

# **Amherst Cultural Council**

## **Annual Report for 2017-2018**

The Amherst Cultural Council (ACC) receives funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). The amount of funding received by the MCC is part of the budgetary process of the Commonwealth's Legislature. For the year 2017-2018, Amherst received \$25,300, level funding. To that figure, the ACC added unclaimed funds from the previous year that added an additional \$3,330 to funds available for this round of grants for a total of \$28,630.

At the summer meeting of the ACC, we added one guideline to indicate that "Applications from Amherst residents and from organizations that serve the local community will be given preference." We deleted one that prevented applicants from recycling the same projects in successive years. We decided this would be cumbersome to administer and difficult for applicants.

A press release was prepared and sent to the local press, but once again the public meeting in September was not well attended.

Each year the MCC selects a few local cultural councils to be audited. On October 16, representatives from the accounting firm, Robert C. Alario, came to Amherst and met with Holly Bowser, Assistant Comptroller for the Town, Andrea Battle (Treasurer of the ACC), and Jennifer Lind and Georgia Barnhill (Co-chairs). The results arrived in January. For the most part, there were no negative remarks, except that the Town, by state law, should segregate the MCC funds from all other funds. A recommendation was made the Treasurer should keep accounting records as a check against the Town's. There was no other criticism of the accounting of the funds. In general discussions, it was brought up that the ACC should create a social media presence. Since then, a volunteer has created a FaceBook page.

In early December, the ACC joined forces with the Amherst Center Cultural District (ACCD) steering committee to host a gathering for residents and grant recipients at Amherst Works. The event was well attended. ACC member Robin Thompson represents the ACC at monthly meetings of the ACCD.

One of the proposals funded the previous received some good publicity in the local press. On December 15, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* printed a photograph of a project that created a 130-foot mural at the Amherst Regional Middle School that depicts the Connecticut River from its source to Long Island Sound. Jennifer Lind and Georgia Barnhill send a brief message of thanks to the paper that was published on January 1, 2018. The caption for the photograph credited the ACC.

This year 71 proposals were received (69 last year) and the ACC funded 59. Most recipients received about one-half of their requests. The largest grants went to

the Amherst Ballet Theater Company, Amherst Cinema Arts Center, Amherst Survival Center, Cross Town Contemporary Art Exhibition, Eric Broudy for a public art project, Picture Book Theatre, Ko Theater Works, Inc., Fafnir Adamites for an art exhibition, Wildwood Elementary School, Gallery A3 for Art Forum, Meg Bandarra for an exhibition, Hampshire College Gallery, and the Hampshire Shakespeare Company. Smaller grants were made to the Jones Library, the Bangs Center, and groups serving Amherst and the region such as the Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestra, Friends of Amherst Community Theater, Friends of the Holyoke Range, and Mohawk Trail Concerts, and *Meat for Tea*, a literary publication.

Members of the committee during the past year were Georgia Barnhill and Jennifer Lind, co-chairs, Andrea Battle, treasurer, Martha Toro, secretary, Sondra Radosh, Alice Briggs, Gina Chaplain, and Robin Thompson. Cyndi Hardison has served as the liaison with the Town. Alice Briggs has resigned her position, effective February 15. Currently we have openings for two new members. The terms of Sondra Radosh, Jennifer Lind, and Georgia Barnhill expire in 2018. All would like to continue for second three-year terms.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgia Barnhill and Jennifer Lind