
Cleveland Classical Guitar Society	\$ 41,111
Cleveland Cultural Gardens	\$ 20,000
Cleveland Dance Project Company	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Institute of Art	\$ 481,419
Cleveland International Film Festival	\$ 112,830
Cleveland Museum of Natural History	\$ 463,937
Cleveland Print Room	\$ 44,158
Cleveland Public Theatre	\$ 107,347
Cleveland Restoration Society	\$ 107,952
Cleveland Rocks: Past Present and Future	\$ 18,500
Cleveland Silent Film Festival and Colloquium	\$ 5,000
Collective Arts Network	\$ 22,922
CollectivExpress	\$ 7,500
Comité Mexicano	\$ 5,000
Contemporary Youth Orchestra	\$ 25,620
convergence-continuum	\$ 15,000
Dance Evert	\$ 5,000
DANCECleveland	\$ 42,683
Dancing Classrooms Northeast Ohio	\$ 18,500
Djapo Cultural Arts Institute	\$ 18,500
Doan Brook Watershed Partnership	\$ 40,346
Dobama Theatre	\$ 52,538
DuffyLit	\$ 12,500
Dunham Tavern Museum & Gardens	\$ 16,500
Encore Chamber Music Institute	\$ 20,000
Ensemble Theatre	\$ 15,000
Foluke Cultural Arts	\$ 20,000
Friends of the McGaffin Carillon	\$ 6,000
Good Company A Vocal Ensemble	\$ 5,000
Graffiti HeArt Corporation	\$ 5,000
Great Lakes Science Center	\$ 254,194
Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival	\$ 29,962
Heights Arts	\$ 27,546
Heights Youth Theatre	\$ 12,500
ICA - Art Conservation	\$ 58,201
Ideastream Public Media	\$ 615,630
In Harmony Therapeutic Services	\$ 12,500
Ingenuity	\$ 50,706
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Inlet Dance Theatre	\$ 34,973
International Women's Air & Space Museum	\$ 18,500
Italian Cultural Garden	\$ 5,000
Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center	\$ 30,140
Kaboom Collective	\$ 16,500
Karamu House	\$ 126,780
Kulture Kids	\$ 15,000
Lake Erie Ink	\$ 34,134
Lake Erie Nature & Science Center	\$ 81,160
Lakewood Young Filmmakers Academy	\$ 5,000
LAND studio	\$ 174,659
LatinUs Theater Company	\$ 18,500
Les Délices	\$ 20,000
Literary Cleveland	\$ 37,860
Little Lumpy's Center for Educational Initiatives	\$ 7,500
Maelstrom Collaborative Arts	\$ 7,500
Maltz Museum	\$ 130,705
Men of Independence	\$ 5,000
Mojuba! Dance Collective	\$ 10,000
Morgan Arts of Papermaking and Educational Foundation	\$ 39,628
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland	\$ 115,130
Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral	\$ 6,000
Musical Theater Project	\$ 35,349
Musical Upcoming Stars in the Classics	\$ 18,500
Naach Di Cleveland	\$ 5,000
Nature Center at Shaker Lakes	\$ 87,767
Near West Theatre	\$ 52,802
North Coast Men's Chorus	\$ 28,221
Oh Sew Powerful	\$ 5,000
Ohio Contemporary Ballet	\$ 42,915
Parma Area Fine Arts Council	\$ 5,000
Piano Cleveland	\$ 79,255
Praxis Fiber Workshop	\$ 20,000
Radio on the Lake Theatre	\$ 6,000
Rainey Institute	\$ 90,574
Refresh Collective	\$ 35,696
Renovare Music	\$ 16,500
Roberto Ocasio Foundation	\$ 5,000
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum	\$ 773,736
Roots of American Music	\$ 25,560
Sankofa	\$ 5,000

