



WARREN CULTURAL COMMISSION

CITY OF WARREN, MICHIGAN

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 – 5:16 P.M.

WARREN COMMUNITY CENTER – CONFERENCE ROOM “B” (UPSTAIRS)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Cutter at 5:16 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

- **Members Present:** Jeff Cutter, Shima Begum, Jon Oaks, Carl Weckerle, Rebecca Zainos
- **Members Absent:** Paula Wild (excused)
- **Guests:** Candice Mayer, City Attorney

A motion was made by Jeff Cutter to excuse the absence of Paula Wild. Supported by Jon Oaks.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

A quorum was established.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Rebecca Zainos, supported by Carl Weckerle, to accept the agenda of the Warren Cultural Commission Meeting of September 15, 2025.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

IV. SECRETARY’S REPORT

A. June 16, 2025 Minutes

- The Commission reviewed the June 16, 2025 minutes prepared. Several corrections were noted, including name spellings and clarity regarding budget motions and the election of officers.
- City Attorney Candice Mayer advised that approval of the June minutes be tabled to allow time for Commissioners to submit corrections and for the Secretary to prepare a consolidated, corrected version.

A motion was made by Carl Weckerle, supported by Rebecca Zainos, to table approval of the June 16, 2025 minutes until the next meeting to allow for revisions.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

Carl will incorporate edits and circulate a revised version prior to the next meeting.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT

Chairman Cutter presented the financial reports for 2024–2025 and 2025–2026.

A. 2024–2025 Expenditures

- The Commission reviewed the final expenditures for fiscal year 2024–2025.
- The Commission noted remaining balances including office supplies and modest balances in both summer and winter program lines, resulting in an overall year-end balance of approximately \$6,234 returned to the General Fund.

A motion was made by Jon Oaks, supported by Carl Weckerle, to receive and file the 2024–2025 expenditures report.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

B. 2025–2026 Budget

- The Commission reviewed the 2025–2026 budget spreadsheet and discussed current and planned expenditures for summer concerts and winter programming.
- It was noted that several planned special concerts later in the fiscal year (including the Warren Symphony and Warren Civic Theatre events) have approved purchase orders but have not yet been paid, so those amounts should not be reflected as “disbursed” until after performances occur.
- After removing those future expenditures from the “disbursed” total and confirming contracted services (lighting, sound, staging) and summer concert payments, the Commission confirmed a revised disbursed amount and a remaining balance under the approved total budget of \$44,100.

A motion was made by Carl Weckerle, supported by Jon Oaks, to approve the 2025–2026 budget as presented, with corrections to the disbursed amount for the summer programs line to exclude not-yet-performed special concerts.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Thomas H. Carey Concerts at the Square

- Jon Oaks reported that total attendance for the 2025 summer concert series was approximately 1,386, compared to 958 in 2024.
- The Commission noted that although there was one additional concert in 2024, attendance in 2025 was significantly higher, with tribute bands (e.g., Fire Lake) drawing particularly strong crowds (approximately 450 attendees).
- Members discussed:
 - Continuing to book more tribute bands to capitalize on audience interest.
 - Exploring a possible “marching band night” as a new concept.
 - Challenges with weather (including extreme heat and poor air quality) and the need for clear communication when concerts must be moved indoors.
 - The possibility of tents to provide shade and shelter, which could improve audience comfort and attendance.
 - Working more closely with the City’s Communications Department (e.g., potential hotline and social media updates) to notify the public by a set time (such as 5:00 p.m.) if a concert is moved or canceled.

B. Juneteenth

- The Commission reflected on the 2025 Juneteenth event, which the Commission supported by funding musical performances and poets.
- Members noted that:
 - The event featured strong performers and a meaningful mix of music and poetry.
 - Attendance appeared lower than desired relative to the Commission’s investment (over \$12,000).
 - Extreme heat and timing challenges limited promotion and may have reduced turnout.
- The Commission discussed:
 - Reviewing the level of financial support for Juneteenth in relation to other events funded by the Commission.
 - Exploring additional or alternative opportunities to support local poets year-round (such as a Poet Laureate concept) and better leverage the artists who participated in Juneteenth.
 - Coordinating with the City Council liaison and the Mayor’s Office regarding community feedback and expectations around Commission sponsorship of the musical portion of the event.

