

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2026

4:30pm

City Hall, Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA 98660

Commissioners Present:

Lewis, Harris, Mendoza, Ford, Percival, Tan, Richardson, Gaspar

Commissioners Absent:

None

Item 1: Call to Order

President Lewis called the May 14, 2026, meeting of the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission to order at 4:33p.m. The Commission met in the main hall at the City Hall Aspen Room and via Microsoft Teams.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Percival, seconded by Richardson, and approved unanimously to adopt the minutes from April 9, 2026.

Item 3: Action Items

The application review subcommittee submitted candidates for Commission recommendations to City Council:

- Carmen Garcia Marshall
- Sam Garrison
- Tracy Fortmann
- Shannon Stewart

Harris shared that the review subcommittee reviewed applications based on skills and representations currently on the commission.

Members

Ruby Lewis
President

Brad Richardson
Vice President

Michelle Tan
Rebekah Percival
Ricky Gaspar
Rosalinda Mendoza
Russell Ford, CCAC
Shon-Lueiss Harris

**Parks, Recreation and
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It was recommended that we keep in touch with the recommended applicant pool even if they are not appointed for this vacancy. It was suggested that we include a memo to Boards & Commissions office for applicants so share what aspects or programs of the commission's work they are the most passionate about.

Action: Richardson held a motion to approve the recommended slate of candidates to go forward to the City Council board recruitment subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ford and unanimously approved.

Item 4: Workshop

a. Inspire Vancouver School Grants

Donovan, Carinn Ormson (Fine and Performing Arts Specialist, ESD), and Traci Young (Curriculum Specialist, VSD) updated the commission on the progress of the Inspire Vancouver School Grant program.

School district funding for 2026-2027:

- A public-school access program is required under state law
- The adopted Inspire Vancouver policy sets a minimum of 10% to be distributed equally to Evergreen and Vancouver School Districts
- Funds help cover field trip transportation and admission costs
- These resources supplement existing programs and expand access for all students
- Additional Opportunities for Eligible nonprofit organizations offering in-school programming for the 2027 school year

Elementary Field Trips

- Each class can choose 3 trips per year
- Each grade has an approved list to select from
- Reimbursement Process
- Funding sustains existing field trips

Secondary Field Trips

- Trip options available for each category: Culture, Heritage, Science, Art
- Local field trips prioritized
- District competitions and festival funding
- Individual Teacher Application process

Next Steps:

- Grant funding available for in-school programming starting in 2027
- Create roster for qualified nonprofits
- Create roster for teaching artists and performers
- Coordinate informational workshops for in-school programming

The floor was opened for discussion and questions among commissioners. Lewis asked how to ensure field trips will be inclusive of BIPOC activities and ensure that students aren't separated or excluded based on identity. Young shared that students are grouped by neighborhood and grades and not separated by identity. Culture and heritage experiences will be provided, as the school districts value inclusion.

Richardson asked how many categories each grade level can select, and how we can focus on locally based experiences that are based in Culture, Arts, and Heritage, as Science has a lot of designated funding across the river. Ormson confirmed that there are multiple choices for each category for each grade level with teacher

buy-in. The intent is to ensure that each school has opportunities to grow within our local area. An open discussion was held regarding providing local options in each category to support the local economy.

Tan echoed concerns about distribution between the different genres based on different limitations. It was recommended that the task force makes a special effort to emphasize less-established institutions and categories that would bring more balanced infrastructural opportunities. Commissioners discussed considerations for assessing organization capacity and partnership for developing student experiences.

b. Grant Process Workgroup Updates

Donovan (Cultural Services Manager) and Hull (Grants Coordinator, Inspire Vancouver) gave an overview of the grant process development.

The Grant Process Workgroup represents organizations of different sizes and budgets. Members include Rose Mendoza, Rebekah Percival, Linda Reid, Jenny Thompson, and Erica Schwenneker. The workgroup tasks are to develop program performance measures, grant guidelines, grant applications and reports, the application score card, and review process.

Workgroup guidance:

- Grantmaking is a relationship
- Simplify applications and reports
- Use plain language
- Communicate in person and over the phone
- Provide definitions and examples

During the grant process, applicants will choose their own contract deliverables and goals.

1. Applicants will suggest their own contract deliverables, goals, and budget
2. Deliverables, goals and budget will become the contract scope of the work
3. Grantees receive funding upfront, after the contract is signed
4. Progress tracked with programming summary chart, expenditure chart, and reports each quarter

Applications will also ask about mission, public benefit, partnerships, community engagement, work to reduce barriers to access, and organization capacity.