Sculpture Center	\$ 20,730
Shaker Historical Society	\$ 16,500
Singing Angels	\$ 15,000
Slovenian Museum and Archives	\$ 6,000
SPACES	\$ 52,880
STV Bavaria	\$ 7,500
Suburban Symphony Orchestra	\$ 6,000
Talespinner Children's Theatre	\$ 20,000
The Cleveland Museum of Art	\$ 957,801
The Cleveland Opera	\$ 10,000
The Dancing Wheels Company & School	\$ 44,189
The Movement Project	\$ 10,000
The Music Settlement	\$ 192,929
The MVMT Dance Co.	\$ 15,000
Trobár Medieval	\$ 5,000
Ukrainian Cultural Arts Association of Greater Cleveland	\$ 6,000
Ukrainian Museum Archives	\$ 27,841
Upcycle Parts Shop	\$ 18,500
Valley Art Center	\$ 41,984
Waterloo Arts	\$ 18,500
Western Reserve Chorale	\$ 7,500
Writers in Residence	\$ 12,500
Zygote Press, Inc.	\$ 27,162

# **Approval of Project Support 2026 Grants**

Mr. Sinatra stated that the Board would be asked to approve the grant amounts and scores for the 156 Project Support grants.

Motion by Trustee Vernaci, seconded by Trustee DiCosimo, to approve the 2026 Project Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes: DiCosimo, Isenhart, Vernaci

Abstain: Blakemore

The motion carried.

Organization	Score	Grant Amount
Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad	8.50	\$ 7,500
Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland	9.75	\$ 7,500

Motion by Trustee Blakemore, seconded by Trustee DiCosimo, to approve the 2026 Project Support grants (below).

Vote – Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Vernaci

Organization	Score	Grant Amount		
10K Movement*	8.50	\$	5,000	
Achievement Centers for Children	8.50	\$	5,360	
America Asian Pacific Islander Organization	7.75	\$	4,250	
America SCORES Cleveland	8.25	\$	7,500	
American Hungarian Friends of Scouting	8.50	\$	7,500	
American Slovenian Polka Foundation	8.25	\$	7,500	
Arts Renaissance Tremont	7.75	\$	4,250	
Association of African American Cultural Garden	7.50	\$	6,375	
Association of Asian Indian Women In Ohio	6.25	\$	4,250	
Babel Box Theater*	7.00	\$	4,250	
Baldwin Wallace University	7.25	\$	6,375	
Beachwood Arts Council	7.75	\$	4,250	
Bedford Historical Society	6.50	\$	3,060	
BigHearted Blooms	8.75	\$	7,500	
Brecksville Theatre	8.25	\$	7,500	
Broadview Brecksville Heights Community Chorus*	7.00	\$	4,250	
Brooklyn Heights Service Clubs	7.50	\$	4,250	
Building Heights*	6.25	\$	4,250	
Canalway Partners	7.75	\$	6,375	
Case Western Reserve University	9.50	\$	7,500	
Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland	9.00	\$	7,500	
Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District	6.75	\$	6,375	
Center for Employment Opportunities	8.75	\$	4,950	
Cesear's Forum	8.75	\$	5,000	
City Club of Cleveland	9.00	\$	7,500	
Cleveland Arts Education Consortium	7.75	\$	6,375	
Cleveland Clinic Foundation	7.00	\$	4,250	
Cleveland Composers Guild	8.50	\$	5,000	
Cleveland Contemporary Chinese Culture Association	7.50	\$	6,375	
Cleveland Grays Armory Museum	6.75	\$	3,487	
Cleveland Inner City Ballet	7.25	\$	4,250	
Cleveland Leadership Center	8.00	\$	7,500	
Cleveland Neighborhood Progress*	9.25	\$	5,000	
Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra	6.75	\$	3,825	
Cleveland Rape Crisis Center	9.25	\$	7,500	
Cleveland Repertory Orchestra	8.25	\$	5,000	

