



Council Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2025
10:00am – 2:00pm
Hub City Vinyl
28 E Baltimore St, Hagerstown, MD 21740

In attendance:

Councilors: Ruby Lopez Harper, Albita Rivera, Marva Jo Camp, Monique Walker, Kathy Beachler, Yolanda Acree, Delegate Cheryl Pasteur, Senator Cheryl Kagan, Tonya Miller Hall, Midge Ingersoll, Janet Stanford

Staff: Steven Skerritt-Davis, Ryan Patterson, Ryan Koons, Abby Neyenhouse, Emily Sollenberger, Laura Weiss, Derrick Quevedo, Chad Buterbaugh, Elizabeth Morales, Alysha Suryah, Nora Howell, Elli Hernandez, Cathy Teixeira, Brad Bittner, Kirk Amaral Snow, Tammy Oppel, David Mitchell, Leslie Gillard

Call to Order

Ruby Lopez Harper called the meeting to order at approximately 10:04 a.m. and reviewed the guiding documents.

Welcome

Nicole Abuhamada, Executive Director with the Washington County Arts Council (WCAC) provided the welcome and information about the WCAC. Lloyd Thoburn, owner of Hub City Vinyl provided the welcome and history of the venue. Brittany Arizmendi, Director of Community Engagement with the City of Hagerstown lauded Lloyd's efforts in the city of Hagerstown and provided a brief welcome.

Roundtable Discussion with Secretary Harry Coker, Jr.

- Marva Jo Camp congratulated the Secretary on his appointment and showed appreciation for his visit to Prince George's County.
- Secretary Coker discussed his commitment to MSAC and the arts.
- The Secretary and Councilors discussed the following:
 - The challenges MSAC and arts communities around the State of Maryland are facing.



- Sustainable pipelines for work for artists in the state, pertaining to housing and work spaces.
- Partnerships of small arts organizations, and getting out in the community.
- Data, and metrics needed for funding of the arts and arts venues.
- Councilors thanked the Secretary for recognizing the arts in the state.
- Funding recommendations for the arts in the state, and art focused apprenticeship opportunities.

Creative Assignment

Ruby led a listening and reflection activity with attendees.

Chair Remarks

- Ruby acknowledged the challenges in funding and political climate, pertaining to arts and culture.
- Ruby encouraged Councilors to engage in their respective communities, and engage with the Maryland Citizens for the Arts.
- Ruby welcomed new council members, and asked them to introduce themselves.
 - Janet Stanford
 - Midge Ingersoll

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

Senator Kagan moved to approve the June 5, 2025 minutes. Albita seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed.

Executive Director's Report (Skerritt-Davis)

- Steven provided the following updates on the Department of Commerce
 - Steven acknowledged members of the Department of Commerce - Deputy Chief of Staff, Cori Duggins, and Director of the Governor's Office of Business Advancement, Luis Cardona.
 - New hires
 - Telework Policy change to 3 days/week in office for admin staff, leadership
 - County Tours
 - August Maryland Business Pulse, arts focus
 - Commerce Blog Post - Kocen Arts Center
- Steven discussed the state hiring freeze, pertaining to vacant positions with MSAC.
- Steven provided other updates:



- Arts Incubator Working Group is drafting a final report
- NEA Procedural Audit is complete, waiting on final report
- NEA Partnership Awards
 - Total award is \$1,048,738
 - includes \$25,000 for Arts & Health
 - includes \$25,000 for America 250
- Drafting Contract with Art Pharmacy to stand up an arts prescribing program in Maryland
- FY25 Grants - awarded ~\$32 million, continue to see high demand some program award rates in the teens
- FY26 Grants - general operating grants processing, grant programs opening, on track to award ~\$32 million
- Arts Capital - FY24 payments, FY25 agreements, FY26 applications
- Professional Development - focus on entrepreneurship and connecting the arts sector with other resources in state government
- Marketing - overview of increased engagement

Discussion

- Councilors discussed Maryland 250 and upcoming budgets.

Executive Committee Report

- Ruby provided updates from the August 14, 2025 Executive Committee meeting regarding FY25 Survey results and FY26 priorities.

Fiscal Report

- Marva Jo provided updates of the FY25 Financial Statement and the FY26 Fiscal Report.

Program Policy and Evaluation Committee Report

- Albita overviewed policies recommended to be voted on from the August 15, 2025 PPE Committee meeting.
 - Folklife Apprenticeships
 - Changing eligibility to allow out-of-state mentor artists
 - Allowing payment to LLCs

Discussion

- Councilors discussed their appreciation of this policy, pertaining to their respective counties.

Shelley moved to send the Folklife Apprenticeship Policy Proposals to the Secretary for final approval. Midge seconded. All in favor, and the motion passed.



Staff Reports

- Ryan P. and Nora provided updates on the Maryland Public Arts Commission.

New Business

- Steven provided details on the Winter Council meeting on December 4 at the Harford County Library in Bel Air.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Final Thoughts

- Ruby thanked everyone for their work in the arts throughout the state, be kind to people, and stay grounded.
- Ruby thanked guest speakers and MSAC staff for their work on coordinating the council meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Brittany Arizmendi provided updates on arts and entertainment around the city of Hagerstown.