



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

ARTS COUNCIL

JAKE WILSON

MAYOR

Somerville Arts Council Board Meeting Minutes Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, July 8, 2026 | 6:30 pm

In attendance: Heather Balchunas, Joe Burgio, Ada Ren-Mitchell, Emily Beattie, Ben Cuba, Christine Hayes, Rachel Strutt, Michael Rosenberg

Public attendees: Jenn Harrington, Mark Levy

1. Approve minutes. (1 min)
2. Community Check-In (10 min)
 - a. BC: multiple music performances, around Cambridge and Somerville
 - b. Board attended galleries, music festivals; board and staff attended Art Stays Here Opening at Som Museum; staff attended ribbon cutting at Central Street Studios
3. Status of Board Recruitment (5 min)
 - a. RS: Board are invited to review submissions, final meeting, not part of direct interview. But there is potential for a “meet and greet” prior to interview process. Brenna will be in touch with board.
4. Share Mayor's Listening Tour past events and future plans (10 min)
 - a. Mayor enjoyed both Literature meeting and Multicultural programming meetings and said there's more listening to do. Next up: dance and theater (hopefully August); visual art/studio buildings in Sept.
 - b. We're proposing arts & culture town hall, late August or early September mayor to present back thoughts about listening tours, promote LCC grant



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- c. Common themes on Lit and Multi-cultural “stops”: need for more space; need for workforce development
5. Discuss Board-generated interview questions for SAC Director role (5 min): board needs to come up with two questions to be added to in-person interviews
6. Recap of Town Art Forum and Perception of Somerville Arts Council. (10 min)
 - a. At start of meeting it was presented that SAC is “leaderless” right now. SAC staff points out this is inaccurate. RS is interim director; entire staff doing great job and leading. HB asks board to help convey this within community. RS: Goal of SAC staff is to convey stability; create a strong foundation for incoming director. Staff working with COMS to launch campaign to better tell current SAC story
 - b. Board and staff agreed its always good to have a forum where people can voice concerns/come together
7. Update: Budget night Information (5 min)
 - a. Questions from Councilors: Lack of clarity that SAC is part of a multi-departmental effort with regards to the Armory and ArtFarm
8. Check-In: Art Beat Festival Status (10 min)
 - a. Somerville Theatre booking conflict for dance performance, possible move to Crystal Ballroom
 - b. Sarah Beckmann will lead first ever section for writers and poets
 - c. Board to table at ArtBeat and promote LCC grant. Table visuals need to be clear that it is SAC, to be placed next to SAC informational volunteer table. Handouts to be created, potentially with work session dates.
9. Update: Armory Request for Proposals (5 min)
 - a. Announcements to be made next week. PR coming; this is a major milestone.



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10. Planning: Coverage for LCC panels & upcoming panel date selection in August (5 min)

- a. Plans for making sure new board members get support
- b. EB will review past panel dates and coordinate new dates