

Amherst Cultural Council  
Approved Minutes  
Wednesday, November 8, 2011  
Jones Library, Large Meeting Room

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, Gretchen Fox, and Sondrosh Rodysh, liaison.  
Absent: Laurie Nisonoff.

Ann distributed the agenda and additional information about criteria and denial letters that can also be found on the MCC website. She requested we please inform ourselves using either the printed materials or by going to the website.

Minutes

Not everyone received minutes sent November 3 via e-mail. Attached were the draft minutes of November 2, the running totals of November 2, and the accepted versions of two prior drafts: September 26, and October 26-27. Now that everyone present had paper copies, nobody requested a re-sending. Ann reminded us that eventually all accepted minutes would be uploaded to the Town of Amherst website.

After taking some moments to read minutes of November 2 during the meeting, they were approved as submitted.

Financial Report

Gretchen was back up for reporting grant amounts this evening.

Ruth distributed the updated spreadsheet #3 and explained the extra lines on the final page. The total amount asked has been revised down from the original \$48,542 to \$47,742. The change reflects FY2012-37 Amanda Hill's twice-reduced requests when she submitted amended supplements to her capital expense application, going from \$1,200 to \$900 and finally \$400.

We have approved \$13,165 so far, and have \$6, 142 left. The elementary schools, asking for \$6,962 represents more than what we have left to give, and, at the beginning of the meeting, we also had several more standard applications to consider, including three tabled applications, and 17 more starting with application FY2012-51.

A question arose concerning our obligation to fund all pass grants. Ann stated we do not have to fund them at all, and if we do, we can determine the amount.

Ann also reminded us we also have interest bearing account from which we can draw funds if we want to increase the amount we spend this year. Whatever we take out of that fund will not be replenished. Discussion followed questioning how so much money had accrued (\$13,839). It might have been unencumbered funds from several years back that were not shifted immediately to the following grant cycle. There may have been local fundraising action. There was also mention that the ACC might have had even more money at one time. Sondra Rodysh stated the Town of Amherst moved over \$20,000 to other projects that the ACC had intended to award to the Amherst Cinema project during its early stages. Sondra, who had the most complete information, **doesn't remember** how those funds were used. The Council expressed concern that we would not want to have the current interest bearing account moved away from ACC activities, and yet are reluctant to use a lot of it this year, not knowing how next year's funding at the state level may change.

### Meeting Dates

Ann moved up the Agenda item “Next meeting: substitute chair.” After new information was shared, we realized the next scheduled meeting might not have a quorum to open the meeting at 7:30. The meeting was cancelled.

The new meeting date was added: Wednesday, November 30 @ 6:30. We expect to have at least 6 people in attendance (5 is a quorum).

Ann will take care of cancelling the November 16 meeting and scheduling the November 30 for 6:30pm. We will assume it will take place at the Jones Library unless otherwise notified.

**Ann will also book with the Town the next day’s previously scheduled meeting for Thursday, December 1 @ 6:30, to be held in the Trustees’ Room of the Jones Library.**

Ann will be away November 30. Sandra volunteered to set agenda and run the meeting in her absence.

### Information clarification from past grant discussions:

2012-46 Honoré spoke to Nancy Rose of Peregrine, the literary journal, and then received four gift-wrapped copies of different issues of the publication for our review, as well as a letter in which their mission statement was included.

Peregrine is not part of Amherst Writers and Artists, although they are inspired by them. The people in charge of publication are all over 60 and local, but contributors are of any age and may live anywhere in the country. They do not sell subscriptions because they have an irregular publication rhythm. Peregrine is sold in book stores, but as Jeffrey Amherst Books never paid for issues, they were dropped. Amherst Books is a very strong supporter.

Honoré thought this was the first time they asked the ACC for money, but other Council members, in viewing the issues, noted that some past issued state they were recipients of grants from the MCC, administered through the ACC .

We discussed what other applications we were funding that supported writers: FY2012-47 Danae Marr for the High School - \$500; FY2012-32 Jubilat/Jones Reading Series, \$200. We considered looking more closely at all the grants for writing, together. We also discussed the path of supporting creative writing in the schools, and then supporting it at the adult level so children view it as a viable career and/or vocation.

**Approve: \$200 and revisit to increase or decrease.**

2012-48 Therese Brady Donohue, Picture Book Theatre. Arnold reported Therese is not well.

**Decision remains tabled.**

2012-22 Dance Generators. We moved to continue discussion when we took up other proposals for the Amherst Senior Center.

2012-45 Old Deerfield Productions. We had already approved \$100 with a note to revisit. Since the meeting Ruth contacted them. North Country, listed on the application as a world premiere, is also part of the 11/11/11 Double Take Fringe Festival. Linda McInerney explained there would only be a 24-minute excerpt shown at the Festival. No further action was needed or taken.

2012-37 Amanda Hill, capital expenditure for a stage. Ruth noted the application states they will not charge for performances. This might be limiting in the future, and Ruth requested the acceptance

letter stipulate they need to consider free will donation, or charging if budget requires. Ann will provide wording something like:

**"We award you these funds on condition that you ask the public for a free will donation or charge for events so that in future years you can exhibit economic viability to merit the long-term expenditure nature of a capital grant."**

Voting Continues:

2012-51 Plainfield Congregational Church requests \$300 for Concerts at 7. The Council appreciates it is a wonderful program, but the location is very far from Amherst, and unlikely to serve our residents.

**Deny:** Local Criteria #9. Priority is given to Amherst artists/cultural groups.

2012-52 Quabbin Valley Pro Musica requests \$250 for a concert.

Approve: \$100.

2012-53 Quick Brown Fox: The Literary Journal of the Five Colleges requests \$500 for an issue of Quick Brown Fox. We noted this is the first time they are requesting funds. Discussion arose around whether the colleges should fund it, rather than the ACC. We didn't have a satisfactory reason to deny it, and wondered whether a small amount from us would help them get funding from other places, or would it mean the project doesn't get off the ground. In general, when we underfund applicants, it means a couple of years later there are more unencumbered funds that can boost a grant cycle, but it also means we are supporting other groups this cycle at a lower amount than we would wish.

**Approve: \$50, with a note in the approval letter to state something like: "If you apply next year, we would like to see you pursue other sources of funding beyond the ACC."**

2012-54 The Rainbow Players and ART Works! ETTA Studio & Gallery request \$1,200 for Back off Bully You Self-Empowered Improv Musical. The Members agree it's a terrific program and helps an underserved population, but that we don't have sufficient resources to award what they request.

**We discussed suggesting they work on attracting a wider audience in the award letter, but no decision was made to do so.**

Approve: \$250 .

2012-55 Katie Richardson requests \$550 for Nests and Nooks: Finding Home.

Approve: \$100.

2012-56 Alejandra Rojas requests \$350 for Visual Testimony: Cultural enrichment of poor comm.

**Deny:** Local Criteria 11. Priority is given to projects that demonstrate strong planning.

2012-57 Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra & Chorus requests \$500 for Music in War and Peach-PVS Season finale.

Approve: \$250.

2012-58 Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestras request \$500 for performance.

Approve \$250.

2012-59 Triple Shadow requests \$400 for Music, Masks and Dance of Bali Indonesia at Fort River.

We noted they are also getting other grants, which indicates there is respect for their work. It was also noted the entire request is for the performance fee.

Approve: \$100.

2012-60 The United Arc requests \$100 for Enjoying nature at Camp Keewanee on Leyden Road in Greenfield. The venue is one hour away; we doubt the audience will come from Amherst.

**Deny:** Local Criteria #9. Priority is given to Amherst artists/cultural groups.

2012-61 National Yiddish Book Center requests \$1,000 for Community Open house and Performance. We view this as a good project and also note the economic sign of the times; this is the first time anyone recalls they are requesting funds from the ACC.

Approve: \$300.

2012-62 Youth Action Coalition requests \$1,500 for Arts-for-Change.

Approve: \$400.

The next and last block of applications all performance related for the Amherst Senior Center. We discussed and compared all these plus the Dance Generators application before voting on individual applications. We noted that two applicants, John Root, and Dawn Kelley would also receive funds from the Amherst Council on Aging.

2012-63 Roger Tincknell requests \$300 for This Land is Your Land.

Approve: \$100.

2012-64 John Root requests \$350 for Only Yesterday.

Approve \$50.

**2012-65 Dawn Kelley requests \$150 for Music is Love” Music & Magic Variety Show**

Approve \$100.

2012-66 Richard W. Clark requests \$375 Barrymore for Amherst Senior Center.

Approve \$100.

2012-67 Steve Henderson requests \$900 for Senior Theatre play TBA.

Approve \$250.

2012-22 Dance Generators requests \$400.

Approve \$100.

At the end of the voting, Ruth noted we had \$3,442 left to award, and that the total amount requested still to be considered for the travel grants and for Therese Donahue was either \$7,462 or \$8, 312, depending on what the true asking amount was from Therese (\$500 or \$1,350). The Council Members were reminded that we can choose to draw funds from the interest bearing account. We were advised to consider how much we would draw, if we want to do that, and also to review voting decisions and consider where we want to increase or decrease individual awards.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Rootberg, Secretary