

Watertown Cultural Council Minutes

October 8, 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, Lois Pond, Meg Ramsdell, Angela Tramontano, Nerida White, Sally Young, Rebekah Zinavage

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm with a quorum present.

1. Minutes

- September 2025 minutes were approved: Morgan approved, Phyllis seconded, Lois abstained, all others in favor

2. Grant education committee and grant process updates

- Nick provided handouts to members with questions to consider when reviewing grants and went over the timeline and process
- MCC provides all grants in a panel book pdf. Greg will bookmark the pdf so members can flip through it easily to the number they need
- Lois will enter grant approvals and denials in the MCC website.
- Lois explained some past reasons WCC rejected grants and explained the process if a grantee requested reconsideration
- Larry recommended that everyone use the pdf and not the website because the numbers did not match last year
- Sally reminded members that grantees can use awards to leverage other funds
- Experienced members explained how they typically review grants to new members
- Lois and Nick reminded members that if they have a compelling point as to why they want to approve or reject a grant to bring it up during discussion
- Nick went over the proposal question handout in more detail, and reminded members that grants should align with WCC's current priorities
- Nick suggested a data collection committee in the future to track grant trends. Lois stated that she looks at each year separately.
- Morgan requested that projects with no former grant application this year (ie River of Light) have a written explanation and spokesperson for members.
- Angela will ask city for an additional table for the discussion meetings

3. FY26 Committee Review

- Grant Education: Nick, Trisha
- Oversight: Lois, Morgan, Angela
- Communications: Greg, Phyllis, Lawrence
- Data collection: to be discussed after grant decisions are sent
- Fundraising: No longer needed. WCC cannot individually fundraise and the previous objective of asking city for matching funds was me

4. Marketing and events

- Faire on the Square? Did not go in 2024 and did not negatively affect grant submissions, Lois thinks the Arts Market is a better fit and opportunity for WCC
- Communications committee will handle the publicity for the Arts Market (what is needed at table, volunteers to staff table, etc)
 - Elektra and Nerida will assist committee with Arts Market publicity

5. Communications committee update

- Greg will determine how to connect WCC's Instagram and Facebook accounts
- Lawrence has article about WCC on Watertown Patch
- Phyllis recommended that someone check the Watertown Cultural district website to ensure that it is updated. Morgan reminded members that grantees should add their events to the website.

6. Finance update

- Morgan stated that we have funds from the city in our account but don't have MCC funds yet. She has taken over everything from John
- All funds are balanced. Last year the city funds went to Liz's account, but this year both sets of funds will be in our account.

7. Guidelines handbook

- Morgan will send draft so members can review for a future meeting after grants are decided
- Trisha will include grants education committee information in the appendix
- Angela will send list of WCC meeting dates again

8. Grantee updates

- Greg stated that one grantee lost her venue and is investigating other options. Lois asked if she can get the event done by June 30, otherwise she will need to send grant money back to WCC
- Upcoming grantee event on October 11: Irish Ceili at Canadian American Club. All members are encouraged to attend.

9. Other Items

- December meeting: should discuss location for grantee event in May. Lois will also discuss any potential grantees who asked for reconsideration, if needed.
- Lois and Morgan will rewrite the grantee letters that are sent in January
- Morgan reminded Greg and Lois that she needs W9s to send logo prize checks

10. With no other discussion items, Lois proposed to adjourn the meeting. Morgan approved, Phyllis seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

-Angela Tramontano, secretary