

Fairhaven Cultural Council Meeting Minutes for 9-20-2023

September 20, 2023 at 6:30 PM

Meeting held via Zoom

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2024 JUN 28 PM2:34

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Beth Ann Gallagher

Members in Attendance: Ron Fortier & Jen Frasier

Associate Members in Attendance: Beth Ann Gallagher & John Walker

Ex Officio in Attendance: Michael Luey

Liaison in Attendance: Chris Richard

Zoom Coordinator: Alyssa Botelho

Ron Fortier called the meeting to order. Start time not noted.

Ron Fortier thanked Michael Luey for acting as an advisor and trainer and for passing on vital information.

Ron Fortier conducted roll call and introduced all attendees to each other.

Ron Fortier brought up the possibility of imposing grant limits on applicants. When he served on the New Bedford Cultural Council, that council capped the total grant funds that could be awarded to applicants, whether they submitted one or multiple grants. Michael Luey indicated that he didn't think a cap was necessary, that no previous applicant had requested more than \$2,500 during his council service.

The discussion moved on to the council's current budget. Michael said the award from the state for this grant year was \$11,500, and the town awarded the council an additional \$2,750—making the council's total spending budget \$14,250.

Ron Fortier asked Michael Luey how many applicants applied last year. There were 33 applicants. Ron next asked the total applicants awarded, and Michael examined his spreadsheet and then answered about 17.

Beth Ann Gallagher shared that the Mass Cultural Council now has a posted video webinar instructing applicants on how to apply. Ron messaged the link to the group.

Chris Richard left the meeting early due to Zoom connection issues.

Ron Fortier said Wendy Drumm gave him her proxy vote for use at the meeting.

Michael Luey asked Ron Fortier for current council membership. Ron listed current full members as Lisa Breese, Jen Frasier, and himself. He left Wendy Drumm off the list and totaled

the membership as 3. (Minute taker correction: Counting Wendy, total membership was 4.) Beth Ann Gallagher and John Walker are onboarding and when full members will bring the total up to 5. (Minute taker correction: the total would be 6, including Wendy.) Michael said 3 is the quorum based on a membership of 5. (Minute taker correction: If total full membership was 4, including Wendy, then the current quorum was 2.)

Ron Fortier opened the vote on Jen Frasier becoming Treasurer. Ron voted yea for his vote and for Wendy's proxy vote. Jen's vote was not asked for, but was a yea. Jen received a unanimous vote. Michael Luey confirmed a vote had just occurred.

Ron Fortier moved the meeting on to voting Beth Ann Gallagher and John Walker in as associate members. He said there was a formal process to joining the council fully that needed to be followed, including being sworn in. He said he would send a link with information. Ron conducted a vote for each new associate member.

Ron Fortier brought up the need for more council members and encouraged the new associates to recruit from their network. Ron then attempted to recruit Alyssa Botelho, who declined for this year, but indicated future interest.

Michael Luey brought upon the need for signatories. Last year's signatories were Michael, Wendy Drumm, and Ron. Michael said that signatories are needed to sign grant paperwork. Two authorized signatories are needed to sign each applicant's paperwork. Michael said a motion was needed to designate signatories. Ron and Jen Frasier were obvious signers. John Walker volunteered, and Ron asked Beth Ann Gallagher. All 4 members were voted as signatories.

Michael Luey asked if the secretary was present and taking minutes or was anyone taking minutes. Ron Fortier answered Lisa Breese was not present. Jen Frasier brought up the fact the meeting is being recorded. Ron Fortier said the transcript can be pulled. Michael said the minutes need to reflect the results of this vote and that they should be sent with a letter to the town's accountant Anne Carreiro to update her.

Ron Fortier returned to the grant cap discussion. Michael Luey said we never had one. The Cultural Council, in the past, would go through voting rounds. First the council would vote to pass on grants to the next round. Next the council would examine the possible award total. Last it would make cuts based on the available award total. Ron motioned to table the grant cap and a per application grant cap. He indicated the committee could follow precedent in deciding awards.

Ron Fortier gave an overview of current grant priorities as essentially meaning projects must benefit Fairhaven residents primarily. Michael Luey said the priorities were firm with the town's money, but looser with the state's. Ron reemphasized who must benefit and gave an example under which there would be no benefit to the town.

Ron Fortier solicited Michael Luey for more operational advice. Michael said Ron needed to work with his contact at the Mass Cultural Council to get the financial report to open. Ron verified that Jen Frasier received the link via email from him.

Ron Fortier reviewed the type of grant the Cultural Council awards. It is a direct grant, not a reimbursement grant. After January's award notification, grantees receive a check, and then they must submit a report on grant use.

Michael Luey brought up SmartSimple. Ron Fortier explained it's the portal used to access grant information from the Mass Cultural Council. Michael said the grants need to be opened for FY24 (i.e. fiscal year 2024). Once that's completed the financial report for FY24 will open.

Ron Fortier brought up the council's Facebook page. He said Hanako said it seemed to be up-to-date. Ron asked Jen Frasier to review the page. Ron wanted the login information to access the Facebook page. Beth Ann Gallagher asked Alyssa Botelho to discuss access. Alyssa is in charge of the town's social media. Beth Ann explained members would need to be added in; that they would need a personal Facebook account to be added; and what the difference is between Facebook admins and editors. Jen said Lisa Breese had been updating the page. Alyssa joined the conversation and explained her management of the page. She has the authority to add page contributors.

Ron Fortier said he is working on the missed budget deadline (Added note: with Jay Wong from the Mass Cultural Council).

Ron Fortier brought up reviewing the plan book (i.e. the document containing all grant applications). That will be the longest meeting of the year. He brought up the idea of splitting the book up between members for review. Grant applications will be closing on October 17, 2024. Then we will vote on approvals and declinations with notifications to grantees following. He discussed his experience on the New Bedford Cultural Council. Michael Luey emphasized the difference in award size and the size of New Bedford's applicant pool and how we needn't take them as a model.

Michael Luey reviewed funds use. He said grantees must spend awards by June 30, but that Anne Carreiro has a workaround if need be. It's an annual award of money that must get spent. Michael and Jen Frasier would be meeting with Anne Carreiro on Monday morning.

Since Lisa Breese was not present, review of minutes from August 9, 2023 was skipped.

John Walker asked about the post-grant award process. He asked about the reports they must make. Michael Luey reviewed application process, including January's award notifications. Then the Treasurer processes grant paperwork and passes it on to Anne Carreiro, who issues checks. Some grantees are late to submit their paperwork to be paid and their post-award reports. The

follow-up work traditionally fall on the Treasurer. Ron Fortier mentioned supporting Jen during the year the grantees have to complete their funded projects.

Ron Fortier asked Michael Luey if there's a way to stagger checks for later occurring projects. Michael said the problem would be in the standard awarding of the grant award letters. They ask for forms to be submitted within two weeks of the award in order to receive their checks. Michael says it's easier to pay it. Michael clarified that the grants are awarded in January, and the period they have to work in is the calendar year. Michael emphasized being cognizant of the grantee's project dates on their application before following up on reports.

Ron Fortier and Michael Luey discussed proof of funded project completion—the report and ways grantees can prove they spent their award properly AND acknowledged publicly the Fairhaven Cultural Council's and Mass Cultural Council's support.

Ron Fortier said he would work on a calendar for the next meeting. He would be going away on vacation to Portugal. He will return on October 9. He said all were welcome to contact via email with questions, even while he is away. Jen Frasier asked to verify next meeting date. Ron said it would be in November based on application deadline of October 17.

Ron Fortier adjourned the meeting at 7:21 PM.