



**EMMA S. BARRIENTOS MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026**

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center convened in a Regular meeting on February 4, 2026, at 301 W. 2nd Street in Austin, Texas. (Some members of the ESB-MACC Advisory Board participated via videoconference.)

Chair Navarro called the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

**Board Members in Attendance:** Angelica Navarro, Lillian “Lily” Zamarripa-Saenz, Hilario “Larry” Amaro, Noemi Castro, John Estrada, Cynthia “Cy” Herrera, Raul “Roy” Reyna.

**Board Members in Attendance Remotely:** Lynda Quintana.

**Board Members Absent:** Alexander “Al” Duarte, Selma Sanchez.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

Hector Ordaz signed up to speak on agenda item 4, “Discussion on FY26-27 budget priorities regarding building operations, programming, and event planning.”

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approve the minutes of the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center regular meeting of January 7, 2026.  
**The minutes from the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center regular meeting of January 7, 2026, were approved on Vice Chair Zamarripa-Saenz motion. Board Member Reyna seconded. Motion passed on an 8-0 vote. Board Members Duarte and Sanchez absent.**

**STAFF BRIEFINGS**

2. Staff briefing on January and February programs, marketing and outreach efforts, signature event planning, and staffing updates.  
**Olivia Tamzarian, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Marketing & Outreach Representative, Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), reported on Casa de la Cultura programs, Youth and Family Education programs; Caminos Teen Leadership programming, current and upcoming marketing and outreach efforts; signature events; collaborations; the Latino/a/e Artist Access Program (LAAP); and staffing updates. (Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

3. Update on Phase 2 Construction Project.

Heidi Tse, Capital Delivery Project Manager, Austin Capital Delivery Services, provided an update on the Phase 2 Construction Project. The update included estimated and substantial completion timelines; temporary certificate and certificate of occupancy; project milestones; emergency project items; and construction progress photos. *(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)*

*The meeting was recessed at 7:27p.m. until 7:34p.m. without objection.*

4. Discussion on FY26-27 budget priorities regarding building operations, programming, and event planning.

**Public Communication General Speaker:**

**Hector Ordaz**, introduced himself as an artist and as a member of several working groups, including the Hispanic Quality of Life Commission, Arts and Cultural Commission, Budget Working Group, and the Joint Commission Budget Working Group. He shared that the idea was to work cohesively with commissions to advance and develop recommendations for consideration by City Council. Ordaz noted that the arts funding had historically been a lower priority, and shared that through the Budget Working Group, a recommendation was placed on the priority list to address the underrepresentation of Black and Brown communities. He further stated that while Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME) does not currently have its own budget, planning is underway for the FY 2027 budget, which is projected at approximately \$150 million. Ordaz highlighted that 8% of the projected budget was allocated toward Hispanic/Latino initiatives. Additionally, he referenced a 2018 recommendation submitted by the MACC Board to City Council encouraging the exploration of alternative revenue streams. He explained that cultural funding primarily came from Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), and that revenue generated through programming does not supplement that funding, which has presented ongoing financial challenges. Ordaz indicated that the purpose of his comments was to provide background information to the board.

**Michelle Rojas**, ESB-MACC Culture and Arts Education Manager, Austin Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment (ACME), stated the purpose of discussion was to identify budget items to be placed on the March board meeting agenda as an action item to approve budget recommendations.

Board Member Herrera summarized that during the Budget Working Group meeting held on February 3, 2026, members reviewed the current fiscal year budget to better understand the MACC budget structure. The group also reviewed historical budgets back to FY 2022-2023 and examined the overall ACME budget for FY 2025-2026. She expressed interest in seeing how the budget is evolving, the approval process, and how funds are allocated. Furthermore, the group discussed budget strategy considerations, acknowledging that with the facility's expansion, an increase in the overall budget would likely be required.

The Board requested that Rojas provide them with a report of the MACC budget, including a breakdown of all program areas and an expense report related to the operations and maintenance cost increase for the new facility, by Thursday, February 12, 2026, to support the development of recommendations.

