

Lowell Cultural Council

Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2026

Attending: Erin Duffey (Administrator); Beth Noel; Bethanne Welch; Jack Traphagan; Timmy Al-Muntafik; Kshitij Karke (KK)

Absent:

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

1. Administrator update — City Council motion-response
 - a. Two councilors filed a motion requesting information on city-funded cultural and public art projects; the City Manager's office issued a motion-response outlining the LCC grant cycle and public art permitting process. Erin contributed but was not the primary author.
 - b. Informational only — no change to LCC process or direct granting.
 - c. Erin and Beth Noel to attend the City Council meeting immediately following this meeting.
2. Local Guidelines for 2027 — discussion and submission to Mass Cultural Council
 - a. Council reviewed the FY27 guidelines line by line; edits made live. Must be in place at MCC by Sept 1; LCC submission deadline is the 28th; target submission tonight or tomorrow (Erin out of office starting Thursday).
 - b. Priority language (from citywide survey) confirmed; each voting member weighs survey results. Interest areas: Music Performances, Historical & Cultural, Youth Programming.
 - c. Removed all reimbursement language — LCC now disburses grants directly; receipts no longer required.
 - d. Project window set to Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2027; application deadline 11:59 PM, Oct 15.
 - e. Retained two-application limit; no funding for semester-long school residencies (referred to MCC STARS Residencies).
 - f. Grant statistics updated to match City submission: 2026 — over \$129,000 awarded to 33 grants, \$375–\$10,000.
 - g. Backup-plan requirements (gatherings over 50 or outdoor events) changed from 'strongly encouraged' to required; applicants must provide a statement.
 - h. Removed dead MCC video link; added a line directing applicant questions to the council email by 9:00 AM on Oct 15.
 - i. Reformatted the five scoring areas (quality, community benefit, budget, planning, leadership) as a bulleted list to avoid implying rank.
 - j. Review timeline: questions to applicants by Oct 27 (October meeting); responses due Nov 4.
3. Council Initiated Program for 2026 — Lowell Artisan Market
 - a. Tabled to next meeting, potentially Spring 2027
4. Planning for the grantee reception

- a. The September council meeting (Tuesday, September 22) will be moved up to 5:30 PM and immediately followed by the grantee reception at 6:30 PM.
 - b. Meeting and reception to be 100% in-person; no Zoom option.
 - c. Erin to send the meeting invite; reception poster (Canva) to be updated with new dates.
- 5. Review of reimbursement requests
 - a. Reimbursement requests reviewed and signed by those present in person.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

END