

**2025 - 2026 MCC Governing Board
Programs & Outreach Committee
October 8, 2025 5:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

Committee members present: *in-person:* Gloria Marrero Chambers – Chair; Ron Keesing; Doug Jeffery;
Katie Gorka; Liz Lawson; Venita Wang

Committee members absent: Katie Myshrall; Kathleen Cooney Porter; Anna Bartosiewicz

Other Board members present: None.

MCC Staff present: Betsy May-Salazar, Executive Director; Jonathan Melendez, Deputy Director;
Holly Novak, Executive Assistant; Mike Fisher, General Programs Director;
Sarah Schallern Treff, Performing Arts Director; Jessica Wu, PIO;
Catherine Nesbitt, Special Events Manager; Willie Montgomery,
Special Events Coordinator

Guests: None.

CONVENE MEETING

Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers convened a meeting of Programs & Outreach Committee of the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center on October 8, 2025, at 5:32 p.m. The meeting was open to the public attending in-person. A courtesy announcement was made about audio-recording for purposes of Minutes. With no changes requested, the agenda was adopted by acclamation.

CONSIDER MOTION REGARDING RATINGS FOR PROGRAMS **remarks by Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar*

Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers introduced this topic by noting that MCC already does publicize recommended ratings on programs. Board Chair Doug Jeffery has articulated this as a key priority of this committee. In conversation with previous board members over a year ago, changes were implemented as of September 2024 - now in practice. Chair Jeffery requested that a motion be drafted for consideration by the Programs & Outreach Committee adopting a policy codifying MCC's policies regarding transparency around communicating age-appropriate ratings for MCC performances. Intent of the policy is to allow transparency around programming and recommended audiences in order to ensure the continued offering of a vast variety of programming.

Following is a proposed MOTION to codify policy:

MOTION: All MCC performances have recommended age ratings to ensure that members of the public are able to make informed viewing choices.

- Ratings are clearly marked in all promotional materials.
- All promotional materials are designed for a general audience.
- The MCC website may include links to trailers or other promotional information regarding performances. These links may reflect the rating of the scheduled performance. A parental advisory note will be included on the website providing guidance related to any links.
- Attendance at all performances is monitored to ensure that attendees are in compliance with all rating guidelines.

Explanation: Parental advisory note on MCC's website will provide guidance for links (which are crucial to maintaining our marketing efforts). General ratings for all performances will continue: family friendly; for all ages; adult. Films continue with a tag line saying "these movies are programming for adult audiences unless otherwise noted." Films with Motion Picture Association (MPA) ratings included ratings. Some films including foreign language and performing art films do not

have MPA ratings. Now we've gone to other sources such as Common Sense Media, to ensure all films have recommended ratings. For performing arts films, we also look at the source of the stage version for rated. **This policy MOTION is codifying things we are already doing.**

DISCUSSION (points clarified and questions raised):

- **Staff support**

Question: Does the MCC staff overall support this? You don't see any reason not to [make this change]?

Yes – this is a reflecting of current policy. Executive Director May-Salazar appreciated Chair Jeffery's perspective that this would allow us to move forward with our variety of programming while being transparent so people can make informed choices regarding what they attend.

- **Ratings in regard to live performances and MCs**

Question: Will it be any problem for us if we claim a live performance is G-rated event and then there is a problem because the performer didn't follow the guidelines? You can't control what people do on stage in-the-moment.

We generally err on the side of caution and rate "Age 13+" Typically this rating is based on language (there may be some swear words occurring). We very carefully look at everything in terms of rating guidelines for live performances. Our material also says "13+"; if something is rated "R" it will be so noted.

- **Bullet point #4 as written appears to give MCC decision responsibility about who is admitted to attend**

Question: Bullet points #1, #2 and #3 seem fine to me and I appreciate the intent behind the MOTION. I know that we want to allow families to make informed choices about what they are seeing here, and what they are walking into and what their kids are walking into. But #4 strikes me as moving from allowing the parents to decide what's appropriate for their children > to MCC deciding.

Clarification by Executive Director May-Salazar: #4 – The ratings all allow for accompaniment by a parent or adult guardian. It is always at the parent's direction what is appropriate for their families.

- **Understanding the source of standard guidelines and the basis for assigned ratings**

Question: Who is behind the ratings? Who has assigned them? What is the standard used?

We first use MPA published rating for the movies. For ones that are not rated we do a lot of research: Common Sense Media; Ratings for the live performance (if there is a video of a live performance). We also look at the content of the movie. For example, today's showing of "Bicycle Thief" has no rating and it's not objectionable content. However, the situation is the post-Mussolini time period in Italy. That's not fun – so we opted for "18+" rating. Also, those movies, in particular, are programmed for daytime on Thursdays, so not a lot of kids are coming (unless during Spring Break when we program with that audience in mind). We err on the side of caution: if it's not rated, we state it as either "18+" or "13+" and we list the source of where that rating came from, such as: "according to Common Sense Media." The change made last year was, rather than just having a statement: "All films are for adult audiences unless otherwise noted," for foreign films that didn't have ratings we have gone the extra step to find another source that issued a rating for it.

