



**REGIONAL ARTS  
COMMISSION**  
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission  
Executive Committee Minutes  
January 23, 2025 via ZOOM  
8 a.m.**

**Call to Order & Roll Call – Gennaria & Sutherlin**

Gennaria called the January 23 meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Jerry Gennaria, chair, Tino Ochoa, vice chair, Sam Fiorello, secretary, John Russell, treasurer, Rhonda Carter-Adams, Member-at-Large, Roz Johnson, Member-at-Large 8:03a

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**A.I. Notetaker – Carter-Adams**

**Staff Attendees**

Vanessa Cooksey, Ann Haubrich, Angie Peters, Lea Sutherlin

**Others in Attendance**

Dr. Robert Harvey, Consultant

**Approval of October 7, 2024 Minutes**

Gennaria called for the approval of the minutes from the October 7, 2024, Executive Committee meeting.

**Motion made by Fiorello, seconded by Russell, and unanimously carried to approve the October 7, 2024 Executive Committee minutes. Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**A.I. Notetaker – Carter-Adams**

**FY 2025 Work Plan (Cooksey)**

Cooksey presented the FY 2025 Work Plan as follows: (1) compared format to previous work plans; and (2) highlighted in detail the key areas of (a) General and Administrative and (b) Grants and Programs. Cooksey noted that her intention and process for creating the work plan is to ensure that every team member sees their role/work in the plan.





**Motion made by Russell, seconded by Johnson, and unanimously carried to approve the FY 2025 Work Plan.  
Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**A.I. Notetaker – Carter-Adams**

**Financial Update (Cooksey)**

Cooksey provided a financial update by sharing the RAC Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue Comparison Chart/Tracker for 2019-2025, and emphasizing the following key points: (1) year-end totals; (2) two new rows added to the chart/tracker displaying [a] year-over-year percentage changes and [b] comparisons to 2019; (3) the Explore STL forecast; and (4) new leadership at Explore STL – Brad Dean, President & CEO.

**Theory of Change (TOC) Update (Cooksey)**

Cooksey noted the following Theory of Change (TOC) updates: (1) reminded that TOC framework was approved at the December 2024 of the full commission; (2) new body of work as RAC moves toward implementation in 2026; and (3) asked Dr. Harvey to give an update on what TOC work is ahead.

Dr. Harvey emphasized that TOC represents both the "joy and the jewel that currently anchors all of RAC's efforts" and highlighted the following key points: (1) the TOC framework; (2) the operational plan in place; (3) the current focus on the internalization process, with collaboration alongside staff; (4) the external phase, where the TOC begins to gain public traction – and that this phase involves critical stakeholders who have the power to either support or challenge the TOC; and (5) requested this committee's input on the list of external stakeholders, asking them to assess whether the list is comprehensive and identify any missing parties.

Dr. Harvey noted the importance of close collaborations with RAC staff and this Committee, as well as the full Board, to reach a point where board members feel empowered to advocate for RAC's mission independently. Dr. Harvey further emphasized the following: (1) TOC is crucial work; (2) the ability to execute RAC's work plan, which includes raising \$1M and translating RAC's TOC into new partnerships, depends on RAC's collective unified voice; (3) the vision must be communicated with enthusiasm and consistency, as Board support is vital in positioning RAC as a leading thought partner for artistic and cultural advancement in the region; and (4) focus on internalizing RAC's message while also preparing to share it externally.

Johnson inquired if there are additional avenues for fostering community involvement beyond creative initiatives.

Dr. Harvey responded that one approach is to spend time in intimate settings with individuals who can assist with messaging and the work and allowing for the reconsideration of aspects that the community values most.

Russell suggested adding grantees from the County, and Fiorello suggested adding the Regional Business Council (RBC) to the list of external stakeholders - respectively.



Dr. Harvey provided an overview of the operationalization process and noted the following: (1) scheduled to occur between Q2 and Q3; (2) process will include the implementation of RAPID, DARCI, MOCHA, and ARC frameworks to identify the appropriate individuals for decision-making roles; and (3) while thorough, the frameworks are designed to enhance clarity around procedures, improve project management, and streamline future workflows.

Cooksey expressed her enthusiasm for this initiative and noted the following two main reasons: (1) it effectively targets the growth areas highlighted in RAC's employee engagement survey, specifically regarding role clarity and responsibility definition; and (2) it substantially supports her development as a leader.

Dr. Harvey then highlighted the communication strategy – the 'where and how' RAC will tell the story of its next ten years, and that this process will be done along with the communications team.

Cooksey thanked Dr. Harvey for the TOC update, and asked for thoughts, questions, comments, concerns, and anything missing from this Committee representing RAC's governing body.

Johnson remarked that although the initial phase of launching an initiative can be time-consuming, she is thankful to Cooksey and Dr. Harvey for their leadership in steering RAC through this process and encouraging everyone to push their boundaries. She expressed her belief that once momentum builds, progress will accelerate quickly. Additionally, Johnson conveyed her genuine enthusiasm for the future and optimism about the next decade as RAC advances. She acknowledged the challenges that lie ahead but emphasized that the work is rewarding.

#### **Personnel Matter (Discussion)**

#### **CLOSED SESSION/Privileged and Confidential**

Gennaria called for a motion to close the January 23, 2025 regular meeting of the Executive Committee for a closed, privileged personnel matter.

**Motion made by Johnson, seconded by Russell, and unanimously carried to close the January 23, 2025 Executive Committee meeting for a closed, privileged personnel matter. Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**A.I. Notetaker – Carter-Adams**

Gennaria asked Cooksey, Peters, Haubrich and Sutherlin to leave the meeting.

Closed session held regarding personnel matter.

Following closed session, Gennaria contacted Sutherlin to return to the meeting.



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**Adjournment – Closed Session**

Gennaria called for a motion to adjourn the closed session and to reconvene the regular session.

Motion made by Fiorello, seconded by Russell, and unanimously approved to adjourn the closed session and reconvene the regular session of the January 23, 2025 Executive Committee at 9:21 a.m.

**Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**Adjournment – Regular Session**

Gennaria called for a motion to adjourn the regular session.

Motion made by Russell, seconded by Fiorello and unanimously approved to adjourn the regular session of the January 23, 2025 of the Executive Committee at 9:22 a.m.

**Votes were as follows:**

**Yea – Gennaria, Ochoa, Fiorello, Russell, Johnson**

**Nay – none**

**Abstain - none**

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 7, 2024
- FY 2025 Work Plan
- Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue Comparison

