



Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, April 15, 2026

A meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:08 pm at the Cleveland Public Library - Main Branch, Louis Stokes Wing, 2nd Floor 325 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44114.

The roll call showed that Trustees Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt and Johnson Thomas were present. It was determined that there was a quorum. Trustee Vernaci was absent.

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

1. SWEARING IN OF TRUSTEES

Trustee Dan Blakemore was reappointed, and Dr. Shenise Johnson Thomas was appointed to serve three-year terms ending on March 31, 2029, by Cuyahoga County Council. Trustee Isenhardt administered the oath of office to Daniel Blakemore and Shenise Johnson Thomas who each swore to honestly, faithfully, and impartially perform their duties while serving as trustees of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: To approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting.
Motion by – Trustee Blakemore
Second by – Trustee DiCosimo

Vote: To approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt and Johnson Thomas

The motion carried.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Trustee DiCosimo presented the slate of officers for 2026 with Trustee Karolyn Isenhardt as President, Trustee Daniel Blakemore as Vice President, and Trustee Leonard DiCosimo, as Secretary.

Action: To approve the slate of officers: Trustee Isenhardt as President, Trustee Blakemore as Vice President, and Trustee DiCosimo as Secretary.

Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo

Second by – Trustee Johnson Thomas

Vote: To approve slate of officers: Trustee Isenhardt as President, Trustee Blakemore as Vice President, and Trustee DiCosimo as Secretary.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt, Johnson Thomas

The motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on today's agenda.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Paulsen thanked everyone for joining her and the Board. Ms. Paulsen's remarks can be found in the board materials on page 5.

6. CONNECT WITH CULTURE

Ms. Maya Curtis, CAC grants manager, introduced the grantee Renovare Music. The grantee provided the Board with an overview of their work and performed several pieces at the meeting.

7. FINANCE AND GENERAL BUSINESS

Finance Report

Ms. Meg Harris, CAC's director of administration, stated that tax revenue through March was \$4,162,016 which is \$85,484 (2%) below budget. She added that on a per unit rate of comparison, the sale of cigarettes at the whole sale level is 2.44% lower than the first quarter of 2025. She stated interest revenue was \$139,510 and that non-grant expenses through March were \$262,072, which is slightly under budget due to timing of payments. Ms. Harris also provided an update on the status of the 2025 audit.

Appointment of members of the Audit and Finance Advisory Committee

Ms. Paulsen said the purpose of this advisory committee is to ensure CAC has proper financial controls and policies in place and that its investments achieve CAC's objectives while complying with the Investment Policy. She requested the Board reappoint current members of the Audit and

Finance Advisory Committee to continued one-year terms: Meghann Marnecheck and Board member Gina Vernaci. She also asked that the Board appoint new committee members Maya Claytor and Robin Johnson, who together bring excellent nonprofit and public sector experience.

Action: To appoint members to the audit and finance advisory committee for the period of April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027: Maya Claytor, Robin Johnson, Meghann Marnecheck, and Gina Vernaci.

Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo

Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Vote: To appoint members to the audit and finance advisory committee for the period of April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027: Maya Claytor, Robin Johnson, Meghann Marnecheck, and Gina Vernaci.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt, Johnson Thomas

The motion carried.

Public Records Manager Designee

Ms. Paulsen asked the Board to appoint Meg Harris and Laura Mormino to be Public Records Manager Designees. Ms. Harris and Ms. Mormino will complete the annual training in the coming months.

Action: to approve Meg Harris and Laura Mormino as the agency's Public Records Manager Designees.

Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo

Second by – Trustee Johnson Thomas

Vote: To approve Meg Harris and Laura Mormino as the Public Records Manager Designees for CAC.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt, Johnson Thomas

The motion carried.

8. BOARD ACTION – GRANTMAKING

Approval of the 2027 Project Support Grant Guidelines

Ms. Curtis and Mr. Jake Sinatra, CAC's director of grantmaking strategy and communications, provided the Board with an overview of the 2027 Project Support Grant Guidelines. There were

no policy updates to Guidelines. The following updates are recommended to improve the program for applicants, panelists, and staff:

- Simplified the **application budget** by inviting applicants to complete a budget template or use their own desired format.
- Transition to a **new online application and reporting system**, a module of CAC's current grant management system, to improve the process for applicants and staff.
- **Reduced and simplified** application responses and requirements, wherever possible.

Action: To approve the 2027 Project Support Grant Guidelines.

Motion by – Trustee Johnson Thomas

Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Discussion:

- How often do staff evaluate the project support program?
 - Project Support is evaluated annually.
- Are there any concerns that the new budget table won't be completed correctly?
 - The change for 2027 creates a framework template embedded in the application. If applicants do not complete it correctly, providing a clear project budget, that will be considered as part of the panel process.
- What portion of a project support grant can be matched with in-kind support and has it increased?
 - Project support grants can be matched with up to 50% of in-kind donations. This is an increase over previous years when the 50% match applied to grants up to \$5,000.
- What is the timing of the panel review?
 - Panel review takes place in late September or early October.

Vote: To approve the 2027 Project Support Grant Guidelines.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhardt, Johnson Thomas

The motion carried.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON CAC BUSINESS

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee DiCosimo, seconded by Trustee Blakemore, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: all Ayes.

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 pm.

Attest:

Leonard DiCosimo, Secretary, Board of Trustees