

Amherst Cultural Council Minutes

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Members present: Mina Kim, MCC Program Officer, Julianne Applegate, Matt Holloway, Robin Thompson, Jenny Lind, Rachel Wang, Cole Graber-Mitchell, Arthur Pero, Leah Neuburger, Charles Baldwin, MCC Accessibility Director and Cyndi Harbeson, Town Liaison

6:30 p.m. via Zoom

1. Meeting was promptly called to order at 6:30 pm. Matt read mandatory script and checked audio. Attendance was checked by rollcall.
2. The July 20, 2021, minutes approved by roll-call vote.
3. Subcommittees: no reports
4. PechaKucha report by Julianne. Dates confirmed 10/14 and 11/11 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. with Bistro 63, cost is now \$650, we have enough artists for the October event. If members have artists in mind, please have them email Julianne.
5. Showcase event report by Cole and Leah. The next few weeks are set aside for editing videos of eight different arts orgs and for further interviews. The Council would like to watch a draft of the video to provide some creative feedback. A rough cut viewing will likely happen at the September 9th meeting.
6. New Direct Granting guidance from MCC. The information about direct granting provided by Mina was very helpful when meeting with Amherst's Finance Director, Sean Mangano. The forms especially helped him envision how they can manage payment up front to grantees. Other towns have been doing this, so the process is established. Sean confirmed that the MCC has the authority to set up the process since the funds are provided by the state. He suggested that this be a pilot year for all grantees. He will confirm with his colleagues in the budget office and get back to Matt the week of August 16. We can vote provisionally tonight but if the town comes back and says no, we will have to rethink. Robin spoke with two other town treasurers, and they haven't had problems, no defaults, and it is much less work for us and the town. It's equitable and all have been enthusiastic about up-front payment to grantees! The availability of this will be something to put forward to so all the possible grantees know it's available. How will this affect granting? There is a general sense that the ACC is also enthusiastic about this. Julianne motioned to vote to provisionally approve up-front direct payment. The council approved provisionally by roll-call vote to utilize direct granting for the next grant cycle. If there are concerns, we can amend the award letter to address issues of default.
7. Updating the guidelines (due Sept. 1): The council worked on the guidelines line by line. Considerable time was taken to discuss the accessibility guidelines with the help of Mina and Charles. The guidelines were given subject headings by Cole to aid grantee's understanding. The guidelines were approved provisionally, by roll-call vote.
8. Robin asked about making live meetings accessible. We have the money to include a sign language interpreter.
9. New business: Matt addressed Amherst's ARP funds (12 million) in relation to a conversation with Rachel Hart of Amherst Cinema who reached out to ask about ARP funds for arts organizations. Is there a need for funds to support Arts community

because of the pandemic? Absolutely. We could facilitate a listening session or dialogue how the funds could help Amherst's artist community. Robin suggests reaching out to the Amherst Cultural District. How do we reach out to the Arts Community, Zoom? How would the funds be accessed? The town manager will conduct a needs assessment and present to the town council his recommendations. We could help muster the voices of the arts community. This is a great opportunity to bolster the relationship with the Cultural District and others. Our public meeting can also be an opportunity to ask how the pandemic has affected potential grantees. We could add an additional listening session in the Spring.

10. New Members: Matt has asked a neighbor, and art professor, to apply to be a member. Please think of any other art enthusiastic people who could possibly join. We need two new members.
11. The council adjourned at 8:13 pm

Jenny Lind, Secretary