

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

Meeting Minutes
Remote: Zoom video call

Thursday, March 30, 2023

In attendance (remotely): Stephen Redding, Piya Mazumdar, Kate Brandt, Melanie Marcou, Ricardo Guillaume

Absent: Suhas Barua

Meeting Called to Order at 6:03 pm

1. S. Redding moved that the minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting be accepted as submitted by K. Brandt with the correction to the meeting time. P. Mazumdar seconded. Unanimously approved.
2. Meeting with Town Manager
 - a. P. Mazumdar and S. Redding met with the Town Manager Ed Kazanovicz and his assistant Danielle Chamberland Roberts to review what the Council has been up to lately and the following topics:
 - b. Switching from reimbursement to direct payment for the next cycle.
 - i. They discussed pros and cons/risks and all agreed to make the switch
 - ii. The Town needed a letter from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which was sent by R. Guillaume the following day. That letter is now on file with Town and is attached at the end of these minutes.
 - iii. The letter sent from the MCC regarding the change should be sent with the checks to grantees in the next grant cycle, for at least one cycle.
 - iv. R. Guillaume suggested adding a PSA in the guidelines when we open the next application process.
 - v. General discussion about the process with the switch to direct payment
 - c. New member recruitment
 - i. Can attend events/activities to recruit
 - ii. R. Guillaume shared recruitment flyer/info with South/Central Massachusetts list
 - iii. Can use admin funds if there is a cost to table at an event
 - iv. Perhaps an ad in the program for school performances
 - d. Ed also mentioned the possibility of putting some live events on the town cable access channel.
 - i. P. Mazumdar suggested also suggested live streaming events (or parts of them) on our social media channels
3. Auburn Annual Report

- a. Requested by Town Manager's office on the last cycle. S. Redding based on the prior year's report and updated with new dates, names, etc. R. Guillaume helped S. Redding find the grants awarded through the MCC grant management system. It was finished and submitted to the Town.
4. Auburn Quarterly Newsletter
 - a. P. Samant sent recruitment flyer and photos/bios of the Council members for the quarterly newsletter
5. Priority Survey
 - a. Usually conducted in the summer to get info about what kinds of programs are important to the community. The results will inform our priorities that are posted before applications open.
 - b. Priorities must be posted no later than August 31 (prior to cycle starting on September 1)
 - c. R. Guillaume will send examples of other surveys
 - d. S. Redding also encouraged council members to get feedback from individuals in their networks
6. Recruitment
 - a. MCC does not require council members to live in the town, but the Town of Auburn does.
 - b. Town will do basic vetting of candidates and forward along to us to review.
 - c. If we have more than two applicants, we will interview to ensure a good fit, if only two, we will accept both onto the council.
 - d. At June meeting, we will elect officers for next year, but can add new members at any time through year.
7. Future Meetings
 - a. Can continue to meet remotely for at least two more years.
8. Next meeting planned for Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm via Zoom
9. S. Redding moved to adjourn. K. Brandt seconded. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Minutes submitted by K. Brandt, secretary

Additional Materials:

Links posted in Zoom Chat:

18:11:20 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

You can also put a PSA about is in your guidelines when the time comes
<https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/auburn/>

18:37:33 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

These could've carried over from FY20-22 <https://massculturalcouncil.org/local-council/auburn/>

18:43:41 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

List of Individual artists who received pandemic relief funding if there's anyone local to reach out to <https://massculturalcouncil.org/artists-art/cultural-sector-recovery-grants-for-individuals/funding-list/>

18:44:03 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

Organizations <https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/cultural-sector-recovery-grants-for-organizations/funding-list/>

18:44:11 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

<https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/mass-cultural-council-celebrates-51m-in-cultural-sector-pandemic-recovery-grants/>

18:54:10 From Ricardo Guillaume, Mass Cultural Council to Everyone:

<https://massculturalcouncil.org/event/amplifying-youth-voices-on-local-cultural-councils/>

Letter from Massachusetts Cultural Council about switch to direct payment

From: "Guillaume, Ricardo (ART)" <ricardo.guillaume@state.ma.us>

Date: March 28, 2023 at 2:26:54 PM EDT

To: Piya Samant <piyali20@gmail.com>

Cc: auburnculturalcouncil@gmail.com

Subject: In support of Direct Granting

Good afternoon, Piya

I'm writing to you to let you know that the Community Initiative team wholeheartedly supports local cultural councils (LCCs) becoming direct granters.

When a LCC reimburses, this often means their grantee must pay out of pocket to do their project and potentially wait for a lengthy period before being reimbursed for those expenses. Sometimes grantees forget to seek reimbursement, the money becomes encumbered, and is carried over to the LCC's next cycle - complicating the financial reporting a LCC must do to calculate the exact amount of money it has to grant to new applicants.

With direct granting, LCCs may pay their grantees in advance, both financially stabilizing the grantee and ensuring that the funds will leave the account and not be backed up for the next cycle. In our experience with direct granting, instances of a grantee being paid in advance and not showing proof of a completed project have been extremely rare. If such were to happen, it is Mass Cultural Council's state funds and the Agency's responsibility and not the municipality's.

We believe that direct granting supports both the LCC and their grantees in a way that reimbursement granting cannot.

Below is a list of LCCs I work with who direct:

Franklin county: Conway Cultural Council, Greenfield Local Cultural Council, Leverett Cultural Council, Montague Cultural Council, Northfield Cultural Council, and Shelburne Cultural Council

South-Central MA: Mendon Cultural Council, North Brookfield Cultural Council, Paxton Cultural Council, Sutton Cultural Council, Webster Cultural Council, and Worcester Arts Council.

All the best,

Ricky

Ricardo Guillaume

He/him/his

Program Officer

Communities

Mass Cultural Council

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