No formal action was taken; this item will continue to inform future planning.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Yearly Calendar and Meeting Schedule

- The Commission reviewed a proposed yearly calendar to meet quarterly, with special meetings scheduled as needed:
 - September 15, 2025
 - December 1, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
 - April 20, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
 - June 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
- City Attorney Candice Mayer advised that the current City ordinance and Commission bylaws specify monthly meetings and would need to be amended to reflect a quarterly schedule. She will:
 - Prepare draft revisions to the ordinance to specify quarterly meetings “and as often as may be deemed necessary by the Chairperson.”
 - Prepare corresponding updates to the Commission’s bylaws.
 - Distribute drafts to Commissioners prior to the next meeting for review and potential adoption.
- Commissioners discussed the need for the ordinance and bylaws to accurately reflect current practice and provide flexibility for special meetings.

A motion was made by Jon Oaks, supported by Carl Weckerle, to change the time of the already-scheduled 2025–2026 meetings (December 1, 2025; April 20, 2026; June 15, 2026) and all future regular meetings of the Warren Cultural Commission to 6:00 p.m.

- Yes: All
- No: None
- Motion Carried.

City staff will update and submit the revised calendar to the City Clerk’s Office.

B. Reappointment – Paula Wild

- Chairman Cutter reported that Commissioner Paula Wild is still a member of the Commission but has not yet completed her reappointment meeting with the Mayor.
- Her reappointment remains pending; this item is on hold until her appointment with the Mayor is scheduled and completed.

C. Commission Vacancies

- There are currently three vacancies on the Commission due to the departures of:
 - Elaine DePalma
 - Keri Pruse
 - Monica Papasian
- The Commission discussed recruitment strategies and confirmed that:
 - Application forms for City boards and commissions are available on the City’s website.
 - Prospective members must apply and be appointed by the Mayor.
- Commissioners were encouraged to identify and encourage potential candidates (e.g., individuals active in the arts community, such as local band boosters).

D. Special Concerts and Sponsored Events

The Commission reviewed upcoming special concerts and sponsored events:

1. October 2, 2025 – Stillwell Manor 50th Anniversary
 - a. Jazz trio performance for the 50th anniversary of Stillwell Manor.
 - b. Commission members discussed that this event is being coordinated in partnership with other City efforts and is not a direct concert expenditure line item for the Cultural Commission.
2. October 26, 2025 – Two Music Events
 - a. Warren Symphony at Warren Woods Middle School (Halloween-themed event).
 - b. Concert band performance at Lincoln High School (Van Dyke Community Auditorium).
 - c. Both events are scheduled for the same date; scheduling conflicts make rescheduling difficult, and both groups are proceeding as planned. The Commission acknowledged the overlap and will monitor attendance and logistics.
3. December 21, 2025 – Warren Civic Theatre, “Little Women” at Owen Jax
 - a. The Commission is sponsoring a performance of Little Women by Warren Civic Theatre at the Warren Community Center (Owen Jax).
 - b. Commissioners discussed what “sponsoring” entails (e.g., offsetting production costs, providing reduced or complimentary tickets) and requested clarification on ticketing arrangements.
 - c. Chairman Cutter will follow up with Warren Civic Theatre to determine whether any complimentary or discounted tickets can be made available to Commission members and the public as part of the sponsorship.

No formal motions were made under this item.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Commission discussed the importance of filling vacancies and encouraged members to share information about the Cultural Commission with community members who may be interested in serving.
- Commissioners briefly discussed the Mayor’s State of the City event. The Commission had a table at both the State of the City and a budget presentation the previous year. Chairman Cutter has not yet received information about whether the Cultural Commission will be asked to host a table this year; he will share details if such a request is made.
- Next Cultural Commission Meeting: Monday, December 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., location within the Warren Community Center to be determined.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Jon Oaks, supported by Shima Begum, to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

- Yes: All
- No: None

- Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Weckerle, Secretary
Warren Cultural Commission