

General Membership Meeting of the Freelance Musicians Association (FMA)

Via Videoconference

April 1, 2026

Meeting called to order by President Nate Omdal at 5:01 PM, EDT.

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A motion was made and carried to approve the March 4 General Membership Meeting minutes as presented.

AFM Director of Freelance Services Wages Argott informed the general membership about the newly-posted minutes on the AFMfreelance.org website, and encouraged members to review.

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Jazz Advocacy Committee: Executive Board Member-at-Large Gene Perla discussed ways to improve [Venuology.com](https://www.venuology.com), the AFM's anonymous venue review platform. It was reported that the website would benefit from some design attention and additional venue listings. Perla mentioned the "New York City Jazz Record," a jazz publication which already contains a club directory of a large number of popular clubs in the city and surrounding areas. Perla suggested that this directory can be a good place to start with updating information on Venuology. Argott, the current Venuology webmaster, is committed to updating the website and making it more user-friendly with assistance from the newly formed Venuology committee.

Vice President Leni Kreienberg, asked if there are any plans to reach out to other locals to ask for their help to add information into Venuology. Omdal replied that member outreach is incredibly important and that if anyone is interested in organizing musicians in their localities, they should reach out via the FMA website's "Join a Committee" form.

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Educational/Professional Development Committee: Omdal reiterated the importance of using the FMA website to officially sign up and become a member of any committee. There was also discussion about how to collect data that is already available throughout the AFM that other locals have made available to their own members; the goal being that we do not spend efforts duplicating work. This information would include educational materials about filing contracts, taxes for musicians, etc.

Omdal expressed the need for a way to educate newly oriented AFM members about the available resources. Kreienberg said that there is a "Play Your Part" curriculum available to AFM Locals on the topic of organizing independent musicians.

They went on to say that the education committee might find this resource useful to help achieve a baseline for common language across all musicians.

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Argott gave an update and report on the current FMA efforts. Argott remarked that Venuology could be a tool for introducing musicians to the concepts of collective power and organizing, and for helping them communicate and educate one another.

Argott announced that the FMA meeting minutes, bylaws, mission statement, and committee information are now up on the AFMfreelance.org website. He also gave an update on membership and financials. Argott asked members to consider getting involved by joining a committee, suggesting a committee, or getting involved in other ways.

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Argott gave an update on the Candlelight Concert Series. Musicians performing these concerts have been subject to spotty allowances, payment adjustments, declining arrangement quality, etc., and after a successful social media campaign and a signed letter from the musicians, the parent company rolled back some of the changes. Argott reiterated that the AFM has no relationship with Candlelight Concert Series, nor does the Federation have any agreement for this kind of work. Due to the performance/event structure, there is no documented "leader" on these gigs, and the musicians do much of the work themselves. Argott asked the members present to share their experiences with the Candlelight Concert Series, as performers or audience members. Discussion followed.

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Omdal discussed community pact agreements and asked the membership for ideas on how to bring these agreements to local venues. He expressed that the FMA and AFM can bring coalition building into local communities. With community pact agreements, local venues, music festivals, clubs, etc., commit to pay and treat musicians fairly. Over 25 Seattle-area clubs have signed a pledge to abide by Fair Trade Music principles since the campaign went public in 2012.

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Argott gave a brief history of his time as the Freelance Services Director, specifically focusing on his desire to drive the department to organizing endeavors and relationships with external stakeholders. Argott echoed President Omdal's call for community pact agreements in place of traditional collective bargaining agreements.

Argott added that programs like AFM's Fair Trade Music and similar labor standards initiatives by local freelance organizing committees can effectively improve conditions and benefit all members of the musical community. A designation, Argott continued, like those for "Fair Trade" venues, not only drives musicians and audiences to good actors but also applies indirect pressure on unfair venues.

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Argott discussed meeting with the United Musicians and Allied Workers (UMAW) regarding a similar venue standards initiative for which they were seeking support. UMAW's "Raise the Bar" campaign seeks to improve conditions and equity for musicians in clubs and venues. Argott invited indie musician Caroline Rose, UMAW member and member of Local 47, Los Angeles, CA, to briefly discuss UMAW's efforts and the campaign. Argott added that UMAW leaders would be invited to a future FMA general meeting to discuss the program.

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Aaron Fowler, President of Local 1000 (Non-geographic), discussed their continuing efforts with Fair Trade Music, noting that these adaptable agreements establish fair minimum rates and require signatories to make contributions on behalf of AFM member musicians. Further discussion continued on the community pact model for organizing venues, including effective communications and media campaigns to connect musicians.

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Secretary-Treasurer Milton Salazar provided updates on FMA financial administration, including obtaining an EIN, establishing an account with the Bank of Labor, and seeking an appropriate tax classification. Argott thanked Salazar for his tremendous efforts on behalf of the steering committee. Argott stated that these documents have been submitted to the AFM's International Executive Board. The Board is expected to decide on the FMA's official Player Conference recognition at the April meeting in San Juan, PR.

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A motion was made and carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:22 PDT.