



**REGIONAL ARTS
COMMISSION**
OF ST. LOUIS

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**Regional Arts Commission
Governance Committee Minutes
August 7, 2025 via ZOOM
8:00 a.m.**

Call to Order & Committee Members in Attendance

Chair Nickens called the August 7, 2025, Governance Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and asked Lea to conduct the Committee roll call. Members in attendance: Rudy Nickens, chair, Roz Johnson, Andréa Purnell, David Wilson.

Members in Attendance

Yea – Nickens, Johnson, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain – none

Members Absent

Jerry Gennaria, ex-officio

Staff Attendees

Vanessa Cooksey, Lea Sutherlin

Approval of May 8, 2025 Minutes

Nickens called for motion to approve the minutes from the May 8, 2025, Governance Committee meeting.

Motion made by Purnell, seconded by Johnson, and unanimously carried to approve the May 8, 2025 Governance Committee minutes. Votes were as follows:

Yea – Nickens, Johnson, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Nickens then called for the following reports:

Status of Commissioner Reappointment – STL County

Cooksey shared status of the STL County reappointment as follows: (1) one active reappointment – Commissioner Rudy Nickens; (2) current term ends October 1, 2025; (3) paperwork for reappointment has submitted to STL County Boards and Commissions; and (4) any STL County delays could result in Nickens serving beyond term.





June 2025 Annual Board + Staff Retreat Debrief (All)

Cooksey highlighted the June 2025 Annual Board + Staff Retreat survey, included in packet for this meeting, as follows: (1) total of 25 participants including commissioners and staff; (2) feedback was largely positive, emphasizing the value of the panel of major anchor institutions and increased engagement from leaders and facilitators; (3) participants appreciated the retreat, with some suggestions for minor improvements e.g., more breaks; (4) the survey also addressed strategic planning, where the consensus favored a five-year plan extending to 2030, allowing enough time to account for global uncertainties; (5) regarding fundraising, most respondents preferred a cautious approach with smaller amounts, reflecting the organization's current capacity; and (6) overall, the retreat was viewed as a successful experience, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. Cooksey then welcomed questions and further discussion.

Discussion held as follows: (1) organizational dynamics and consensus that the overall survey feedback was positive; and (2) some comments regarding survey feedback on about foundational processes, which led to suggestions from this Committee for further clarification and open communication.

Topics for Board Governance Development - September 11, 2025 (All)

Discussion held regarding planning topics for the upcoming annual board governance development (September 11) as follows: (1) emphasis on the importance of identifying themes or ideas from the June 2025 retreat to incorporate into the board governance development agenda; (2) this full commission meeting, historically called "Board Governance Training," has shifted to focus more on professional and team development, especially for new commissioners; (3) significance of continuing work on the strategic plan, as a deeper dive into its implementation and next steps; (4) agreed upon Dr. Robert Harvey as facilitator; (5) the need to address the "how" of executing the plan, ensuring clarity and questions are addressed; and (6) Strategic Road Map (designed by Jason Schipkowski), as a guide for preparatory work for participants to facilitate more meaningful discussions during the development session.

Commission Member Pipeline Dashboard

Sutherlin reminded that this Committee requested a comprehensive document for status of RAC commissioners, e.g. past, present, prospective. She reported the following regarding the commission member pipeline dashboard: (1) project is complete although a fluid one; (2) can be found as part of the Online Handbook; and (3) explained how to access the dashboard.

Open Discussion (All)

Discussion held regarding officers for 2026 with the following commissioners agreeing to serve: (1) Tino Ochoa, chair; Sam Fiorello, vice chair; Rhonda Carter-Adams, secretary - but will continue to talk through this role; John Russell, treasurer; Jerry Gennaria, member-at-large; either Robert Arbuthnot or Beverly Isom, member-at-large; (2) agreed to consider Vin Ko [who came off RAC's Board in 2023 with his move from the county to the city] to submit to City Boards and Commissions as Roz Johnson's term ends January 2026; and (3) discretion of incoming chair to appoint committee chairs.

Cooksey then gave a detailed update on RAC's 40th Birthday Bash event – August 28, 2025.



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Roll Call & Adjournment

Nickens called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Purnell, seconded by Wilson and unanimously approved to adjourn the August 7, 2025 Governance Committee meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Votes were as follows:

Yea – Nickens, Johnson, Purnell, Wilson

Nay – none

Abstain - none

Submitted by

L. Sutherlin, Exec. Asst. & Commission Administrator

Attachments

- Governance Committee Minutes, May 8, 2025
- Board Term Summary
- Annual Board + Staff Retreat Survey Results

