The Oakland Observer @Oak_Observer

Jun 24 · 46 tweets

Now on to Life Enrichment...cancellation last time, so there was no Head Start oral report, & in meantime, HS director Cooppan was hired back, her superior Latonda Simmons was fired just ahead of mtg. OO will focus reporting on this, Cultural Affairs report & Extended Stay report

The Extended Stay report has been continued over several months to address issues to advocates and questions about how well the project is working to house displaced homeless residents.

Won't spend too much time on the OFCY fund report

It would be impossible for a member of the public to keep up with even half the items that come through committees. The public hears about these issues usually only when a CM has reached out to reporters about it; they don't follow the meetings.

We're starting with the Cultural Affairs report. There's over 20 speakers on this, and I am pretty sure that the focus is going to be the freezing of the Cultural Affairs Manager in budget.

		Committee	Committee
5	Subject: FY 2024-25 Informational Report On The Operations Of Oakland's Cultural Affairs Division From: Economic And Workforce Development Department Recommendation: Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Cultural Affairs Division On The Status Of Its Fiscal Year 2024-25 Operations 25-0733		
	Sponsors:	Economic & Workforce Development Department	
	Attachments:	View Report	
		Legislative History	
	5/15/25	*Rules & Legislation Committee	Scheduled to the *Life Enrichment Committee
	5/29/25	*Rules & Legislation Committee	* Withdrawn and Rescheduled to the *Life Enrichment Committee

Some highlights in the report

Table 1: FY 2024-25 Funding Allocations

FY 2024-25 Financial Assistance Category	Number of Organizations Supported	Amount of Financial Support	Amount Per Organization
Cultural Organization Assistance (Gen Op)	25	$162,500	$6,500
Neighborhood Voices for Festivals	18	$25,500	Up to $1,416 (permit subsidy)
TOTAL	**43**	**$188,000**	

Table 2: FY 2023-24 Cultural Funding Program Grant Statistics

FY 2023-24 Funding Category	No. of Applications Received	Total Awards	% of Applications Awarded	Average Award Amount	Amount Awarded
Cultural Organizational Assistance (General Operating)	31	27	87%	$30,000.00	$810,000.00
Neighborhood Voices for Festivals	58	33	57%	$15,588.24	$517,000.00
Networks of Care: Teaching Artist Grants	36	15	42%	$10,000.00	$150,000.00
GRANTMAKING TOTAL	**125**	**75**	**62%**	**$18,529.41**	**$1,477,000.00**

Table 3: FY 2023-24 Cultural Funding Program Impact Statistics

FY 2023-24 Funding Category	Total number of City-funded events/activities	Number of participants and audience members engaged through these events/activities.	Number of Artists Employed
Cultural Organizational Assistance (General Operating)	18,907	271,771	1,524
Neighborhood Voices for Festivals	40	215,866	1,007
Totals	**18,947**	**523,637**	**2,531**

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Oakland's Public Art Program (PAP) provides oversight and guidance on best practices for public art in the city and commissions original works of art for public spaces in Oakland. Informed by the Oakland Cultural Plan and the Public Art Plan, the Public Art Program:

- Creates opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the cultural diversity of Oakland
- Enriches the City's visual environment
- Integrates the creative thinking of artists into our deeply rooted neighborhoods and new construction public improvement projects
- Provides professional development and career opportunities for emerging and established professional artists
- Fosters financial investment in Oakland's economy through creative place keeping
- Contributes to safe, healthy, and vibrant communities

Public Art Program staff act as program and collections managers, community liaisons, project delivery managers, facilitators and artist advocates for projects on public property (e.g. City/Caltrans/BART) and Oakland Municipal Code (OMC)-mandated Public Art Projects for Private Property, with guidance and support from the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC).

