

**Cultural Council
Minutes
November 17, 2021**

Members in Attendance: Joseph Bisbee, Jr., Daniel Callahan, Mary Pap, Marie Stoeckel, and Hong Vuong

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Joe made a motion to approve the October 20, 2021 meeting minutes. Dan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Old Business

Dan asked that his discussion with the Mayor's office regarding finalizing paperwork for items that have been paid, be added to the minutes. He requested this be included in the minutes and the minutes were approved as amended.

Joe brought up the grant cycle timeline and encouraged all members to read the November 1st email sent out by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to all local cultural council members, which contains useful information on the grant cycle, timelines, and reporting requirements. Members can now view all grant applications that were submitted and can access the panel books online.

Joe mentioned that the Weymouth Cultural Council received almost 40 grant applications. It was noted that more outreach to the public about the availability of grants might be necessary next year before the next grant cycle. One possible option would be to send out press releases through the mayor's office announcing that the council granted over \$40,000 to various local organizations.

Community engagement and the results of the recent community input survey were discussed. The council was pleased with the number of respondents that took the survey this year. There were 102 responses to the survey that was available online on the Town of Weymouth's website, Facebook page, and twitter. A hard copy of the survey was also made available to Weymouth seniors at the Whipple Center. Marie volunteered to provide the survey to the seniors and work with the Whipple Center staff to make it available. She was disappointed at how long it took to get approval to place them at the senior center, however, they were finally made available. Those results were not yet collected, but Marie said she would pick up the surveys next week and report back on the senior responses. She was also told that next year the members who receive the online newsletter can also get the survey shared electronically, if we were interested in that option as well.

The members went over each survey question, and it was apparent that the majority of responses reflected the priorities of the council, and the desires of the community to fund programs geared towards arts education in schools, community wide gatherings, projects celebrating local history, and nature, science and environmental programs. The grants that the council has funded over the years, such as school and library programming, was consistent with the results of the survey. Most residents supported funding for programs that were geared towards families and teens. Most residents, about 70%, were informed about cultural activities through social media. Marie and Hong were curious as to how our applicants that were awarded grants advertised their events. Since so many Weymouth residents hear about cultural activities through various social media platforms, it would be beneficial for grantees to utilize social media in advertising their events and programs. That advertisement would also bring more awareness and visibility to the Weymouth Cultural Council in general.

Hong mentioned how the purpose of the community input survey was two-fold: to meet the state requirement of community outreach and to better understand the desires and needs of the community when making our funding decisions. Hong wondered how we can better use the community input we receive and ways we can reach out in the future besides just the survey. It is something that the council wants to think about in the next grant cycle. Quite a few comments from the survey results mentioned that residents were not aware of cultural council grants and funding being available for local groups and organizations. The council members discussed putting out a press release in the fall, well in advance of grant applications being due; to get awareness out in time for applicants to apply. Other means of public service announcements around town as well should be utilized.

New Business

Joe commenced the election of council roles for Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The first election was for Chair. Marie made a motion to nominate Joe as Chair, Hong seconded the motion; it passed unanimously. Next, Joe made a motion to vote on the Secretary position. Marie nominated Mary and Joe seconded; the motion passed unanimously. Joe made a motion to vote on the position of Treasurer. Joe nominated Dan and Mary seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Joe urged all the members to pull up the panel books online and start reviewing the grant applications ahead of our voting meeting. Dan offered to share a spreadsheet he made of all the grant applications. Dan was thanked for all of his work in putting together helpful spread sheets for the council.

Joe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. and Dan seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cultural Council is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. to be held via Zoom.

Approved by: Joseph Bisbee

Mary A. Pap

Dated: 12/15/2021

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