

MONTAGUE CULTURAL COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Date	July 22, 2026
Time	10:05 AM – 11:21 AM
Attendees	Jon-Marc Seimon (Chair), Ben Letcher (outgoing Treasurer), Julie Kumble, Kate Martineau (Secretary), Maggie Martin

1. Call to Order

Meeting convened at 10:05 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from the last two meetings — Maggie motions to approve, Ben seconds, passed unanimously.

3. Recruiting New Members

- Council currently needs at least 2 new members (minimum 5 needed to vote; 3 consistently active members required to function, though more is preferred).
- Maggie Martin is stepping back after long service; will remain nominally on the council (won't formally resign) until a replacement is found but does not plan to attend regularly.
- Ben's term structure was clarified — terms are staggered as 1-year commitments (out of a 3-year cycle)
- **Candidates discussed:**
 - **Galen Huckins** — no response after outreach; considered unlikely at this point. One more attempt may be made.
 - **Klon Koehler** — confirmed interested and ready to join. Next steps: send onboarding info, get sworn in by the Town Clerk's office.
 - Mark at “Two Ghosts” — reached out, no reply yet; Julie will try again.
 - Julie trying names off “Laurie’s list”
 - **Kaia** at Waterway Arts— approached, currently too busy (recently retired, may be interested next year).
 - **Nick** (runs Sadie's) — considered too busy.
 - Other ideas raised: National Honor Society teens (community service requirement — precedent of two students volunteering at a past event was very positive), art/music/theater teachers as a recruiting channel, skate park outreach/flyering, non-Montague residents are eligible to serve. **Kate to reach out to art/drama/music teachers, Honor Society, Monte’s kids?**
 - Kate reached out to Dan at Element to ask for ideas. No luck there.
- **Treasurer transition:** Ben is leaving the Treasurer role. Jon-Marc volunteered to step in. Discussion on splitting the workload — accounting/numbers (straightforward) vs. “herding cats”/communications and reminders (harder). No final division of labor decided; will feel out organically.

4. Treasurer's Report

- \$1,400 carried over, which matches exactly \$1,400 in **unresolved/outstanding grant agreements** from three organizations:
 - Montague Community Band (Hannah Smultz) — point person has had health/cognitive issues; transitioning to a new contact. **Kate following up.**
 - PawPaw Culinary Club (Chris) — no paperwork received; unclear if project was completed. **Julie following up.**
 - Wes Brown — reliably late but has always come through with support; **Kate following up.**
 - These funds are **encumbered** until the grantee either accepts (completes paperwork) or the offer is formally retracted — needs resolution before it carries into a new fiscal year and gets more complicated.
 - **Deadline set for response from all three grantees: July 31.**
 - Kate handling Montague Community Band and Wes Brown; Julie handling PawPaw Culinary Club.

5. Prepping for Fall Grant Season

- **Guidelines/priorities for FY27** reviewed. One clarifying edit made: “Montague-based” projects will be clarified to mean projects that **take place in** Montague (previous wording was ambiguous and led to out-of-town applications).
- **Kate motions** to approve guidelines with that one change — **Julie seconds. Passed** unanimously. (also fix extra bullet points)
 - **Kate to fill out form.**
 - **Key upcoming dates:**
 - Aug 18, 6 PM — required training/webinar for newly appointed members
 - Aug 28 — New Cycle Report due (formerly “Local Guidelines and Priorities” update)
 - Sept 1 — Applications open
 - Sept 10 — Applicant info session
 - Sept 15 — Financial reporting webinar
 - Oct 8 — Financial report due
 - Oct 15 — Applications close
 - Oct 15 – Dec 31 — Deliberation period
 - Dec 31 — Denials must be issued by this date
 - Jan 15 — Grant decisions report due to Mass Cultural Council
 - **Outreach/marketing for applications:** need a plan before Sept 1 — flyers (town will print in color), possible postcards/physical mailing (would require budget for postage/printing not previously allocated), press release via Montague Reporter, possible paid ad. Distribution list: prior applicants/grantees (screening out those who were rejected as out-of-scope, using the existing color-coded spreadsheet).
 - Decision on whether to hold a public event this year — tabled for a future meeting.

6. Reinvigorating the Council

Open brainstorm, no decisions made — carried to future agenda:

- Possibility of the Council running its **own special project/event** (rather than only funding grantees) — precedent: a past showcase event at “the Shea,” cost roughly \$1,500–2,000.
- Reviving social media presence (current Facebook page is inactive); idea of recruiting a member specifically for social media/community engagement.
- Stepping up promotion of grantees' events once funded.

- Possible alliance/partnership with Gill's cultural council — open question on how this would affect matching funds from the Town of Montague; **Jon-Marc to follow up on that specifically.**
- Note: Suzanne (town staff) has been formally added to her job description as a consultant to the Cultural Council — no change to her role or authority, just a documentation update (per Walter, town administrator).

7. Other Business

Maggie Martin confirmed she'll remain available if needed but is stepping back from regular attendance; will not formally resign until a full replacement is in place.

8. Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 5, 2026, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM. Klon Koehler to be invited.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn — made, seconded, passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:21 AM.