Key program oversight responsibilities include:

- City Managed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Projects: Established in 1989, the City adopted Ordinance No. 11086 C.M.S. (amended in 2019: Ordinance No. 13562 C.M.S.), authorizing the allocation of 1.5% of municipal capital improvement project (CIP) costs to commission, acquire, and facilitate private and community investment in public art for public spaces.
- Public Art for Private Development Projects: The OMC Chapter 15.78, amended in 2014 to adopt Chapter 15.78, sets public art requirements of 0.5% of residential or 1% of nonresidential private development costs for public art (Ordinance No. 13491 C.M.S.). Staff provide guidance, facilitate artist opportunities, community engagement, and final compliance. Staff also facilitate review when required by the PAAC (see below).
- Civic Art Collection Records and Maintenance: Monitoring and assessing City commissioned permanent artworks, when funds are available. Staff facilitate and provide oversight of necessary maintenance in coordination with the respective departments and Public Works staff. The permanent artwork funded by the City requires investment in documentation, education, and maintenance to sustain the City's capital investments and cultural assets.
- Temporary/Permanent City-Funded Artist and Community Initiated Projects: Commissioned as funding becomes available; facilitated in collaboration with other departments and reviewed for completeness and feasibility with City requirements.
- Artists' Professional Development and Workshops: Provided by City staff to local artists for new CIP opportunities, and through partnerships with local organizational stakeholders and regional trainings with public art programs in nearby cities.
- Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC): Staff recruit and facilitate committee appointments; prepare agendas, minutes, staff reports; and facilitate presentations for

FY 2024-25 Public Art Activities

- **Public Art Prequalified Public Artist Roster:** In Summer 2024, PAP staff launched a call for artists for a prequalified artist roster for upcoming City commissions. Designed to reduce barriers to participation and through proactive outreach to local libraries, community centers, and arts organizations, as well as through social media outlets frequented by local artists, the call received a record 418 applications and resulted in a prequalified public artist roster for upcoming projects, including the 78 Oakland artists who completed the 2023 Cultural Strategist-in-Government workshops.

- Public Art Projects Plan**:** Over the course of the year, staff and the PAAC developed a plan identifying upcoming CIP projects, Contracting Assistance, and Civic Arts Collections priorities for presentation to and adoption by the City Council in May 2025.

- **CIP Program:** PAP staff work with colleagues in Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (ORPYD), Oakland Public Works (OPW), and the Department of Transportation (Oak DOT) and PAAC to implement plans for city-funded capital improvement projects across Oakland.
    - Mosswood Community Center: Conducted community-informed artist recruitment process and initiated community engagement for design development with Oakland artist Adia Millett.
    - DeFremery Park Snack Shack: Initiated community-informed artist selection process for new murals in collaboration with Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (OPRYD) and Oakland Public Works (OPW) facilities staff.
    - Planning initiated for the following projects, in alignment with the Public Art Plan:
        - Lincoln Recreation Center
        - Estuary Park Project
        - 14th Street Streetscape Project
        - 7th Street Connector Project
        - Bancroft Avenue Streetscape Project
        - Fire Station 29
    - Collections Management and Maintenance: Working with colleagues in EWDD Business Development (BD), OPW, Oak DOT, community stakeholders, and commissioned artists, staff initiated the development of proposals for removal, repair and/or replacement of various artworks in the collection, including the Uptown BART Gateway project, the Broadway Underpass project, and the Rockridge Temescal project.
- **Public Art for Private Development:** Provided support and guidance on artist selection, staff, and PAAC project review and code compliance for over sixteen residential and commercial developments spanning two to five years from inception

The Manager position is currently considered vacant, but is actually filled by an ELDE. Per Brown's comments at last council meeting, this ELDE role would sunset in November, leaving the position truly vacant

Table 4: Cultural Affairs Division Staffing

Position	Budgeted	Filled	Vacant
Manager	1	0*	1
Program Analyst III (Public Art)	1	1	0
Program Analyst III (Cultural Funding Program)	1	1	0
Program Analyst II (Public Art)	1	1	0
Program Analyst II (Cultural Funding Program)	1	1	0
Total	5	4	1

* Position is currently filled by an Exempt Limited Duration Employee (ELDE).