5. Presentation by community members on their experience with Cultural Arts funding. **Luis Ordaz Gutiérrez provided a brief overview, explaining that the City’s cultural funding programs were established in the late 1970s to early 1980s. Since inception, those programs have experienced systemic underinvestment and inequitable allocation of funds. He attributed these disparities in part to funding matrices, including application formulas used to determine organizational operating budgets and award amounts, as well as factors such as donation and philanthropic investment patterns, and barriers related to social, economic, and language accessibility.**

**The presenters ask was to place an action item on the March meeting agenda to approve a recommendation to request support of appropriate outreach for Latino communities regarding funding programs. Including providing human translations of all relevant documents, ensuring oversight of the Spanish-language process in its entirety, issuing contracts in Spanish, and tracking metrics and data on the distribution of cultural funding by ethnicity.**

***(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)***

6. Presentation by past participants on their experience with the ESB MACC Latino Arts Residency Program. **Juan Oyervides introduced himself as a former Board Member and Chair of the MACC, noting that he served on the board for ten years. He expressed support for the Latino Arts and Residency Program (LARP), which he originally helped establish during his tenure. Mr. Oyervides explained that the program was developed to address affordability challenges faced by Latino artist, with the goal of providing residency opportunities and housing support at the MACC. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that Latino artists have a presence and resources within the institution. He also spoke about the Advisory Board’s unique position, given its direct connection to City Council members, and encouraged members to use their relationship to help address disparities in cultural funding. Reflecting on his time with the MACC, Mr. Oyervides shared that the board often faced budget challenges, particularly when it came to staff, operations, and utility costs, while programming was less impacted. He concluded by pointing out that the creation of the ACME department presents new opportunities for growth and expanded support for arts and cultural initiatives.**

**Luis Ordaz Gutiérrez addressed both the historical context and future outlook of the program.**

**The presenters ask was to place an action item on the March meeting agenda to approve a recommendation to collaborate on the redesign of the LARP program, including the review of contracts, policies and procedures; oversight of equipment and inventory; advisement on technical matters; staff training on proper use of equipment; and collaboration on room and space buildouts. Further, move to establish a working group, comprised of current and past LARP participants, to support continuity, institutional knowledge, and ongoing communication.**

***(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)***

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

7. Presentation and recommendation by Iván Dávila, Chair of the Coalition for Austin’s Arts and

Spanish-Language Theatre (CAAST) and members of CAAST’s Advisory Committee, regarding a proposed increase to the Latino Artist Access Program (LAAP) budget for Fiscal Year 2027. **Iván Dávila provided an overview of CAAST, describing it as a coalition of Spanish-language performing artists and organizations that have been active in Austin for more than 20 years, with both local and national recognition. He explained that the coalition was focused on aligning existing City infrastructure to better support artists. The CAAST team discussed the need for the Latino Arts and Residency Program (LAAP) to evolve. They stressed that limited staffing capacity remained a significant challenge and stated that three core components must be addressed simultaneously: people, infrastructure, and program capacity. Noting that funding only one or two of these elements would continue to perpetuate existing gaps rather than resolve them. They shared the design principles intended to support the development of a true incubator model, outlining the requirements for production readiness, including access to incubation resources, and clarified CAAST’s role in supporting the advancement and sustainability of LAAP.**

The presenters ask was to place an action item on the March meeting agenda to approve a request for \$515,000 increase to the FY2027 LAAP budget to support dedicated technical and marketing staff capacity; fund essential lighting and sound infrastructure upgrades; and expand cohort size and capacity-building support.  
*(Please see the Board and Commissions Website for backup material.)*

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Update on Capital Improvement Project (CIP) plan regarding the replacement of the hot water line. (Sponsors: Reyna, Castro)
- Update from the Grand Re-opening Working Group (Sponsors: Reyna, Castro)
- Creation of LAAP Working Group (Sponsors: Herrera, Reyna)

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Navarro adjourned the meeting at 9:34 p.m. without objection.