

Amherst Cultural Council  
**APPROVED** Minutes  
Wednesday, November 2, 2011  
Jones Library, Large Meeting Room

Note: This meeting took place after the snow storm of October 29; some Council Members were still without power, heat, or Internet.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Ann Woodbridge, Chair.

Present: Ann Woodbridge (Chair), Ruth Rootberg, (Secretary, Co-Treasurer), Honoré David, Sandra Mullin, Arnold Friedmann, Ellen Kosmer, Joan Temkin, and Sondrosh Rodysh, liaison.

Absent: Laurie Nisonoff, Gretchen Fox.

Minutes

Minutes of October 26 & 27 were approved as corrected.

Treasury report

Ruth explained the spreadsheet she distributed. There is some color coding in the far left column to indicate decisions we want to revisit, and other colors in the penultimate right column indicating at which meeting the most recent decision was made. The spreadsheet also indicates how much is left to give. As of October 27, there was \$8,542 left to grant. Knowing we had not allocated anything yet for the requests for field trips from the 3 elementary schools, which totals \$6,962, the Council Members understood we must carry forward by offering less than we would wish to any one group.

With both Laurie and Gretchen absent, Joan Temkin volunteered to be back up for reporting grant amounts this evening.

November 16 meeting time changed to 7:30

Several members are not available for the November 16 meeting. To insure a quorum and as robust a gathering as possible, the meeting time was changed to 7:30 pm. It will take place in the Large Meeting Room at the Jones Library.

Sample Disapproval letter

Ann passed out a sample disapproval letter for us to see, and she read aloud the reasons for disapproval. We noted “Your project did not provide enough public benefit for our community compared to other proposals we received” allows for a lot of decision making on our part.

Discussion of applications, criteria, etc.

Ellen noted the applications that also the applicant needs is required to have at least one year experience (Page one of the application requires a check mark to the statement: The applicant, or person leading the project/program, has been engaged in the kind of activity for which funds are requests for at least one year), there is no necessity to back up that statement, and we are left to **guess at a person or group’s level of experience. See note for follow-up at end** of these minutes.

A question was raised as to how do we distinguish between a salary or stipend/honorarium. A stipend/honorarium was for a short-term, or single project.

Ann mentioned the MCC, over the past couple of years, has updated criteria and evaluations. There are some samples for disapproving applications on-line. She requests we individually visit the MC C website: evaluating grants, when Internet becomes available to us again.

Setting conditions for approval: future guideline limitations.

Ruth referred to an e-mail of October 30 sent to Ann that indicates the ACC can set conditions for using our grant money, such as requiring a free-will donation. Please see copy of e-mail in notes.

Reports on gathered information on tabled grants:

2012-1 Crocker Farm. There was no new information, and we further tabled any discussion of field trip proposals.

2012-36 Gregory Maichack - Georgia O'Keeffe was taken up again.

Sondra reported he did a similar project on Monet at the library a few years ago. The Members questioned why he did not want to charge a materials fee to participants, and why not run the class without receiving funds, as so many other teachers do. **This program looks as if it's for people who could afford to pay, and the Members question the merit of teaching people to copy another artist's work.**

**Deny:** Your project did not provide enough public benefit for our community compared to other proposals we received.

2012-37 Amanda Hill, Many Hands Farms, which originally requested \$1,200 and then reduced it to \$900, has once again lowered its request to \$400 for a capital expenditure to construct a stage. Ann distributed a second supplement, claiming she **doesn't know which we are to use**. Ann also gave us copies of the capital expenditures definition and correspondence to date.

Discussion ensued. The farm is **on Amherst Road in Amherst. It's a new group**. We wonder what the cultural benefit will be. Ann reported she had suggested they apply, after establishing a track record, for a standard grant rather than capital expenditures. They could use other venues to establish themselves as performance producers. However, the location seems inherently important to this project.

If we fund, we want to make sure the money will be used only for building the stage, and reimbursement from ACC will take place only after they demonstrate the stage has been built, (we will recommend they send a photo) and they have also received a minimum double amount of our funding from other sources. (Capital expenditures require a 2:1 ratio of funding from other sources).

**Grant: \$100 and revisit to lower the amount, if we are out of money.**

Voting Continues:

2012-39 Mentors4Me requests \$900 for ARHS Alumni mentoring program.

Discussion included questioning whether this was really a humanities project. Ann noted the criteria **for humanities projects are vague: "aspirational of the human condition."** **We perceive it as a good project, and the need might be there, but it is not appropriate for this Arts Council. It seems more like a social service project.**

**Deny:** Your project is not clearly related to the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences.

2012-40 Mohawk Trails Concerts requests \$1,000 for Cross Currents and Special Anniversaries. The Council recognizes this as a great institution; how much can we afford to give them?

**Approve: \$500 and revisit.**

2012-41 Multi-Arts requests \$650 for "The Girl Who didn't Listen to her Mom."

Ann noted Catalina Arrubla was previously awarded a grant, asked for an extension, and ultimately was **denied because she didn't complete on time. She was encourage to reapply, and has with this application.** Ann is not sure whether this is exactly the same project as before.

Joan will research who participates in the project, but we provisionally made a decision.

**Approve: \$250 and revisit.**

2012-42 Music in Deerfield requests \$750.  
Approve: \$250.

2012-43 Music on Main requests \$200 for Peter and the Wolf and Other Musical Stories.  
Approve \$100.

2012-44 Northampton Screen Writers requests \$500 for Stage to Screen.  
**Deny:** #11 from local Program Guidelines: Priority is given to projects that demonstrate strong planning.

2012-45 Old Deerfield Productions requests: \$500 for North Country by Talaya Delaney.  
**Approve: \$100 and revisit.**

2012-46 Peregrine AWA press requests \$1,500 for issue XXVII.  
Honoré will research: Where do the copies get distributed? What are themes/cultural bias of the publication?  
She will request a copy for the ACC to review.  
**Decision was Tabled.**

2012-47 Danae Marr, requests \$1,000 for Performance Alive, Lenelle Moise and Serious Play!  
**Approve: \$500 and revisit.**

2012-48 Therese Brady Donohue requests \$1,360 or \$500 for Picture Book Theatre Production.  
After some discussion the Members discovered a discrepancy in our application copies: Some stated a request for \$500 and others for \$1,350. Ann's showed \$500, which is what she input into the website, and is therefore what shows on Ruth's spreadsheet.  
Arnold will follow up to determine which version is accurate.  
**Decision was Tabled.**

2012-49 Pioneer Jewish Film Festival requests 900 for the 2012 season.  
Approve \$450.

2012-50 Piti Theatre Company requests \$500 for To Bee or Not to Bee at the Amherst Sustainability Festival.  
We had questions what they would do in case of rain. Apparently they have performed previously in the rain.  
Approve \$150.

Notes:

We want to give the MCC feedback concerning the application; they need a specific question asking for a description of level of experience to back up the statement that experience is more than one year.

E-mail sent to Ann Woodbridge, October 30, 2011 from Ruth Rootberg:  
Ann,

Our power was out only over night, so I've been hard at it all day. I read a bit more thoroughly the MCC guidelines and have a few things to discuss, to keep in mind - possibly for now, and also for our spring meeting regarding changing local guidelines: - The parts in bold are copied from the MCC guidelines.

**Based on community input, each local cultural council may determine whether or not they accept requests for field trips, and if so, what types of expenses are eligible (student**

**ticket cost, transportation, chaperone tickets, guide fees, etc.). This type of grant was formerly known as a "PASS grant."**

Ruth's response - where does it now say we can't fund for transportation? Note also, this year's council does not approve of chaperone tickets, but we have not made that public.

**Local councils are authorized to establish a smaller window of eligibility; if they do so, they must publish the eligible dates in their local guidelines.** We could decide not to grant anything retro-actively....

**Conditional Approvals. LCCs may place conditions on approved applications (i.e., the applicant must hold the proposed program during the town festival, or the performing group must provide free tickets to senior citizens). LCCs must communicate any conditions to the applicant in writing and note them on the application and in the minutes for that meeting. If the applicant does not agree to the condition they can choose not to accept the grant.**

In the instances where we've been asking: why aren't they asking for a donation or charging - we might stipulate we're granting only on condition they also ask for a free will donation, or some such thing.

Regards,

Ruth

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Rootberg, Secretary