

Montague Cultural Council
Sunday, February 4, 2018, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.
Gill-Montague Senior Center
62 5th Street, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Present: Jen Audley, Rachel Teumim, John Furbish, Pam Allan, Kate Martineau, Anne Harding, Dan Brandon

Absent: Jan Atamian, Shannon Coakley-Ramsey

Guests: Cindi Oldham, Suzanne LoManto, Walter Ramsey

1. **CTO:** the meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

2. **Minutes:**

12/17/17 – on a motion by Rachel & second by Anne the minutes of the 12/17/17 Council meeting were unanimously approved with a correction to the spelling of “cultural” on page 2.

12/19/17 – on a motion by Anne & second by Dan the minutes of the RiverCulture Liaison subcommittee were unanimously approved.

3. **Treasurer’s Report:**

FY17 – The January 2018 report on the FY17 grantees was distributed for review. No questions were raised.

FY18 – The January 2018 report on the FY18 grantees was distributed for review. Six grantees returned their paperwork in the two week time frame and their contract invoices were submitted for payment. Anne has contacted the recipients who have not returned their paperwork. Some of the organizations who have applied for grants have questions about the pilot program process and prefer not to issue checks from their program funds as they do not want to be employers. Jen has pushed the questions to the MA Cultural Council.

4. **Request:**

Cindi Oldham presented information about a potential partnership with Greenfield’s Recover Learning Center (RLC) and the Montague Catholic Ministries Women’s Center to offer an inclusive watercolor course at the Women’s Center on Saturday under the umbrella of RLC. Publicity will need to make it clear that the program is not just for women. Cindi has also arranged for an exhibit at the Great Falls Discovery Center for the month of August, 2018. The class series will start in May or June and consist of 6 to 8 classes.

5. **Discussion: FY18 Program Promotion**

Typically when grants have been awarded MCC makes an announcement to the press; however, until all signed contracts have been returned from grant recipients. At this time 9 have been received and all other grantees have been reminded to return their agreements. It was agreed to shut down the Montague Cultural Council web page and start using the

Town of Montague page designated for MCC. Links on the State CC site will be updated to reflect the new location for information. We want to try and increase the visibility of the Massachusetts Cultural Council as well as the events funded by our local council. It would be nice to see all of them on the RiverCulture page as well as the town calendar. Suzanne LoManto said she would put together a press kit packet with a sample press release, list of local radio, press & television stations as well as the RiverCulture contact information.

John Furbish reminded members that there are seven categories now (versus four) and would like to see some marketing talking about the category (dance, music, theater, science, humanities, multidisciplinary, etc.)

Rachel mentioned the earlier discussion of each council member being a liaison to a certain number of grantees. Anne agreed to add some columns to the monthly treasurer's report to include the liaison and other information.

Rachel will investigate purchasing some placards or some sort of foam core board to advertise the Montague & Massachusetts Cultural Council sponsorship at the upcoming events. Suzanne said we could store them in her office once it's finished. Once we have them we can let the grantees know about them.

Other suggestions were stickers/shirts/pins/buttons etc. – possibly bulk purchases to give away at council events.

Jen would like to reach out to Erving and Gill Cultural Councils to see about future networking events and/or cosponsoring events. The one in Greenfield last year was great and had good attendance.

John Furbish noted that former MCC member Lisa Davol will be singing at the Great Falls Discovery Center Coffee House on Friday, February 9th.

6. Presentation/Discussion:

Walter Ramsey (Town Planner) and Suzanne LoManto (Turners Falls RiverCulture Coordinator) reported on proposed changes with the RiverCulture program. In its eleventh year the position coordinator position is currently being funded by the town as a contractor.

Prior to this year, the program was the recipient of an MA Cultural Council Adams grant which provided substantial funding over the years. It was noted that all Adams grants in the Commonwealth had been discontinued (not just Montague).

The Planning Department is proposing a change to add a town position for 25 hours/week reporting to the Planning Department. They are still working on the framework but are looking for opportunities for collaboration and want the title to be "Cultural Coordinator" (CC) with an eye toward expanding cultural programming in all five villages of the town.

One possible framework was distributed for review and comment. Although there was no formal proposal for the role of the Montague Cultural Council to work with the CC, we threw

out some ideas – cooperative publicity; MCC could refer artists who were not funded to the cultural coordinator for possible opportunities; MCC and the CC could collaborate on projects; MCC might have a seat on an executive oversight committee; MCC and CC might investigate annual events etc.

Jen has discussed this with the chair of the Finance Committee (FC). She noted the job of the FC is to ask the hard questions the financial aspects of the proposal and look at cost benefits. The endorsement of the FC is important to the success of the proposal. Ultimately the addition of the position would need to be voted at Town Meeting. Jen suggested the MCC could be helpful by being critical and asking hard questions – which should go to Walter and/or Suzanne. Members of MCC are welcome to attend the March 7, 2018 FC meeting to support the proposal as well as writing personal letter of support if desired.

Anne moved that MCC write a letter to the Selectboard (SB) and Finance Committee supporting the addition of a Cultural Coordinator position. Second by Kate. Vote: all in favor. Kate and Anne will draft a letter to be sent to MCC members for review and then sent to the SB and FC. Our goal is to have it complete by 3/1/18.

There was further discussion on ways MCC and the CC could help each other; the importance of expanding the role of the CC to include all the villages; other potential collaborators (for example, Millers Art Bridge, Sawmill River Arts, Montague Business Association etc.) Jen noted that Montague is considered by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to be a leader both locally and statewide. The creation of a town position would ensure this trajectory of innovation continues and would reflect well on the town as a return on the State's investment in Montague.

On another note Suzanne told MCC she has applied for Montague's inclusion in a state-wide Art Week (formerly a Boston event) that is happening 4/27-5/6/18. She is working with Lisa Davol (Marketing and Membership Manager of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce) to organize events in both Greenfield and Montague. They are looking for participants to host/prepare participatory events during the time frame. Jen feels strongly that Montague should have a strong program of events for Art Week.

7. Other Topics:

- a. Town of Montague Annual Report – Jen is planning to submit a page of information about FY17 MCC activities for inclusion the town's annual report.
- b. New Town Website – we discussed this previously with regard to moving our web information to the town site as well as linking to our page on the MA Cultural Council site. Jen noted that we don't have much on the site at this time but that we should flesh out our information and start adding to it especially since there are issues with our former website.
- c. MCC event on March 17 – Montague is going to be featured on a special event called "A Sense of Place" to be held in Worcester. Jen has participated in a conference call and will be on the panel at the event. She will have five minutes for a brief presentation on Montague and we're doing here. She'll be seeking

input from multiple sources for the presentation. She will be allowed five slides for the presentation.

- d. Next meeting dates – the first Sunday of March and April were discussed as potential meeting dates (to be held at the senior center from 1-3 p.m.) March 4 was accepted but it was suggested we meet April 8 instead of April 1 (which is Easter Sunday).

8. Topics not anticipated: none