

Town of Auburn, Massachusetts
Auburn Cultural Council
104 Central Street, Auburn MA 01501-2303

Meeting Minutes
Remote: Zoom video call

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

In attendance (remotely): Council members Kathleen Brandt, Andrea Lettic, Melanie Marcou, Piyali Mazumdar, and Stephen Redding. Guest speaker Ricardo Guillaume from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm

1. R. Guillaume introduced himself and gave overview of program and reviewed the Local Cultural Council (LCC) FY23 Guidelines.
 - Confirmed that we are set to give grants as reimbursements (rather than direct grants)
 - Each council must have at least 5 members, no more than 22. Quorum is 4 members.
 - Council member terms are 3 years, may only serve two consecutive terms, then must take at least one year off before coming back.
 - Up to 5% of state funds can be used for promotional and administrative expenses; up to 20% can be spent on a project conducted by the Council.
 - We can fundraise for additional funding in addition to state allocation, donations to the Council are tax-deductible.
 - Community Engagement: we must survey the community yearly, asking people in the town how they want to see money spent so we can create funding priorities, which must be posted by August 31. This was done via Survey Monkey (free version) by last year's Council members in preparation for this year.
 - Shared links:
 - <https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/auburn/>
 - <https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/with-a-little-help-from-town-friends/>
 - <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/lcc-toolkit/>
 - LCC must meet with municipal fiscal officer between Sept 1 – 30
 - Grant cycle
 - Open for applications from September 1 – October 17
 - Then Council members review and make funding decisions. Denials can be appealed. Following the appeal window, we notify acceptances
 - If we want to switch to Direct Grant instead of Reimbursement, we need approval from the town.
 - A. Lettic asked if other LCC's have provided feedback after switching to Direct Grant. R. Guillaume reported that many LCC's appreciate being able to do direct grants. Very rare that people take money and don't do anything for it.
 - A. Lettic asked if there is a way to check other LCC's 'do not grant' lists. R. Guillaume replied that there is no shared list at this time.

- S. Redding asked if LCC's generally spend everything they receive in a year. R. Guillaume responded that often money is left over, typically from projects who are awarded grants but then don't happen or don't use the full grant amount.
 - Eligible projects must occur between July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023. It is possible, therefore to support a project which has already occurred.
 - Grants cannot be used to purchase food or beverage, no individual scholarships.
 - Interviews allowed if we want to talk to applicants.
 - S. Redding asked if it is our responsibility to advertise funded events.
 - Can put out a press release announcing grantees
 - Can promote specific projects, but don't need to
 - Can use account funds for a grantee reception
 - Can login to system to see Grants Management System: massculturalcouncil.smartsimple.com
 - Go through process to determine how much we have to grant before voting
 - M. Marcou will update portal with info
 - S. Redding asked about how to encourage diversity. Can look demographics of grantees from past years and do outreach to people who aren't being reached
 - R. Guillaume left the meeting at 7:02 pm.
2. Follow up with last year's grantees
- Discussion about best way to ensure access to council email, given changing members and multi-factor authentication requirements. May need to get a "burner" cell or Google number. P Mazumdar will research.
 - Everyone who reached out while current members did not have access to email account has been contacted and their issues resolved.
 - Checks are printed by town, so there could be a 2-4 week delay to when the checks get cut.
 - Some projects from last year have recently happened or not yet happened, so reimbursements still coming in from. Approximately 8 still outstanding.
 - M. Marcou will share list of outstanding projects with the council
 - M. Marcou recommended that we switch to Direct Grant from Reimbursement for next year, she will check with town for approval from town.
 - M. Marcou will follow up with Mary DeCoursey about whether she is still on the Council
 - M. Marcou will fill out as much as possible on treasurer's report
3. Vote to approve the minutes from last meeting.
- S. Redding moved
 - A. Lettic seconded
 - Approved unanimously
4. Promoting grant cycle
- Grants cycle announced on Council accounts on Facebook and Instagram
 - P. Mazumdar will create Twitter account
 - All Council members encouraged to post in places where we are on online
 - S. Redding will do Real Auburn Facebook group and NextDoor
 - P. Mazumdar will send to Auburn Public Schools superintendent
5. Next Meeting
- Discussion about next meeting timing and topic

- Next meeting tentatively set for Tuesday, October 25 at 6:00 pm on Zoom when we will begin reviewing grant applications

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm

- K. Brandt moved to adjourn
- S. Redding seconded
- Unanimously approved

Minutes submitted by K. Brandt, secretary