

Watertown Cultural Council Minutes

September 10, 2025

7:00-8:30pm, Watertown City Hall 3rd floor Meeting Room

Present: Nick Haddad, Morgan Henderson, Lawrence Kessenich, Elektra Newman, Trisha O'Connell, Greg Papasian, Phyllis Perrone, Meg Ramsdell, Angela Tramontano, Nerida White, Sally Young

Absent: Lois Pond, Rebekah Zincavage

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm with a quorum present. Morgan led the meeting in Lois's absence.

1. Member Introductions

- Members introduced themselves to the council for those who were unable to attend the August meeting

2. Minutes

- August 2025 minutes were approved: Nick approved, Lawrence seconded, all in favor

3. Grant season

- Grant season is now open, deadline October 16, 2025
- Projects must benefit Watertown residents, but artists do not need to be from Watertown
- Having a clear budget and venue helps strengthen the grant proposal
- Sally reminded members that people can refer those interested to one of us if they have questions
- Both the MCC and WCC websites have more information

4. FY25 Liaisons

- Members should remind their grantees that their final project report is due once the project is complete
 - Liaisons should send their grantees a reminder with the final report template attached
 - Grantees should let the liaison know about any upcoming project dates so WCC can promote on social media and also attend when possible

5. Logo contest prizes

- Greg explained the logo contest to new members; WCC is keeping our old logo but awarding prizes
 - Lois sent emails to the winners
 - Greg will send each winner's information and prize certificate to Morgan so she can send them their checks

6. Grant education committee update

- Nick explained the committee: will develop the process on how to evaluate proposals
- Vote was held to approve the committee charge, as stated:

Grants Education Committee Charge

Prior to the annual review of grant applications: develops both a template and a process for scoring applications; presents them to the Watertown Cultural Council for discussion, possible revision, and adoption; and distributes the final version of the template to Council members.

At a Council meeting following the annual review of grant applications: leads a discussion to review both the template and the grant awards process and collect suggestions for possible improvements to both.

- Vote to accept: Angela approved, Greg seconded, all approved committee charge
- Nick and Trisha provided members with:
 - spreadsheet template to help keep track of grant proposals
 - guide to help members consider proposal: does it match WCC priorities? Is quality sufficient?
- Members should review both handouts prior to next meeting, any questions and modifications will be discussed at the October meeting
- Nick reminded members that it is important to hear from those who have a minority vote during the grant review process
- Sally stated that receiving a WCC grant can often help projects get other grants.
- Morgan stated that the application has a question regarding whether the project can be held even if not fully funded, which can be considered during grant review
- Greg explained that the grant proposals come in one large document, he will bookmark them to help with the process

- Nick proposed having a separate data committee
 - Angela currently handles this, but having a committee could help her and allow WCC to track other trends, such as how often council approves/rejects the same grantee

7. Finance update

- Morgan is in the process of taking everything over from John and this should be completed this year
- WCC already received the \$17,000 allotted by the city and the funds are in our account
- \$16,400 from MCC has been approved and should arrive soon
- Morgan reminded members that money from the city will be set aside for the grantee event, Gorky mural, and other administrative needs
- Funds from MCC must go to grants that fit WCC priorities, but city is more flexible (for example, funds went to River of Light project).
- Morgan will provide WCC handbook updates at the next meeting

8. Faire on the Square and Arts Market

- This year's date is Sept 13, 2025
- Liz will put WCC information out for the council
- WCC will not staff officially, but members can stop by the table and help out if interested
- WCC focuses on Arts Market because it is a better fit for the council's needs
 - Approximately 3,600 went this year
 - Candy and coloring books helped bring in kids, so WCC members could discuss council with parents
- Greg plans to make a WCC trailer for cable TV, a QR code could be placed on promotional materials to bring people to the trailer
- Other ideas for future Arts Markets:
 - Add trailer QR code to flyer
 - Create flyer with questions to help visitors start a discussion
 - Create a poster with photos from grantee projects to hang at the WCC table

9. Edible Watertown

- Sally updated members on Edible Watertown and the 4 artists/scientist pairings

- Whitney Woods: design an information board
- Sound installation on the Arsenal Yard green
- Charles River Watershed mural
- Sculpture installation on community path
- Edible Watertown also received a NEA grant for the projects and fund are in the account
- Sally will send upcoming dates for the projects

10. Other Items

- Greg went into more detail about the trailer. It will have: intro, WCC description, example projects, grantees discussing their projects, social media accounts, how to apply
 - Morgan and Sally will send suggestions of grantees who could discuss their projects in the trailer (for example Matt Hanna, Xin Peng)
- Sally encouraged members to sign up for the city-wide arts and culture newsletter
- There is a member arts show on September 18, 2025 at Mosesian Center for the Arts. Sally will have her art there.
- The Mosesian Center has a new executive director. Morgan will ask her to attend a meeting to meet WCC members.
- Nick reminded members to come to the next meeting with suggestions for the grant education committee
- Greg encouraged all members to follow WCC on Instagram and Facebook.
- The next meeting is on October 8, 2025, 7:00-8:30pm, in the city hall 3rd floor meeting room

11. With no other discussion items, Morgan proposed to adjourn the meeting. Lawrence approved, Nick seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

-Angela Tramontano, secretary