REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission**
**Executive Committee Minutes**
**Tuesday, August 5, 2025 via ZOOM**
**8 a.m.**

**Call to Order & Committee Members in Attendance**

Chair Gennaria called the August 5, 2025 meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and asked Lea to conduct the Commi ttee roll call.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Jerry Gennaria, chair, Tino Ochoa, vice chair, Sam Fiorello, secretary, John Russell, treasurer, Roz Johnson, Member-at-Large, Rhonda Carter-Adams, Member-at-Large

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Carter-Adams, Johnson**
**Nay – none**
**Abstain - none**

**Staff Attendees**

Vanessa Cooksey, Lea Sutherlin

**Approval of Minutes**

Gennaria called for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2025 Executive Committee meeting.

**Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Russell and unanimously carried to approve the Executive Committee m inutes – July 10, 2025. Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Carter-Adams, Johnson**
**Nay – none**
**Abstain - none**

**Sunshine Request - Holy Joe Society (HJS) Update**

Cooksey gave an update on the HJS Sunshine Request as follows: (1) the second request received on July 14 requires third party support from Anderson IT; (2) cost estimated provided to, and rejected by HJS; (3) options made available - pay cost or adjust request to information that can be pulled by staff; (4) HJS confirmed willingness to pay with continued objection to the cost; (5) RAC staff will fulfill the request after payment is received; (6) received a new request from Atty. Michael Garland on August 4 – potential complaint from Brad Jackson/River City Opry who applied for an ARPA grant and denied due to non-residency; (7) plans for RAC to engage a crisis communication firm; and (8) will keep this committee updated.

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**Continued Discussion Regarding Draft FY 2026 Budget & Work Plan**
Cooksey shared a PPT highlighting the draft of the FY 2026 Budget and Work Plan as follows: (1) overarching strategic direction; (2) staff been working on easy-to-read strategic roadmap 2026-2030 covering 'our assets', 'our work', 'our goals', 'our outcomes', 'our impact'; (3) kudos to Jason Schipkowski for taking what's been done over the last two years and making it easy to understand.

Gennaria suggested a sentence on 'why this matters' as a part of 'our impact'.

Committee members agreed.

Cooksey further highlighted budget categories as follows: (1) will possibly need one more Executive Committee meeting prior to the September full commission meeting to vote on the FY26 Budget & Work Plan – in preparation for a full vote at the November annual meeting; (2) we invest, we amplify, we lead; (3) FY26 Explore STL forecast; (4) FY26 beginning cash balance; (5) FY26 ending cash balance; (6) FY25 admin & ops (unallocated) expenses – will tighten to create savings and more money for grantmaking; and (7) this budget does not disrupt building account and crisis response account, or include any interest earned.

Discussion held as follows: (1) variance, reduction in reserves; (2) possibly dial back spending depending on revenues; (3) articulated policy on cash reserves; (4) clarity on how this funding is dispersed; (5) similar past discussions regarding a below forecast scenario; (6) remaining ARPA funds; (7) additional discussion about crisis communication firm; (8) possibility of freezing salaries and review of organization chart to ensure right staffing model to support the strategic direction road map; and (9) possibly dedicate portion of RAC's website to a Q&A on how decisions are made.

Gennaria asked Cooksey to summarize next steps.

Cooksey noted the following: (1) based on this feedback, will continue working on the draft FY26 Budget and Work Plan; and (2) requested an additional meeting of this committee (Executive Committee) prior to the September full Commission meeting.

Johnson left meeting @ 8:57 a.m. and noted that she is aligned with the draft FY26 Budget and Work Plan.

**40th Birthday Bash Update**
Cooksey gave an update on the 40th Birthday Bash.

**Discuss FY 2026 Officers (Gennaria)**
Gennaria shared that some slots for the FY 2026 officers will be a natural progression as follows: (1) Ochoa has agreed to serve as chair; (2) Fiorello has agreed to serve as vice chair; (3) Russell has agreed to serve again as treasurer; (4) he [Gennaria] he will transition to member-at-large; (5) remaining slots would be secretary – suggested Carter-Adams, and another member-at-large should be from the City (6) next step – ask Nickens as Governance Committee chair, to reach out to Arbuthnot and/or Isom as possible member-at-large.

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Cooksey showed commissioner terms (included in the packet for this meeting).

Discussion held regarding Board terms and upcoming FY 2026 officers.

**<u>Adjournment</u>**
Gennaria called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Fiorello, seconded by Russell and unanimously approved to adjourn the August 5, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee at 9:05 a.m.

**Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Carter-Adams**
**Nay – none**
**Abstain - none**

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

ATTACHMENTS
- Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 7/10/25
- Board Term Summary