Fife says in her district the Black Arts Movement needs too be more activated, noting that the manager position needs to be maintained for the special attention it brings.

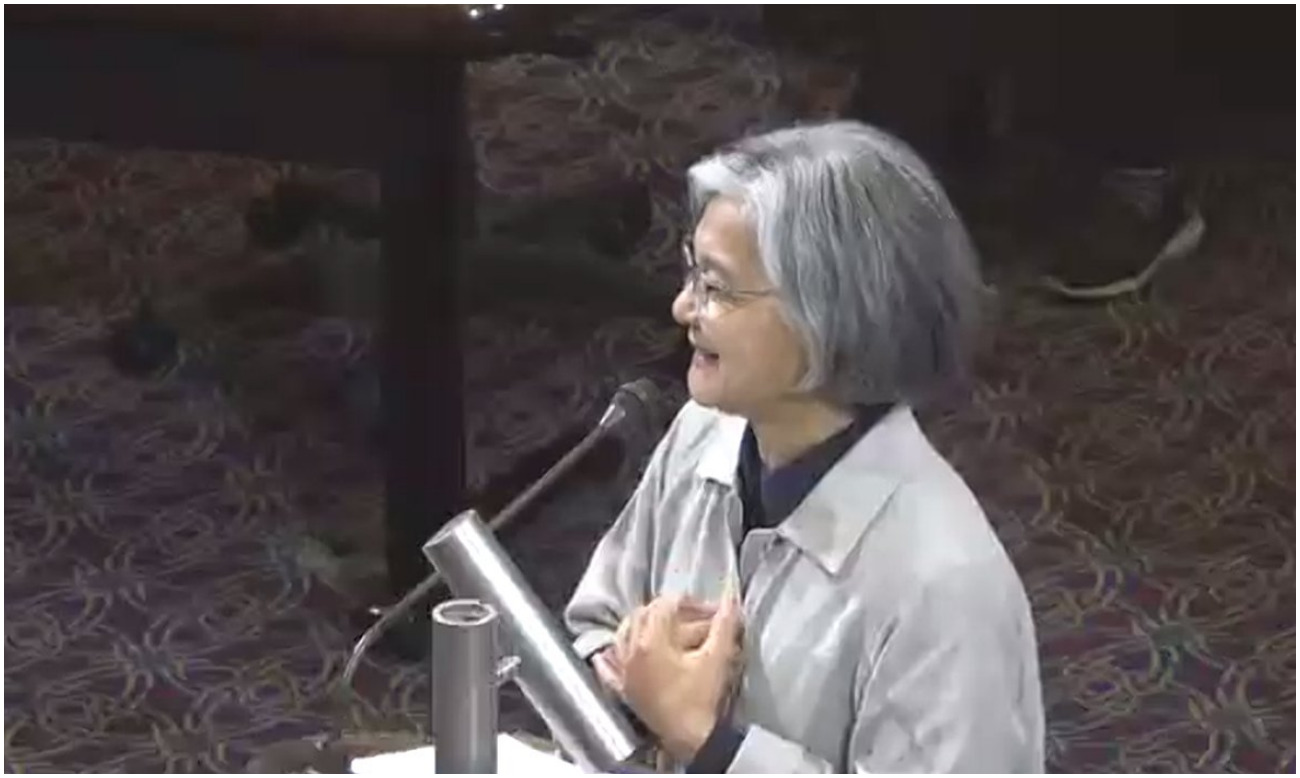
Liz Luke ED of Living Jazz, statewide board California for Arts and Arts Advocates, 6 year board member of Grammy's event holder. Manager is " voice for 100s of K of Oaklanders and those that visit Oakland. To cut that voice is to cut ambassador position for Oakland"

Speaker is from Malonga Casquelord: "reconsider and reinstating the position of a manager, because there will be many missed opportunities. The resources that can be invested in will be missed. It weakens community engagement and impact..."

