

Watertown Cultural Council (WCC) Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 11, 2024, 7 – 8:30pm

Mastrangelo Room, Watertown Public Library

In attendance: Council members Monica Fairbairn, Nick Haddad, Bredt Handy, Morgan Henderson, Lawrence Kessenich, Janice Provencher, Lois Pond, Angela Tramontano, Sally Young, John Howard Foote, Phyllis Perrone, Greg Papazian

Absent: John Howard Foote, Nicolette Reiss, Janice Provencher

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 7:01 pm by Lois Young.

Approval of previous meetings' minutes: Lois asked for comments on the minutes from the August meeting; none offered. Lawrence moved that they be approved, Phyllis seconded the motion; approved unanimously.

Publicity for grant applications: The grant application period is 9/1 – 10/16/24. The City sent out a press release about it. The Council discussed ways in which individual members could increase distribution among their own networks; all were encouraged to share on social media. Per Lois, Liz Helfer sent the release to the schools, Watertown Business Coalition, the Charles River Chamber of Commerce and the Mosesian Center. There was also a short article in the Watertown News.

Faire on the Square: Scheduled for September 21. Liz Helfer set up tables for the PAAC, WCC and the Cultural District, but was not able to be present, and there weren't any activities associated with the tables that might draw interest. The Council decided not to have members scheduled to attend, deciding that the event wasn't one that was likely to be worth the volunteer time unlike the Arts Market.

Council members did discuss a bigger banner for events like this, and developing a better logo. Greg suggested having a contest for WHS students who would then have something to add to a portfolio if they won. There definitely needs to be a high res version of whatever logo the Council uses. It was decided that this is a good project for the spring agenda.

Public Arts and Culture Committee update: Sally reported that she started as the WCC liaison with the PACC about the time Liz Helfer started. Sally noted that she has done a lot of work in that position.

- Edible Watertown project – has \$70,000 grant which funded the program and Sally/PAAC have applied for a second grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The school have had an intern, signs in the elementary school gardens and a shed in the middle school garden all associated with the project. Sally reports that the kids are really motivated, and there is a little money left over that might fund an intern again next year. The NEA grant would pair a scientist with an artist to create a public installation or performance.
- The River of Light project is moving along. WCC voted last year to partner with the PAAC but hadn't made a monetary commitment. Lois noted that the Council needs a

proposal to vote on in order to commit money. Sally will send the report on the project around, and will ask the PAAC what the deadline is for committing.

- Sally's term on the PAAC expires in November; she would like to continue as the WCC liaison, but asked if anyone else was interested. Lois asked if there was a motion to renew Sally as the liaison; the Council decided to vote in October so that members of the Council could decide whether they were interested.

Reports from 2024 grantees:

Lois asked council members if they had received reports from their grantees. Some have been received. Lois will send an email to all grantees reminding them to get them in, and then individual council members will follow up with their assigned grantees. Lois noted that the reports usually go to the WCC dropbox file, and she will make sure that all council members have access. MCC wants to know that the reports have been received, but don't want the reports themselves.

Nick and Marie (previous council member) both had grantees from last year that didn't execute their projects – Lois and Nick will follow up with those.

Distribution of additional Council funds for 2025:

Nick asked to revisit the discussion of how the Council will distribute the additional funds received for 2025 (combination of funds from the City and the MCC).

Lois recalled John recommending that we fully fund more grants (rather than partially funding some). Nick asked what else we might sponsor as the Council, like the Lantern Parade or creation of a new logo for us. Phyllis suggested collaboration with Liz Helfer, and suggested she be invited to the next meeting. Bredt suggested we look at the applications received through the MCC portal and then make decisions about additional funds once we have made decisions on those. Greg suggesting focusing on individuals to lift up rather than funding larger organizations. He also noted that the high school doesn't fund the arts the way that it funds sports. He will talk to the head of the arts department. Monica did note that MCC now has focused grants for schools, and that might be a source of direct funding for them that would allow WCC to focus other places. Morgan asked about additional ways to promote WCC and available grant \$\$; Greg suggested a video and will work with Watertown Cable to create one.

Grantee programs:

Sally asked if anyone had been to grantee programs.

- Nick noted that the Boys and Girls Club program was well-attended and Gore Place tours were interesting.
- Monica had oversight of some grants to school programs, and said it was hard to get permission to attend those. She will reach out to MCC to inquire about how the new grants directly to schools work.

Lois reminded folks that Jay Wong is our new MCC rep. Bredt will run the October meeting.

Business concluded, Bredt made a motion to adjourn; Morgan 2nd. Meeting unanimously adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted – Morgan Kennedy Henderson, WCC Secretary