

**Regional Arts Commission
Full Commission Board Minutes
May 21, 2026
8:30 a.m. via Zoom**

Welcome, Call to Order & Roll Call (Chair Ochoa)

Ochoa called the May 21, 2026 meeting to order @ 8:33a, and asked Sutherlin for roll call.

Commissioners Present

Commission: Constantino **Ochoa**, chair, yea; Sam **Fiorello**, vice chair, yea; Rhonda **Carter-Adams**, secretary; John **Russell**, treasurer, yea; Robert **Arbuthnot**, yea; Gerad **Ewing**, yea; Vin **Ko**, yea; Mont **Levy**, yea; Andréa **Purnell**, yea; David **Wilson**, yea

Commissioners Absent

Anita Hagerman
Beverly Isom
Jerry Gennaria
Rudy Nickens
Cheryl Walker

Staff Attendees

Vanessa Cooksey, Savannah Babington, Charlie Bosco, Gregory Harris, Ann Haubrich, Tracey Morgan-Harris, Chloe Higgins, Leigh Winter, Lea Sutherlin, Rita Dillard, Mk Sadiq

Others in Attendance

Rick Gratza, KEB
Atty. Travis Kearbey, Legal Counsel, (Quarles)

Recognition of Public Guests

None in attendance.

Approval of the Minutes – April 10, 2026

Ochoa called for a motion to approve the following Full Commission meeting minutes - April 10, 2026.

Motion made by Russell, seconded by Fiorello, and unanimously carried to approve the April 10, 2026 minutes.

Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Ko, Levy, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

COMMISSIONERS

Constantino Ochoa, *Chair*
Sam Fiorello, *Vice Chair*
Rhonda Carter Adams, *Secretary*
John H. Russell, *Treasurer*
Robert Arbuthnot
Gerad Ewing
Jerry Gennaria

Anita Hagerman
Beverly Isom
Vin Ko
Mont Levy
Rudolph Nickens
Andréa Purnell
Cheryl D.S. Walker
David Carl Wilson

PRESIDENT & CEO
Vanessa Cooksey



President & CEO Report (Cooksey)

Cooksey gave a high-level overview of President & CEO/Team following community engagement and events – (1) continued participation in community and grantee events, including St. Louis Children's Choir Gala and Dance St. Louis' 60th anniversary; (2) supported the commissioning of a special work with Alvin Ailey 2, honoring Chuck Berry's 100th birthday; (3) hosted "Meet the Muralist" event at Cortex on Duncan Avenue, showcasing local muralists and enhancing exposure for creatives; (4) participated in the Urban Arts Coalition and co-chaired a convening at AFTA Con in Albuquerque, NM; (5) invited to focus groups on the future of the arts sector at the national level; concluded the 3-week St. Louis Film Project screenings at Alamo Drafthouse - screened 4 out of 5 films due to technical issues; (6) upcoming "Snacks at RAC" community engagement event scheduled for 5/27; (7) engaged with Opportunity Trust on regional education initiatives; (8) participated in Explore St. Louis' VEX robotics conference; and (9) recognized by St. Louis Magazine as part of the Business 500 and participated in WashU's advisory group for Black Studies.

Cooksey also reported on the following: (1) attendance at Kre8 Spaces' Fifth Anniversary Gala – Cooksey received a Lifetime Achievement Award alongside colleagues; (2) RAC team 'closing tour' of Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (SLU), supported a project documenting its history; (3) collaboration with WashU's Center for Experiential Learning on the Leisure Time Study - findings will be shared - thanked Mk for working with Wash U to get it completed; (4) upcoming Grants & Programs special meeting to discuss recommendations and framework for grantmaking through 2030; (5) work plan review for FY26 scheduled with RAC's board chair and vice chair - considering responses to recent public records requests; (6) review of Hotel/Motel Revenue Tracker and Cash Flow Analysis, January – April 2026; (7) Hotel/Motel tax revenue remains volatile – noted delays in receipt and potential shortfall if revenue does not improve in the coming months; (8) expecting to be on budget overall, with savings from staff departures will offset some expenses; (9) end-of-year estimated cash projection contingent on revenue recovery; and (10) follow-up on Edward Jones gift.

Update on Government & Legal Affairs – Closed Session [Privileged & Confidential - Legal Matter RSMO 610.021(1)]

Ochoa called for motion for closed session for Update on Government & Legal Affairs [Privileged & Confidential - Legal Matter pursuant to RSMO 610.021(1)].

Motion made by Carter-Adams, seconded by Levy and unanimously carried to close the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting for Update on Government & Legal Affairs [Privileged & Confidential - Legal Matter pursuant to RSMO 610.021(1)]. RAC's legal representation was present. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Ko, Levy, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

CLOSED SESSION HELD/Privileged and Confidential

Ochoa called for a motion to adjourn closed session of the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting and to reconvene the open session of the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting.

Motion made by Fiorello, seconded by Ewing and unanimously approved to adjourn closed session pursuant to RSMO 610.021(1), and to reconvene open session of the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Ko, Levy, Purnell, Wilson

COMMISSIONERS

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Cheryl D.S. Walker
David Carl Wilson

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Nay – none
Abstain - none

Roll Call & Adjournment

Chair Ochoa called for a motion to adjourn the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting.

Motion made by Levy, seconded by Ko, and unanimously approved to adjourn the May 21, 2026 Full Commission meeting at 10:16 a.m. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Carter-Adams, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Ko, Levy, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none
Abstain - none

Submitted by
L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

Attachments

- Full Commission Meeting Minutes, April 10, 2026

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