

Amherst Cultural Council Minutes

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Members present: Julianne Applegate, Matt Holloway, Robin Thompson, Rachel Wang, Cole Graber-Mitchell, Leah Neuburger, Cyndi Harbeson, Town Liaison (in person at the Jones Library) and Jenny Lind (via Zoom 6:30 p.m.)

1. Meeting minutes for August 11, 2021 were approved by council vote.
2. Hybrid meetings: The council discussed how we can conduct hybrid meetings and what the open meeting rules allow. Jenny can't vote tonight because 48-hour notice wasn't given that she would be meeting with the rest of the council via Zoom.
3. Subcommittees: The council voted to disband subcommittees and will now discuss accessibility and outreach matters during council meetings. We no longer need to follow any subcommittee rules.
4. Direct Payment to Grantees: The town approved a pilot program to directly fund grant recipients. Payment will be made using a different form and not by reimbursement this next cycle. The process will be easier with the collaboration of the town. The council will now receive a final report to document the event and how the funds were used. Grantees must confirm event date(s) as a requirement which will make the process easier. Is there an existing contract we can use and customize to assure grantee accountability? What is the timeline for the process? We will likely disperse funds in March. We will have some time to work the process out before then.
5. Grant evaluation: Grant applications have started to appear on the MCC site and our online access is available and very user friendly. Printing the PDF of grant applications should be quick. We will still use printed panel books and Cyndi will take care of getting them printed quickly. We should be able to start in early November. Can we agree to meet virtually? It would take less time in theory does it make better sense to meet in person? Does the MCC have a tool to help manage evaluations? Rachel will check the MCC site. Rachel's evaluation form will help quickly narrow down to the project that don't meet the guidelines. Matt will send out meeting poll to set our schedule. At the October meeting we can talk more about the evaluation process. Usually each member reviews grants on our their own time then sends their eval numbers to Julianne. She will compile the numbers before each meeting then we can move quickly through the projects for each meeting.
6. Next Meeting: In person, Thursday, October 7 at the Jones Library at 5:30 pm.
7. PechaKucha report: Block party has been cancelled -- how does this affect our event? Julianne will check in with the town health department. Masks yes but can we mandate vaccines? What's the capacity of the indoor venue? Julianne will bring info back to our October 7 meeting.
8. Showcase event report: Leah and Cole presented some raw footage for the Showcase video. The interviews and studio visits were really great! It's so nice to see visual artists at work as they talk about what they make and how they make it. It would be nice to see overlays with finished work and the dances with the interviews. Small snippets of video can be used effectively in social media. When finished the Showcase can be

presented as a Facebook Live event or launch party. Take the time to polish it to present later.

9. New business: Rachel Hart, who suggested that the town use some of the 12 million in pandemic relief funds to support artists, the arts and culture, is not able to put together a letter with stakeholder's support to send to the town. Do we want to make a statement to the town? Ask the town to hire Arts and Culture person like Northampton has? We will provide listening sessions during our two meetings next week on Tuesday and Friday (September 14th and 17th). Please come to the meetings if you can, but we can't have more than 4 council members present. Please contact Matt if you can come. Jenny will take meeting notes on Tuesday night. During the info meeting on Tuesday, Matt will run through the application process first and then answer questions. We will provide our guidelines as well. The rest of the meeting will be dedicated to a listening session about the pandemic effects. The September 17 meeting is also a listening session. Can someone take meeting notes?
10. Adjournment 8:11 pm