

**Regional Arts Commission
Full Commission Board Minutes
July 16, 2026
8:30 a.m. via Zoom**

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

Ochoa called the July 16, 2026 meeting to order @ 8:32a, and asked Sutherlin for roll call.

Commissioners Present

Commission: Constantino **Ochoa**, chair, yea, Sam **Fiorello**, yea; John **Russell**, treasurer, yea; Robert **Arbuthnot**, yea; Gerad **Ewing**, yea; Jerry **Gennaria**, yea; Vin **Ko**, yea; Rudy **Nickens**, yea; Andréa **Purnell**, yea; David **Wilson**, yea; Beverly **Isom**, yea; Cheryl **Walker**, yea;

Commissioners Absent

Anita Hagerman
Mont Levy
Rhonda Carter-Adams

Staff Attendees

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

Others in Attendance

Atty. Travis Kearbey, Quarles
Rich Finneran, BCLP
Meredith Parfet, Ravenyard Group
Jenny Schmidt, Ravenyard Group
Trish Donovan, KEB

Recognition of Public Guests

None

Approval of the Minutes – June 11, 2026

Ochoa called for a motion to approve the following Full Commission meeting minutes – June 11, 2026.

Motion made by Fiorello, seconded by Russell, and unanimously carried to approve the June 11, 2026 minutes. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Grants Recommendations (Committee Chair Fiorello & Haubrich)

Fiorello commended Haubrich and her team for their dedicated and thoughtful work over several months in developing effective strategies to advance the arts in the region. He highlighted the team's careful resource deployment and the refined proposed solutions and emphasized the diligence behind their efforts. Fiorello then asked Haubrich to report.

Haubrich noted that a great deal of the following reports would be based on retreat discussions in June, and acknowledged the dedication and hard work of Higgins, Winter and Bosco as well as the Grants and Programs Committee. She stated that

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the structure being presented was recommended by the Grants and Programs Committee and the Grants Team. Haubrich then provided the following Grants and Programs updates and highlighted the thoughtful work behind proposed changes to grant structures, emphasizing transparency, oversight, and strategic focus.

Discretionary Grants

Haubrich reported that at its July 7, 2026 meeting, the Grants & Programs Committee approved restructuring Discretionary Grants into categories such as partner grants, public art partnerships, and opportunity grants, with detailed funding levels from 2027 to 2030. Haubrich noted that the total discretionary budget decreases slightly but aims for clearer criteria and process.

Fiorello called for a motion to approve the proposed categories and structure of the discretionary grants, understanding that the proposed recipients of such grants would be identified at a later date. Motion was seconded by Nickens and unanimously approved. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Artist Support Grants 2027-2030 - Artist Investment Grants

Haubrich presented the Artist Support Grants 2027-2030 as follows: (1) the proposal combines artist support grants and artist investment grants, with a total of \$250,000 annually from 2027 to 2030; (2) these grants aim to support high-impact, innovative, mid-career to established artists, offering up to \$25,000 per award, with up to 10 awards each year; (3) the selection process involves panels with city and county representation; (4) there are project-based artist grants, with a total investment of \$500,000 per year, supporting emerging and mid-career artists through awards of up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for collectives, with approximately 70-80 awards annually; (5) the purpose is to enhance community vibrancy, civic engagement, cultural heritage, and public spaces, with a regional reach and contributions to the local economy; and (6) total funding for these programs from 2027 to 2030 is projected at \$750,000 per year.

Fiorello called for a motion to approve the Artist Support Grants 2027-2030, and the structure, as described in the meeting.

Motion made by Walker, seconded by Ko and unanimously carried to approve the Artist Support Grants 2027-2030.

Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Arts Organizations Grants 2027-2030

Haubrich presented the Organizational & Pillar Grants 2027-2030 as follows: (1) organizational grants will be broken into additional tiers determined by the expense average of their last three fiscal years; (2) large arts organizations will receive stable funding based on past expenses, with detailed criteria for eligibility and reporting; (3) pillar grants total around \$2.075 million annually; and (4) Grant process enhancements - plan includes rigorous reviewer training, in-person due diligence, a new letter of inquiry process, and streamlined appeals.

Discussion held regarding the following: (1) procedures for recusal and voting on grants with potential conflicts of interest; (2) possibility of managing recusals through email or surveys; (3) agreed to vote on grant categories and names without specific recipients, with detailed conflicts handled separately; and (4) emphasis on verifying conflicts and organizational eligibility before finalizing funding.

Fiorello called for a motion to approve Arts Organization Grants 2027-2030 - the name of the category, the criteria being applied, and the amount of money being committed to it.

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Motion made by Russell, seconded by Wilson and unanimously carried to approve Arts Organization Grants 2027-2030 - the name of the category, the criteria being applied, and the amount of money being committed to it. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Program Support Grants 2027-2030

Haubrich gave an update and reported that at its July 7, 2026 meeting, the Grants & Programs Committee approved the Program Support Grants 2027-2030.

Fiorello called for a motion to approve the Program Support Grants and the structure, as described in the meeting.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Walker and unanimously carried to approve the Program Support Grants 2027 - 2030. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Haubrich shared that next steps include preparation for upcoming town halls, workshops, and further due diligence on eligible organizations.

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 Gennaria, seconded by Isom and unanimously carried to close the July 16, 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, Russell, Arbuthnot, Ewing, Gennaria, Isom, Ko, Nickens, Purnell, Walker, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

CLOSED SESSION HELD/Privileged and Confidential

Arbuthnot left meeting @ 9:18a; Isom left meeting @ 10a; Fiorello left meeting @ 10:28a

Ochoa called for a motion to adjourn closed session of the July 16, 2026 Full Commission meeting and to reconvene the open session of the July 16, 2026 Full Commission meeting.

Motion made by Gennaria, seconded by Ewing and unanimously approved to adjourn closed session pursuant to RSMO 610.021(1), and to reconvene open session of the July 16, 2026 Full Commission meeting at 10:29 a.m.

Yea – Ochoa, Russell, Ewing, Gennaria, Ko, Nickens, Walker, Wilson, Purnell, Fiorello, Arbuthnot (left before adjournment) Isom (gave proxy for adjournment)

Nay – none

Abstain – none

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Purnell left meeting @ 10:30a

Roll Call & Adjournment

Chair Ochoa called for a motion to adjourn the July 16, 2026 Full Commission meeting.

Motion made by Nickens, seconded by Walker, and unanimously approved to adjourn the July 16, 2026 Full Commission meeting at 10:32 a.m. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Ochoa, Russell, Ewing, Gennaria, Ko, Nickens, Walker, Wilson, Purnell, Fiorello, Arbuthnot (left before open session adjournment) - Isom (gave proxy for adjournment)

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

Attachments

- Full Commission Meeting Minutes, June 11, 2026
- Revised Criteria for Pillar Grants

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