- **Ratings & decisions are based on viewing it as a live performance first, before any artist contract is written**

For live performances we have very general categories: family friendly; all ages; adult (13+). Danielle Van Hook, Youth Programs Director, views the performance, talks to the artist, talks to the agent to get an idea of what it is. '13+' is something created for a grown-up audience; content rated 'R' will be identified as such. It's based on us literally seeing the material and talking to the agents, and sometimes reading the scripts.

- **A caution was expressed that the policy as written is too broad (would apply beyond The Alden to also performers at McLean Day and other large-scale MCC events). It was recommended to revise the MOTION:**

Question: My only concern is the language: "MCC performance" is so broadly stated we might be requiring ourselves to do something that makes no sense. I recommend narrowing the policy to "The Alden Theatre performances" – so we don't end up creating extra work for ourselves. I recommend before we advance this to a vote to adjust the wording somehow to narrowly specify that this has to do with actual "programming" as opposed to a performance associated with the MCC (such as McLean Day stage).

Reflection on this important point as raised:

* We would always offer an "all ages appropriate" concert at McLean Day stage. But we don't put a rating on it; it's part of the festival.

- * The rating system applies to films & programs but not public festivals or concerts McLean Central Park. Perhaps there is a neat workaround: McLean Day will be ‘family friendly.’ Or written as: “Unless events are ‘family friendly.’”
- * We can think of the correct way to re-word this: referring to it as “The Alden programming” would theoretically eliminate any reference to McLean Day or those types of events. The edit should be a ‘carve-out’ for special things rather than identifying it with anything: this will apply to The Alden Theatre specifically.
- * Re-write could show the distinction: when the performance is the event vs. the performance is ancillary to the event.
- * There is a clear difference between ‘open-air/anyone can come’ events which are always going to be unrated vs. things always going to be rated “R.” *Comment by board member:* Yes, that’s the way to deal with it: either events are rated for all ages or they are not. This might be the easiest way to express it: ‘Anything without a rating is intended for all ages.’ (*general concurrence*)

Comment by Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers: It’s better to re-read the MOTION and digest it and then try it again.

ACTION: We can re-write it as a suggested edit. We will revise it and think about it.

- * Intentional vagueness of the policy language is well-reasoned and beneficial. Board Chair Jeffery emphasized that the intent is transparency. It doesn’t restrict MCC at all, nor restrict individuals. The ‘intentional vagueness’ facilitates MCC having discretion to actually determine the appropriate ratings – that is beneficial. The MOTION requires that a rating mechanism is put in place but it doesn’t actually ‘micro-manage’ (it’s not intended to).

MOTION: To pass, as corrected – the original wording accepted, with the following addition:

“Any performance without a rating is intended for all ages.”

All MCC performances have recommended age ratings to ensure that members of the public are able to make informed viewing choices.

- Ratings are clearly marked in all promotional materials.
- All promotional materials are designed for a general audience.
- The MCC website may include links to trailers or other promotional information regarding performances. These links may reflect the rating of the scheduled performance. A parental advisory note will be included on the website providing guidance related to any links.
- Attendance at all performances is monitored to ensure that attendees are in compliance with all rating guidelines.
- Any performance without a rating is intended for all ages.

Unanimously approved - by a vote of six.

CONSIDER PROGRAMS & OUTREACH COMMITTEE NAME /PURPOSE

**remarks by Board Chair Doug Jeffery*

The intent is to have this committee go broader. Changing the name would hopefully change the purpose: How do we engage with the community? (in whatever form that is). It may be beyond just marketing efforts. The intent is to hopefully allow this committee to go bigger in thinking. Examples: Offering ‘virtual’ events – ‘virtual’ community center. Perhaps have people sign-in or scan as they enter– so you know who is here- as a way to engage with people. We’re all trying to bring more people to MCC. Perhaps offer ‘flash’ performances in the middle of McLean (5-minute performance of “Hamlet” downtown). Ways to get out there and think ‘outside the box,’ letting everyone know that we’re here. How do we engage with the community? That is the intent: it’s less about the name and more about encouragement of us thinking through what we do to engage. However, if it’s not value-added, we definitely don’t need to change this committee’s name.

