



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Tuesday, February 25, 2025

A regular meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:03 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, Scott Taylor, and Vernaci were present. It was determined that there was a quorum.

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: Motion to approve minutes of the December 18, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting.

Motion by – Trustee Vernaci
Second by – Trustee Scott Taylor

Discussion: None.

Vote to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting.

Ayes: all ayes.

The motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment.

3. CONNECT WITH CULTURE

Hermione Malone, executive director of the Cleveland International Film Festival, provided an overview of the activities at CIFF.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

5. FINANCE REPORT

Ms. Meg Harris provided the financial update.

2024 Unaudited Financials

Revenue. Final, unaudited tax revenue for 2024 was \$8,889,512. Tax revenue for the year was \$314,328 (3.41%) below forecast and \$1,193,574 (11.8%) lower than 2023 tax receipts. Interest revenue was \$449,955.

Expenditure. Final, unaudited expenditures for FY2024 were \$12,136,632 ending the year \$353,368 under budget. To balance the budget, \$2,755,225 was used from the general fund, as planned.

Annual Audit. The Local Government Services division of the Ohio Auditor of State began work on CAC's GAAP conversion for 2024 in early January and should finish the conversion in March.

2025 Financials YTD

Revenue. Tax revenue through January was \$779,850. This is \$78,499 (11.2%) above budget and 59,170 (8.2%) above revenue for the same period in 2024. Interest revenue through January was \$67,537.

Expenditure. The majority of CAC's budget is comprised of grants which were approved by the Board in 2024. These grants are accrued at the beginning of the year and recognized on the balance sheet. Non-grant expenditures through January were \$101,692.

Due to lack of funds on deposit, CAC delayed entering into a handful of grant agreements, waiting until the funds were on deposit to secure the contracts. As of today, all contracts have been sent out.

6. REPORTS AND ACTION – GRANTMAKING

Mr. Jake Sinatra, CAC director of grantmaking strategy and communications, presented an overview of highlights from the Grantee Connect Series, a yearlong effort to deepen CAC's connections with grantee partners through a series of meetups, surveys and listening sessions.

Mr. Sinatra presented the objectives for 2026 grantmaking, informed by feedback from the Grantee Connect Series and Peer Funder Scan. Recommendations included:

1. Prioritize consistent and reliable operating support funding for Cuyahoga County arts and culture nonprofits.
2. Build efficient and effective grantmaking practices to the benefit of grant applicants and current grant recipients.
3. Increase awareness and transparency around CAC's purpose, authority, and decision-making processes.
4. Continue CAC's emphasis on public benefit by funding nonprofits and programs that connect all Cuyahoga County residents with arts and cultural experiences.
5. Deepen connection and trust with our grant recipients through ongoing listening, conversations, and feedback and evaluation processes.

Action: To approve the 2026 grantmaking objectives, as outlined, to guide the development of CAC grant program guidelines and policies for consideration at a future CAC Board meeting.

Motion by – Trustee Blakemore

Second by – Trustee DiCosimo

Discussion:

When would these grant programs be rolled out? These grant programs would be rolled out in late spring with funding opportunities for Project Support 2026 and General Operating Support 2026-27.

How frequently does the Board of Trustees review policies? The Board reviews and approves grant program criteria and policies every one to two years, depending on the program; the Board has the ability at any meeting to review or change policy.

It is important for the Board to discuss policy at every meeting because there are a lot of outside factors that can impact the policy and operations of CAC.

Vote: To approve the 2026 grantmaking objectives, as outlined, to guide the development of CAC grant program guidelines and policies for consideration at a future CAC Board meeting

Ayes: all ayes.

The motion carried.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. WORK SESSION

The Board of Trustees held a work session with staff on approaches to forecasting CAC's revenue and discussion ensued. No Board action was taken during the discussion.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by – Trustee Scott Taylor

Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Ayes: all ayes.

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 pm.

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 pm on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at the Cleveland Public Library's MLK Jr. Branch in Cleveland.

Attest: _____
Leonard DiCosimo
Secretary, Board of Trustees