The score card will be organized into two parts, with customizable bonus points:

- Alignment Section
 - Public benefit
 - Proposal feasibility
 - Community engagement and trust
 - Equitable access
 - Sustainable operations and management
- Impact Section (examples)
 - Community needs
 - Youth focus
 - Priority audience
 - Geographic diversity on the equity index map

Next steps include the approval of the score card, grant guidelines, and approval of the review committee process.

Richardson suggested including median incomes in the equity index map as a factor, including levels of school funding in specific areas.

Hull will integrate commissioner feedback and bring back a final draft of the scorecard and a preview of grant guidelines at the next commission meeting.

c. Inspire Vancouver Outreach Update

The first wave of community outreach for Inspire Vancouver is off to a strong start. Right now, our primary focus is connecting with people and organizations who are eligible to apply for grants. We want to make sure they have enough time to learn about the program and begin considering grant opportunities before the applications open later this summer.

We are using social media and email to encourage people to follow Inspire Vancouver social media, visit the website, join the mailing list and attend one of our community information sessions. There have been three information sessions so far, with four more scheduled in May and June. We have an updated flyer available for you to see the dates, times and locations of those sessions.

We've welcomed between 10-25 people each time. The information session includes a short presentation and Q&A. After that, staff and ambassadors stick around to meet people and answer any additional questions they may have related to their specific situation.

We've been receiving positive feedback from the sessions so far, and people who have attended are helping spread the word about our remaining sessions through their networks.

There is a lot of learning happening both ways at these information sessions. We are there to educate people about the program, but we are also learning a lot from the questions community members are asking. This real-time feedback has already identified new information to add to the website and helped us recognize areas where more research is needed before the grant applications open.

Commissioner Lewis was thanked for leading one of the sessions already. She will be leading two more in June. Some of our other Inspire Vancouver ambassadors will be leading the remaining May sessions. Commissioners are encouraged to attend any of the sessions. It's a great way to support this work and connect with the people and organizations that are interested in the program.

We're looking forward to having Inspire Vancouver staff on board soon to help create the outreach plan for the summer and fall. We know that the primary focus during that period will be to encourage people to apply and promote supporting services and events like grant workshops. After the grants are awarded in the fall, the outreach strategy will broaden to include the whole community, as we start promoting all the exciting new arts, culture, heritage and science experiences that Inspire Vancouver is helping make possible in Vancouver.

Here's how commissioners can help with community engagement in May and June:

- Complete the ambassador training and plan presentations with your networks
- Attend scheduled information sessions to connect with the community
- Visit inspirevancouver.org to join the email list and encourage others to do the same

- Follow Inspire Vancouver on Instagram and LinkedIn and share our posts

Item 4: Community Forum

None presented.

Item 5: Commission and Staff Reports

a. Cultural Services Manager

Donovan gave the following updates:

- In June, commissioners will receive updates on VAMF, including volunteer opportunities.
- Sharon Svec, a local gallery curator, is offering workshops at the Arts Hub to help vendors understand how to run booths at the park on May 14, 15, 20, and 23.
- You are invited to the Arts Hub to experience the sculpture and watercolor exhibits in the gallery.

b. Commission President

President Lewis had no updates at this time.

c. Clark County Arts Commission

Ford gave the following updates on CCAC:

- Recent discussions have been centered around Poet Laureate selection, events, lifetime achievements, and art talks.
- Celebration for sculpture event at the Arts Hub happened on May 1st, featuring 3 arts educators to give art talks.
- James Lee Hanson, Lifetime Achievement Award winner – his spouse will present on sculptures.

Item 6: Open Discussion and New Business

None presented.

Item 7: Next Meeting – June 11, 2026

Donovan gave a brief summary of agenda items planned for the June meeting.

Item 8: Between Now & Then

Commissioners and Staff shared any known events:

- Staff will be sending commissioners calendar invitations for the work group.
- Metropolitan Performing Arts –
 - o Footloose, May 8-26 at the Magenta Theater
 - o Broadway Minis: The Very Hungry Caterpillar, May 30
 - o Broadway Jr: Beauty and the Beast, June 6-7
- Black History Month Fashion Show, May 23 at 10am – 4:30pm
- The performing arts stakeholders group will be reconvening on 5/21.
- VAMF – call for artists is still open until the end of June.
- Next week the museum is having their History on Tap program in Ridgefield, featuring Beth Harrington next Thursday at the Old Liberty Theater.

This meeting adjourned at 6:22pm.