Executive Director May-Salazar emphasized that in Programs (with a big “P”), outreach weaves through everything we do. Our constant effort is to engage with the community. Jessica Wu’s role in marketing is community engagement; that is one of her strengths. **A name change is OK but we don’t want to lose the emphasis on “outreach”- maintaining the fact that the role of marketing outreach is a big part of this committee’s role.**

OPTIONS: **Programs & Community Connection** **Programs & Community Engagement**

- The term “engagement” (as compared to “outreach”) feels a little more modern and bi-directional with the community. How people think about marketing today is: ‘How do you *engage* with people?’ as opposed to ‘How do you *reach out to* them?’ The word “engagement” is preferable; it’s not just unidirectional
- The word “engagement” includes marketing and how we publicize to this community, but it’s also more than that.
- “Outreach” sounds more like broadcasting (one-way). There is a nice feeling with ‘engagement’ that this is bi-directional. That’s how a lot of media works today.
- Background of this committee’s current name: Years ago it was two separate committees: Programs Committee; Communications Committee. However, so often the conversations happening in both places were very similar, so the decision was that it made more sense to combine it into one ‘Programs & Outreach Committee.’

PIO Jessica Wu was asked to comment: She agreed the approach needs to be more local. The current name of this committee seems very much like ‘cold-calling’ in the way it sounds – which is not how MCC operates. We do want to establish a relationship and continue to build on it. The term ‘engagement’ is better than ‘outreach.’

MOTION: Change the name of this committee to “Programs & Community Engagement.”

Unanimously approved by a vote of six.

ATTENDANCE REVIEW **remarks by Executive Director May-Salazar*

Now underway for a couple of years, the concept of this attendance report is to ultimately be able to also quantify all walk-in attendance. We will need scanners on the doors to capture all walk-in attendance. We are currently not collecting the passive use of this space, which is enormous: parents sitting waiting for children in classes; people who use MCC to meet with their family. People are walking in every day and pausing in the lobby and passing through – there’s a lot of such passive activity.

Style of the report: We had previously collected attendance data on departments differently – which didn’t facilitate comprehension by an outside viewer. Now we are dividing data into: events held here; events at OFC; events held offsite. We’ve started to build analysis pages providing more detail regarding attendance for this committee-level discussion.

Requesting board member feedback on:

1. Is this a level of detail that is useful? 2. Is there anything else you would rather us be tracking if we can get to it?

GOAL: As we build this out, we will be able to accomplish a lot of analysis on information as it is collected in one place.

Instructional: Further broken out by the type of instructional classes (cooking vs. dance vs. fitness). The example charts showed various options graphically > type/category of class; compare by season; compare year-to-year.

- *Recommendation:* For types of classes, it would be helpful to compare length of classes (6 sessions vs. one-off session). From the data as presented, it would be hard for me as a board member to know if these classes are working or not. Is it 132 cooking classes with one person attending – which would be something I would be concerned about? Or is it all ‘sold-out’ classes among only three class sessions, which would be very good. As presented, it’s hard to have insight into that question.
- *Recommendation:* reference room capacity as a measure of potential. We could add another layer – number of classes; average class size; max capacity of a fitness class. We know the capacity of the facility spaces as a reference point: what the max class size would be and how many classes the data totals represent.
- *Recommendation:* Show the variations in public interest – i.e. different things people are interested in (at SIA) rather than aggregate. Analyze in terms of: Are these classes meeting the needs of the community? Are people excited about attending them and anticipating more such programs? However you could measure that would be helpful.

Performing Arts: Listing every program and attendance (concert by concert; also in categories). As we build out the year, we will start to be able to see overall attendance by category.

- *Recommendation:* For The Alden, it would be helpful to know what percentage of the house was sold? Sell-out? 50% ticket sales? 25% of house sold? Also, for multiple shows – the numbers are lumped into one total. Was it one performance at 50% capacity or two performances at 80% capacity?

Community events: includes a listing of each event; attendance.

OFC: aggregate numbers (After School Program). It will be interesting to look at what is driving the use of the facility: How much use is by SPARC? After School program? Open games? Ping pong players.

Camp: different camps are shown (that data could have more depth to it to make it valuable).

Space rentals: Joe McGovern tracks every inquiry: phone calls and formal requests; actual bookings; attendance (as how the groups report it to us). We rely on the rental organizer to provide attendance figures. When we eventually have counters on MCC entrance doors we will be able to double-check those attendance figures for accuracy. We would like to analyze the use of OFC in a similar way so we know what type of groups are using OFC: local open vs. private group rentals.

- *Recommendation*: Explain the qualification for “local open” groups as a defined term.

There are different categories of qualification and rates to rent MCC spaces. Local Open = based in McLean; more than 50% of your membership is based in McLean in our tax district; and you are open to all (a list of criteria that makes a group qualified). *The categories and qualification policies for rentals are in the Policies & Procedures notebook every board member has received.*

ONGOING DISCUSSION & SHARING OF PERSPECTIVES:

Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar: We may have goals for attendance, but not everything belongs in an attendance report. The purpose of this data is to show in more detail what data is used to build the attendance overall report. Other analysis can be done/and is done regarding deep analysis on various areas of programming.