There continues to be a lot of anger at Ramachandran: "disappointed to hear misinformation that's been spread about cultural affairs, to see one of our own described as a useless bureaucrat...Bedoya allowed Oakland to punch above its weight and brought MM to city."

Ronnie Stratton, ED of Art Murmur: "We see the Cultural Affairs Manager as a key infrastructure position to secure partnerships and outside dollars so we can keep open art ecosystem working for artists or businesses and the residents that you represent"

Vanessa Wong, Cultural Affairs Commission Chair: "Please, think holistically about what's happening in in this sector. It's It's big. It's not only commercial. It's not only about economic development for our city, our only great asset that we have left"



Speaker runs his own arts project "in the red": "Ryan Coogler...went on to produce the film centers, which has grossed over $362 million worldwide. When we support artistic talent in this community, we have seen time and time again that it can shift narratives in the world"

Lance Wilson of APTP: "We know what happens when the youth have nowhere to go between 3 and 6pm, we know what happens when opportunity dries up and policing expands. Oakland has seen this cycle before. We refuse to accept it"

Several Cultural Affairs Commissioners are here today to advocate for the position, many are mentioning Roberto Bedoya, the long-standing director of the dept, like Alana Lipset, one of the Commissioners

Houston: "I'm kind of confused..." says he saw Brown try to save the position at the budget meeting, but he thought it had been saved. Fife says it wasn't included in the budget

Gallo, who hasn't yet said anything about the position and didn't help Brown on the dais with it at the budget meeting, appears to now support the manager position reinstatement.

Gallo says he "read about" cutting Cultural Affairs Director. He was at the budget meeting and saw it happen.

Wang who was on the budget committee, wants to understand current staffing. There were five positions, but there are more likely to only be 4, due to high vacancy rate....there's only four in the current budget

ELDE leading Cultural Affairs division as interim ...says they took EWD roles "managing relationships and long-term grants for key cultural facilities...special events division, fairs, festivals..."some attracting a ton of visitors, creating a new narrative about Oakland"

Wang asking about the $1.5 MM awarded in report...staff says it was actually reduced by almost half, the awardees were expecting 30K or so, received 6K instead

Fife said she has to manage time of meeting and asks Wang to end her questions...Fife "I will work with council members, because this is what it looks like to fight for something, I will make commitment to make sure we can bring this item back"

Fife: "I just want all of the people who came here today to speak about this revenue generating position, this life saving position, that I hear you, I see you, this budget was rushed. You did not get an opportunity to weigh in, and we're going to change that."

Now on to this contract for evaluation services, also won't report on this much.

4 Subject: FY 2025 Professional Services - The Bridging Group (TBG)
From: Human Services Department
Recommendation: Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Execute A Professional Services Agreement With The Bridging Group To Conduct The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Evaluation Of The Oakland Fund For Children And Youth And Other Services That Support Continuous Quality Improvement Beginning July 1, 2025, Through June 30, 2026, In A Total Amount Not To Exceed Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($350,000)
25-0784

Sponsors: Human Services Department

Attachments: View Report
View Legislation

Legislative History

5/29/25 *Rules & Legislation Scheduled to the *Life Enrichment

One thing we learned in that last item is that two CMs were not really paying attention for what they were voting on in budget. Fife's partner had a vehicle accident and couldn't be there. Five CMs literally passed this budget.

Now on to the Head Start Oral Report. I think there's fewer speakers here [5] than there would have been, because Cooppan was rehired, which was the main issue for most.

