



**REGIONAL ARTS  
COMMISSION**  
OF ST. LOUIS

314.863.5811  
info@racstl.org  
RACSTL.ORG

**Regional Arts Commission  
Executive Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, September 3, 2025 via ZOOM  
9 a.m.**

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

Chair Gennaria called the September 3, 2025 meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and asked Sutherlin to conduct the Committee roll call.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Jerry Gennaria, chair, Tino Ochoa, vice chair, Sam Fiorello, secretary, John Russell, treasurer, Roz Johnson (8:10a), 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 August 5, 2025 Executive Committee meeting.

**Motion made by Russell, seconded by Ochoa and unanimously carried to approve the Executive Committee minutes - August 5, 2025. Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Carter-Adams**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

Gennaria asked Cooksey to share updates on the following.

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

Cooksey reported the following: (1) the team is responding to a third information request from HJS involving five [5] items, with two already provided and the remaining items requiring support from Anderson Technology – at their hourly rate - to access all relevant documents, including emails and files for the past two years; (2) the process is time-consuming due to the volume of data, including over 16,000 emails in one Outlook account; (3) team continues to work in good faith to fulfill the Sunshine request; (4) mentioned that efforts to have a direct





conversation with HJS representative Judge Dierker were unsuccessful, as he declined to engage further; and (5) the team is preparing both offensive and defensive strategies for potential next steps.

Group discussion held about legal privilege, accounting methods, grantmaking, state statutes and crisis communication/reputation management.

#### **Continued Discussion Regarding Draft FY 2026 Budget & Work Plan**

Cooksey presented the draft of the FY 2026 Budget as follows: (1) highlighted/outlined two [2] budget scenarios based on Explore STL revenue forecasts; (2) emphasized that revenue growth has slowed, and RAC is currently behind forecast; (3) how communication and deposits from Explore St. Louis impact planning during a revenue-critical period; and (4) detailed outcomes which included possibility of pausing new grants and cutting administrative costs.

Group discussion held regarding (1) Sunshine Law; (2) accounting and reporting; (3) grants and programs; (4) Explore STL and (5) need for further discussion at next Finance Committee meeting.

Cooksey then presented the draft of the FY 2026 Work Plan as follows: (1) draft focuses on strengthening organizational foundations, researching new grant approaches, completing the transition of CAT into an independent organization, refining the St. Louis Arts brand, and evaluating data and community engagement efforts; (2) emphasized the importance of focusing on fewer priorities due to reduced cash reserves and volatility, ensuring the organization remains adaptable and strategic; and (3) she plans to present detailed budgets and recommendations to the Finance Committee at its Q3/September meeting to request support for this focused approach.

Sam left the meeting @ 9:58a

Gennaria asked Cooksey to give brief updates on the following.

#### **Update on Special Grant – Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO)**

Cooksey gave an update on the special SLSO \$200K grant as follows: (1) reminded that this special grant was approved to commemorate the reopening of Powell Hall and RAC's 40th anniversary; (2) as an acknowledgement of the grant, SLSO proposed a RAC presenting sponsorship for the Chuck Berry event and series, along with a naming opportunity for one of the elevators in the Burgess family lobby of the new Jack C. Taylor Music Center at Powell Hall; (3) the total contribution is split, with part supporting the event sponsorship and the remainder dedicated to the elevator naming or a plaque; and (4) she emphasized that this is a one-time, historic donation that doesn't affect future grants or ARPA funding.

Cooksey shared that she was presenting the SLSO proposal for feedback from this Committee prior to the upcoming board meeting and noted that she is comfortable with the offer and believes it's a fitting gesture for this historic partnership.



### **Discuss FY 2026 Officers**

Cooksey acknowledged that discussions regarding officers will be necessary, and because this meeting was nearing its conclusion - and to respect time constraints, she will await further input from Nickens, Chair of the Governance Committee.

### **40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash Update**

Cooksey noted that she would give this report at the September 11 full Commission meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Gennaria called for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Russell and unanimously approved to adjourn the September 3, 2025 meeting of the Executive Committee at 10:05 a.m.**

**Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Johnson, Russell, Carter-Adams**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 8/5/25
- Sunshine Request HJS
  - Allocation Graphs
  - Cash Balance Analysis
  - Standing Partnership Crisis Plan Kick-off Meeting Agenda
  - Statute and City Opinion
- FY 2026
  - Budget Outline
  - 2026 - 2030 Workplan
  - Monthly Revenue Comparison 2019 - 2025

### **SLSO**

- Chuck Berry Sponsorship Deck