- *Recommendation by board member*: At a high level – look at whether there is a way to get more nuance:
 1. For each attendance number, follow in parenthesis with a percent of capacity at the class (only in spaces where it makes sense). That’s all I really want to know.
 2. If you had a target goal, that would be great: attendance relative to a target goal (but only if that makes sense). For example, if a target = 50 people seeing a film but only 30 people attend, that is 60% participation. Mention the target for showing a film: perhaps ideally 50 people; and then show the percent who actually attended. It would be great if you have 200% attendance! That kind of comparison makes sense.

Comment by Executive Director May-Salazar: I understand the value in that data; but that number without a lot of analysis is misleading, especially in the theater. In The Alden, a certain audience comes in the middle of the day. It is minimal cost to show that film and it’s intended for a particular audience who can attend midday. Perhaps only 30 people will attend (i.e. 10% attendance) – that isolated figure doesn’t mean anything. By contrast, for other Alden theatre performances we DO expect to sell the entire house. While board members may be capable of understanding the nuances, presenting it in a report that is publicly accessible on the website without further analysis is challenging.

Comment by another board member: Or maybe it’s just the number of instances a performance is offered = The Alden has three instances where a film/performance was offered. That combination will interpret the information more clearly.

Comment by Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers: But so many of the performances are all different; so you have all these different categories that you’re trying to figure out how many people are going in there: classes; performances > it’s hard to quantify.

Summary by Executive Director May-Salazar: This document is a work-in-progress; we will continue refining the analysis. It’s complicated because all the data comes from multiple sources and has only been captured in summary. Each internal department quantifies their data differently and this is a new and different way of looking at attendance. We’re aiming to collect it consistently, have it all in one place so it’s easy to keep reviewing, gain analysis from it and learn.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SURVEY **remarks by Deputy Director Jonathan Melendez*

The survey is live now; QR code is available. We are trying to ensure that all events have an event survey and this annual survey. We are working on outreach and engagement with various communities through getting it translated into different languages. Fortunately, PIO Jessica Wu has deep networks in the area, especially with local schools. We are trying to get in touch with the various communities who perhaps did not fill out the survey in the past (PTA’s; Family Engagement Liaison) through direct contacts to those communities so we can speak to them about taking our community engagement survey.



As the new name of this committee speaks to “engagement,” we encourage you to engage your personal networks and get people filling out the survey! To assist in that effort, we are developing a script so that when you are engaging your networks to participate in the survey you have talking points of why it’s important. It will be a toolkit – to use when you are at events, talking to your neighbors, or whatever type of engagement you are doing with the community. It will have survey-related details so you can talk about it comfortably. If you have any questions, we are here to answer.

We are emphasizing reaching out to various communities and your personal networks and friends. If you are a Rotarian, a member of American Legion – take this to your groups and please share it around. Ask people to fill it out and give us some feedback so we can help MCC improve. GOAL: To cast the widest net possible. Your assistance in helping with the engagement will help push us over the top this year and bring in some quality responses.

Participation TO-DATE: 92 respondents as of now. It’s only been live for a few days; it continues until January 2026.

Last year’s TOTAL participation: 320 respondents

In January we will send it out to everyone registered through ACTIVE registration system (usually about 55,000 to 65,000 people); so hopefully, we’ll get a big boost. But we can use a lot of help between now and then. Perhaps we will get a lot more responses because of MCC’s 50th Anniversary, as people are more engaged.

Comments about survey method:

Question: Is the survey shorter and less complicated to answer than last year’s iteration?

Yes – it will take no more than 8 minutes. It’s not very cumbersome; it should be fairly easy.

Question: Do you have staff walking around engaging with people passively sitting in the lobby and waiting for classes?

Staff is always actively talking to people, so we can encourage them to fill out a survey. There is a kiosk set-up in the lobby. Part of our media kit underway is providing the Front Desk with information for their interactions with people who come in. The Front Desk staff direct people to the kiosk.

Presence at MCC events: Some events are coming up and you are welcome to sign-up to help us: “Be Visible” board engagement list. Petfest is this Sunday, October 12. We appreciate your help.

OLD /NEW BUSINESS

Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers thanked Executive Director Betsy May-Salazar, Deputy Director Jonathan Melendez, General Programs Director Mike Fisher and Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for their contributions this evening.

She opened the floor to any matters of old or new business. Nothing was mentioned as a further topic for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With all business matters concluded, Chair Gloria Marrero Chambers thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Holly Novak, Executive Assistant