***Life Enrichment Committee** **Agenda - FINAL** **June 24, 2025**

6 Subject: Report On The City's Head Start Program
From: Councilmember Fife
Recommendation: Receive An Informational Report From The City Administrator On The City's Head Start Program, Including (1) Recent Actions Concerning Leadership Staff And Potential Impact On The City's Federal Head Start Funding; (2) Clarification On The Roles, Responsibilities, And Mandates Of The Head Start Advisory Board, The Head Start Program Director, City Administration, And The City Council; (3) Race And Other Demographic Data On Head Start Teachers And Students; (4) Details On The Proposed Process To Eventually Transfer Oakland's Head Start Program From The City Of Oakland To An External Entity; And (5) Information Regarding The Formal Status Of The City's Head Start 2021-2026 5-Year Grant Contract With The Federal Government And Plans For The 2026 Continuation Application
25-0778

Sponsors: Fife

Legislative History

5/29/25 *Rules & Legislation Scheduled to the *Life Enrichment

Kind of an odd moment: Simmons would have likely given this report, if she hadn't been fired. Cooppan, who Simmons likely fired, was hired back afterward and is now giving the report that was prompted by her own termination

Not clear if her assistant director Bouey was rehired too...maybe we will find out here

Cooppan: oversight bodies are the governing body and the policy council. Policy Council is made up by parent and family members, primary caregivers, community members."

every center & program option like home based or family child care, has elected representatives. Every center votes and elects a representative. Every home based option votes elects a representative. Every family child care votes, we have community reps that are elected as well

They come together and form the Policy Council. Council is the governing body, and an advisory council appointed by the Council acts as proxy for Council at meetings

Head Start program director oversees operational functioning, ensure that Head Start act is being followed, that the program performance standards are being followed.

One of the issues on the termination of Cooppan is that the City Admin does not have sole

power over terminating role

"we have regional offices throughout country that serve as a liaison for grantees, give guidance and direction, approve your grant...in April that office was shut down"

Cooppan said that the HS grant was returned, but then they had to deal with a "fiscal specialist...so our applications now go to individuals we don't necessarily know, and it's following a process that is new to us"

Cooppan said that the HS application had been submitted and fiscal specialist said it looked good.

Tania Scott Smith the Oakland Head Start, Chairperson pushed back on an audience member who was shouting over others, said that the outcome came from community engagement, and hundreds advocating, not just one person yelling

Okay, they received and filed the report. There's some good information about where HS stands in the report.

Now on to the Extended Stay item...an attendee is still yelling, Fife called a recess.

Back to the meeting. The Extended Stay/Mandela House item started out as a written report, which is still available, but its been continued as there were a lot of questions from public. But there doesn't appear to be many advocates here.

Staffer says there's supplemental info: 46 Mosswood residents were encountered at the encampment. 32 went to Mandela; 14 were offered alternative housing, one accepted a women's shelter, one accepted the cabins, 11 relocated to other encampments,

Table 2

Encampment Census					
	MLK & 23rd	**Mosswood Park**	**East 12th median**	**Overflow**	**Total**
Census at the time of the grant application	January: 68	January: 45	January: 37	January Estimate: 60	210
2nd Census in June 2024	June: 88	June: 33	June: 79		200
Closure Date	September 16-27, 2024	April 21-May 2, 2025	May 12-June 6, 2025		
Census at the time of Closure	**64** At closure, 10 went to respite care; 14 accepted emergency or cabin shelter 40 relocated to other encampments; 6 of the 40 requested alternative housing	**33**	**128** At closure, 68 went to Mandela House; 4 individuals went to Family Housing; 6 Respite Care; 3 Refused Housing; 1 incarcerated during closure; and 5 received alternative housing at cabins or BACS 41 relocated to other encampments		225

MLK/23rd: at closure, 64, individuals were encountered by the outreach teams; 14 accepted emergency shelter and cabins. 40 relocated to other encampments. Only 3 of six who were meant to go to Mandela House went there; one of the individuals passed away.

Theres apparently 21 spaces left at Mandela House, per the staffer

Hopefully this comes back in a written report...the item is coming back at the next meeting.

okay, so that's it for the meeting, it went a bit over, Public Safety will be starting late, but will only have one item, but its a somewhat heavy one, the asset forfeiture one.

Source: https://x.com/Oak_Observer/status/1937681255870660729
Thread: https://twitter-thread.com/t/1937681255870660729