



Methuen Cultural Council 2026

Alejandro Baez - Vice Chair
Ellen Baranowski - Chair
Olivia Chung - Member
Taana Latu -Member
Lesly Melendez - Member
Carey Smith- Member
Catherine Zembruski – Member

Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Location: Nevins Memorial Library; *Study Room*

1 **Call to Order/Roll Call/Vote to Accept Agenda/Public Participation**

Meeting commenced at 6:32 PM. Present: Alejandro Baez, Ellen Baranowski, Olivia Chung, Taana Latu, Carey Smith, Catherine Zembruski. Absent: Lesly Melendez. No public participation. Motion to accept agenda: Alejandro. Second: Catherine. Vote: 6 yes, 1 absent. Agenda accepted.

2 **Reading and Approval of Minutes-** January 12, 2026 meeting

Motion to accept minutes: Carey. Second: Olivia. Vote: 6 yes, 1 absent. Minutes accepted.

3 **Financial Report-** Update

Ellen reported on the FY26 grants. Twelve (12) were paid out on January 29th. Nine (9) checks will be cut in the next payroll with payments to be mailed from city hall on February 19th. Five (5) grant recipients have not submitted their paperwork yet, and their grants are outstanding. Each grant recipient has been notified of his/her status via email and frequent email reminders to complete the paperwork. One grantee completed the project and sent a final report without complying with our request for activity date(s) so that one of us might have attended.

4 **Unfinished Council Business**

-Planning for our council sponsored event at MMMH

Ellen shared news from communications with trustees from the Music Hall. We have been given the date of March 28th for our reception event. The council decided on 1:00-3:00 PM. We also discussed an email from MA Cultural Council “FY26 Council Program Flag”; and how our event can meet the parameters of expectations for reimbursement through council-sponsored programming funds.

-Follow-up on 2026 grants

(See notes in #3)

-Outreach to share our “news”

Alejandro shared with the group an outline that he worked on to strengthen our work with the community. He will share it with members via email to be discussed at the March meeting

(addendum to these minutes). It is a great jumping off point for a subcommittee and for the larger body to steer our outreach.

*An “Engagement/Outreach Subcommittee” was named (Alejandro, Olivia, and Taana) with Alejandro chairing the new committee. This group will work on strengthening our work in the community, and will become part of our future agendas for updates. Additionally, the group will help with some of our electronic advertising to make it more eye-catching and user-friendly. Discussion included a renewed focus on teaming with the city in projects that center around arts, sciences and culture. **E/O Action Step: The E/O Subcommittee will create an invitation to our Methuen Cultural Council Grant Recipient Recognition Event** so that we might send it to grantees at the beginning of March.*

5 New Council Business-

-Nominations/vote for Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer

Ellen made a motion to nominate Alejandro for Vice-Chair of the Methuen Cultural Council.

Second: Taana. Vote: 6 yes, 1 absent. Alejandro accepted the position. No nominations were heard for Secretary or Treasurer.

-Meeting with Mayor Beauregard 01/27

Ellen talked about the meeting with Mayor Beauregard and team to discuss some summer options for the town. Those notes were shared with the group. The MCC has been asked to sponsor aspects of three (3) of the planned activities. A vote was taken to agree to the requests for funds/support for the June, August and September dates. We will commit to \$1500 each (total of \$4500). Motion: Alejandro. Second: Taana. Vote: 6 yes, 1 absent. Motion passed.

6 Announcements/Miscellaneous-

-2 new event dates one change

Dates and venues that have been shared for projects were announced.

-banner update

Discussion on an MCC banner took place with Staples price information shared. It was agreed that we would order a 2x6 banner in Scrim Vinyl with 6 grommets. The price will be about \$75. The banner will be designed by a member of our new E/O Subcommittee member, Taana.

E/O Action Step: We will have the banner available for the March Reception.

Discussion on the St. Patrick's Day Parade. The MCC will not participate.

The E/O Subcommittee wants a group photo at the March meeting.

A software design program with a one-year subscription will be purchased.

7 Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Olivia. Second: Taana. Vote: 6 yes, 1 absent. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: March 9, 2026

Anyone needing an access accommodation to participate in City of Methuen programs or services, please contact Sandy Almonte, ADA/DEI Coordinator at 978-382-2123 or salmonte@ci.methuen.ma.us at least two weeks in advance, or two business days before a board or commission meeting. This notice is available in alternate formats upon request.

A PROPOSAL FOR INCREASING ENGAGEMENT IN THE CULTURAL COUNCIL

Purpose:

The purpose of this proposal is to use all possible resources and opportunities to increase the visibility, effectiveness, and community engagement of the Methuen Cultural Council. Through the use of social media, outreach, testimonials, events, and collaboration with city and private actors.

Definitions:

“Engagement”: as referred in this document is the process of relationship building with the community measured through metrics such as:

- A. Social media engagement: Likes, comments, shares etc
- B. Amount of people at events
- C. Amount of applications for grants
- D. And other metrics added by the council

“Testimonials”: as referred in this document are grant recipients creating short videos addressing the impact of the work of the Methuen Cultural Council.

“Content”: as referred in this document as social media materials for publication

PART 1 SOCIAL MEDIA:

Action steps:

1. Consolidate all social media accounts (FB, Insta, etc)
2. Start asking for grant recipients social media handles (consent based strategy)
3. Contact past recipients for testimonials
4. MCC members can volunteer to create “content” (ex: a “how to apply for a grant video”)
5. Achieve the collaboration of the Mayor’s office and City Council for sharing MCC content (ex: delegated to Chair and Vice Chair)

PART 2 OUTREACH:

Action Steps:

1. Yearly city wide art contest (Youth division and Adult division) *discussion (Council programming)
2. Achieve collaboration between MCC, past recipients, and our schools through volunteering during after-school clubs etc
3. Attendance during recipient’s showcases

PART 3 COLLABORATION:

1. Work with the department of community development and the Methuen Business Alliance to create a survey for business owners. The goal is to see what business owners want to see when it comes to culture in our city (murals, events, etc)
2. Meet with the school department and the MYCC to see how we can collaborate further with our youth
3. Identify non-profits operating in the city willing to oversee public-private projects (MCC serves as intermediators)