Cleveland School of the Arts Board of Trustees	9.75	\$ 7,500
Cleveland Shakespeare Festival	7.00	\$ 4,250
Cleveland TOPS Swingband	8.00	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Treatment Center	8.75	\$ 7,500
Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project	8.50	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Winds	8.25	\$ 5,000
Cleveland Women's Orchestra	7.75	\$ 6,375
Club Dominicano De Cleveland*	8.25	\$ 5,000
Colors+ Youth Center	8.50	\$ 7,500
Community Life Collaborative	8.25	\$ 6,500
Connecting for Kids	9.00	\$ 7,500
Darl Center for the Arts	6.75	\$ 4,250
Deutscher Musik Verein	7.25	\$ 1,955
Downtown Cleveland Inc.	8.50	\$ 3,000
East Cleveland Farmers' Market Preservation Society	7.25	\$ 1,700
Edward E. Parker Museum of Art	8.50	\$ 4,000
Empowering Epilepsy	8.50	\$ 7,500
Environmental Health Watch	7.25	\$ 6,375
Euclid Symphony Orchestra	8.75	\$ 5,000
Far West Center	10.00	\$ 7,500
Fashion Talks Foundation	6.75	\$ 4,250
Food Strong	8.50	\$ 5,000
Fostering Hope	8.25	\$ 7,500
Friends of the East Cleveland Public Library	7.00	\$ 3,400
From Me 2 U, Inc	8.25	\$ 7,500
FrontLine Service	10.00	\$ 7,500
FutureHeights	9.00	\$ 7,500
Gardening in the District	7.75	\$ 4,250
German Central	7.25	\$ 6,375
Golden Ciphers Youth Development & Cultural Arts Center	7.75	\$ 4,250
Greater Cleveland Film Commission	9.00	\$ 7,500
Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association	8.75	\$ 7,500
Harvard Community Services Center	8.00	\$ 7,500
Haus of Transcendent	8.50	\$ 7,500
Hellenic Preservation Society of Northeastern Ohio*	7.25	\$ 4,250
High Art Fridays*	7.50	\$ 4,250
Hispanic Police Officers Association	8.00	\$ 7,500
Historic Gateway Neighborhood Corporation	6.50	\$ 6,375
India Fest USA	8.25	\$ 5,000
InMotion	8.75	\$ 5,420
International Community Council-Worldwide Intercultural Network (ICC-WIN)	7.75	\$ 4,250

Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland Ohio	7.00	\$	6,375
Jewish Federation of Cleveland	6.75	\$	6,375
Jones Road Family Development Corporation	8.00	\$	7,500
Kings & Queens of Art	6.75	\$	4,250
Lake View Cemetery Foundation	9.00	\$	7,500
LakewoodAlive	8.75	\$	5,000
Larchmere PorchFest	8.50	\$	5,000
Lexington-Bell Community Center	8.00	\$	7,500
LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland	9.50	\$	7,500
Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential (LEAP)*	8.00	\$	5,000
Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation	6.00	\$	2,720
LYLESART	8.25	\$	5,000
Metro West Community Development Organization	7.00	\$	6,375
Midnight Art Club	6.50	\$	4,250
MidTown Cleveland	6.50	\$	4,250
Museum of Creative Human Art	6.50	\$	4,250
NAMI Greater Cleveland	6.75	\$	6,375
New Avenues to Independence	8.00	\$	7,500
No Exit	8.25	\$	5,000
No Surf House*	6.00	\$	4,250
North Pointe Ballet	8.75	\$	7,500
North Union Farmers Market	6.50	\$	3,625
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development	9.50	\$	7,500
Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association	8.75	\$	5,000
NuPoint Community Development Corporation	8.50	\$	5,000
OCA Cleveland	9.00	\$	5,000
Ohio City Inc	8.00	\$	7,500
Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation	6.75	\$	5,440
One South Euclid	9.00	\$	7,500
Open Doors Academy	7.25	\$	6,375
Open Tone Music	9.00	\$	7,500
Pakistani Cultural Garden	7.75	\$	4,250
PALS for Healing	9.00	\$	7,500
Parma Symphony Orchestra	6.25	\$	4,250
Phantasy Community Foundation*	9.00	\$	5,000
Polish Village Parma	8.00	\$	5,000
Powerful Long Ladder*	9.25	\$	5,000
Reaching Heights	8.50	\$	7,500
RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Company	6.50	\$	4,250
Rollin' Buckeyez	8.75	\$	7,500
Rose Centers for Aging Well	9.25	\$	7,500
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Schmooze Ohio	6.25	\$ 4,250
Seat of the Pants	9.50	\$ 7,500
Sew4Service*	8.25	\$ 5,000
Shaker Arts Council	8.75	\$ 5,000
SHED Projects*	8.75	\$ 5,000
Shore Cultural Centre	7.75	\$ 4,250
Slavic Village Development	9.00	\$ 5,000
Smart Development*	8.25	\$ 5,000
SOS: Strengthening Our Students	7.33	\$ 5,950
Stella Maris*	6.33	\$ 4,250
Stellar Acrobatic Dance Academy	9.00	\$ 5,000
Tender Hearts Crusades	8.67	\$ 7,000
The Foundry	7.00	\$ 6,375
The Gathering Place	6.75	\$ 6,375
The Harvard Square Center	6.67	\$ 4,250
The Land	9.00	\$ 7,500
The Meeting Place Learning Center	7.25	\$ 6,375
Thea Bowman Center	8.67	\$ 7,500
Tremont West Development Corporation	8.67	\$ 7,500
Tuskegee Airmen North Coast Chapter*	7.50	\$ 4,250
University Circle Inc.	8.67	\$ 7,500
UpStage Players	7.67	\$ 4,250
Ursuline College	8.33	\$ 7,500
VIVA Bavaria	7.33	\$ 6,375
West Park Kamm's Neighborhood Development	8.67	\$ 6,585
West Shore Chorale	8.00	\$ 7,500
West Side Catholic Center	9.00	\$ 5,000
West Side Community House	8.33	\$ 7,500
Western Reserve Fire Museum & Education Center	7.00	\$ 4,250
Western Reserve Land Conservancy	6.00	\$ 6,375
Westlake Chinese School	7.00	\$ 6,375
Westown Community Development Corporation	6.67	\$ 6,375
Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus	8.33	\$ 6,000
Women in Film and TV Ohio*	8.75	\$ 5,000
YMCA of Greater Cleveland	8.25	\$ 7,500
Youth Challenge	9.33	\$ 7,500

<sup>\*</sup> Indicates a first-time Project Support grant recipient

#### **Approval of Other Grants for 2026**

Motion: To approve a grant to **SMU DataArts** in the amount of \$14,500 to provide CAC grant recipients with a tool to track program participation and financial measures for CAC grant reporting for the period of Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2026.

Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo Seconded by – Trustee Vernaci

Vote – all ayes:

The motion carried.

Motion: To approve a grant to **Neighborhood Connections** in the amount of \$50,000 to support resident-led arts and culture projects throughout Cleveland and East Cleveland in 2026.

Motion by – Trustee Blakemore Seconded by – Trustee Vernaci

Vote – all ayes:

The motion carried.

Motion: To approve a grant to **Assembly for the Arts** in the amount of \$500,000 to design and manage a program that provides support for Cuyahoga County artists in 2026.

Motion by – Trustee Vernaci Seconded by – Trustee Blakemore

Discussion: Trustees asked how much of this grant would directly benefit artists. Mr. Sinatra said that the proposal stated \$450k would provide grants to 176 artists ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

Vote – all ayes:

The motion carried.

## 8. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

The next meeting will be held at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, December 17, 2025.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: To adjourn the meeting:

Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo Seconded by – Trustee Blakemore

Vote to adjourn the meeting.

Vote – all ayes:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 pm.

Attest: