

**Amherst Cultural Council
Accepted Minutes
May 5, 2011
Amherst Room, Jones Library**

Present: Ann Woodbridge (Chair), Katya Ites (Treasurer), Ruth Rootberg (Secretary), Sandra Mullin, Arnold Friedmann, new member Ellen Kosmer, and staff liaison Sondra Radosh. Also present were Therese Donahue of Picture Book Theatre Production, and, for a portion of the meeting, Amherst resident and pianist Susan (last name not given).

Community Input

The main purpose of this meeting was to seek community input, but Therese was the only one there to do that. She noted redundancy in the grant application, and because there is a character limit set, she requested changes in the questions that would allow her to elaborate rather than to repeat herself. Ann said the application is generated from Boston and is used throughout the State; she requested that Therese contact Kylie Sullivan of the MCC directly with her suggestions.

Local Guidelines – Ann Woodbridge to finalize language

The Council discussed making additions to the current local guidelines. (See end of these Minutes for current local guidelines.) We empowered Ann Woodbridge to make textual edits, with or without input from other Council members, in our presence or via e-mail, and after she had spoken with Kylie Sullivan of the MCC, so the guidelines could a) be in keeping with State guidelines, and b) could be added and published to the community before the minutes from this meeting are approved.

One entity – one application

In light of Hampshire Shakespeare's practice of making a separate application for each production, and perhaps then being awarded more money than other similarly sized organizations, the Council wishes for each organization to apply for a season rather than a project. The new guideline would be:

13) For non-PASS grants: only one application from each organization or individual will be considered (i.e., multi-program/project requests must be combined under one application).

Applications from University students

The Council received and granted an award to a UMass student, but is concerned we might become inundated with applications from students. We want to ensure that there is a significant public benefit, should more students file applications. The new guideline would be:

14) We encourage applications from students, but we do not encourage projects whose sole purpose is fulfillment of a requirement for a degree program.

Bangs Senior Center and the many individual applications

The Council discussed the numerous applications that individuals make to perform at the Bangs Senior Center. We also noted many individual performers repeat the same program over several years. Nancy Pagano of the Bangs Senior Center has not been informed of our vision of a "Senior Arts Program" where we would give one large grant and have her allocate the funding. We do appreciate that, while it would reduce our workload, it would entail more administrative work for her. As no such program has been created, we add the next two guidelines that affect several of the applicants to the Bangs:

15) For repeat applicants, new programming will be given preference.

16) We encourage first-time applicants.

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Adhering to procedures

The Council discussed the importance of adhering to procedures. We will insist that grantees provide more documentation that shows they have acknowledged their award. The documentation must show the MCC logo. We will insist grantees adhere to publicity requirements, and produce specific receipts for expenses to be reimbursed. Ann asked Katya to create a checklist to assist grantees with their obligations, and offered to help her develop it. If grantees do not fulfill their obligations, they will not be reimbursed.

On our part, we will no longer make exception to the application deadline: Envelopes must be postmarked by October 15.

Retroactive acknowledgement

We discussed the difficulty organizations have who run their programs before receiving grants, and then get reimbursed retroactively. They can't publicize receiving a grant. We discussed options, including acknowledging grants they have received from ACC in the past, or saying they had applied for a grant for the program/season. Another option is to change the window of programming to only the months after the grant is awarded. For instance, if an application is made in October 2011 and awarded January 2012, the programming would take place from February 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013. We are not sure that is the option we want to choose, but first Ann will check with MCC to see if it's possible.

Extension of reimbursements

The Council wants grantees to understand more clearly their obligation to notify us if their project will not complete on time. Ann will check with MCC to see how much leeway we have with the date a request for extension arrives; is it one year from the date of the letter of the award; one year from receipt of the letter, or could it be December 31 of the year of the award. Possible language is:

"Request for extension of completion of the project and/or receipts submitted for reimbursement must be received by December 31, in writing, of the year of the award."

Website updates

Ruth summarized the updating she has done to the ACC page on the Town website. She pointed out that it is really the responsibility of the liaison, Sondra, but for the time being, as long as Ruth is Secretary, she has volunteered to continue the updates.

Ann said there will be a "calendar" meeting in September. The date for that meeting will be fixed via doodle.com.

Vacancies

There is still one vacancy on the Council, and when Katya's term is up in July, there will be two. The maximum number on the Council is 9, and a quorum is 5. We can operate without filling the vacancies, but Ann still has people to talk with, and is especially interested in identifying someone to fill the role of Treasurer.

Upcoming Events

Katya invited us to her program at the Jones Library May 7, 11-2pm, which is partially funded by the ACC.

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Amherst Ballet will receive its Gold Star Award June 17 at the Chamber of Commerce monthly breakfast, to be held on the Green during Taste of Amherst. MCC will provide \$70 to pay for Council Members to attend. More information will be coming.

Having no more business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Rootberg, Secretary

Current Additional Guidelines

- 9) Priority is given to Amherst artist(s)/cultural groups
- 10) Venues must be confirmed when submitting an application. Please include a letter from the venue as confirmation
- 11) Priority is given to projects that demonstrate strong planning
- 12) Priority is given to individuals with strong qualifications and/or track record