Montague Cultural Council — Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Time: 5:00 PM

Location: Zoom (recorded for the purpose of generating minutes)

Chair: Jon-Marc Seimon

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Jon-Marc Seimon at 5:00 PM.

2) Attendance

Present: Julie Kumble, Kate Martineau, Maggie Martin, Jon-Marc Seimon
Absent: Ben Letcher (at a conference), Jasper D. Adams
Guests: —

Note: Meeting was recorded for minute-taking.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes

Confirmed that members had reviewed prior minutes.
Motion: Approve the minutes as presented.
Moved by: Julie Kumble
Seconded by: Kate Martineau
Vote: Unanimous approval.

4) Treasurer’s Report (Ongoing Business)

No new treasurer update (Ben absent). Brief report-out that Ben and Angelica met at Town Hall to align on organization of finances; fuller update expected next meeting.

5) New Business

5.1 Administrative & Event Funding Allocations

Context reviewed:
- State grant (FY): $8,600.

- Municipal support: $9,000.
- Policy reminders:
  - Up to 5% of state funds may be used for administrative costs.
  - Up to 20% of state funds may be used for a council event; municipal funds may supplement as needed.

Consensus goal: maximize dollars going to grantees; keep admin lean; use municipal funds to buffer where appropriate.

Motion: Allocate $1,000 for a Council event and $250 for additional administrative/publicity needs.
Moved by: Kate Martineau
Seconded by: Maggie Martin
Vote: Unanimous approval.

Notes: Prior event costs (Shea Theater) were under $2,000; expectation is that $1,000 will suffice, with publicity handled efficiently (press releases, flyers; paid ads only if needed).

5.2 Grant Evaluation Process & Rubric

Reviewed a video outlining an objective scoring framework (criteria and weighted matrix) to reduce bias and speed voting meetings.
Agreement to scale the approach to MCC's size/volume; use a spreadsheet-based rubric (Yes/No or 1–5 scoring) aligned to local priorities.

Action: Ben to build the draft scoring spreadsheet/rubric.
Action: All members to review MCC priorities and propose criteria/questions (Yes/No and/or 1–5) for the rubric.
Action: Maggie Martin to circulate screenshots/notes from the presentation and share a PDF of guidelines/priorities.

5.3 Collaboration with RiverCulture / Suzanne LoManto

Discussion of informal outreach from Suzanne LoManto (RiverCulture) about reducing duplication and potential coordination.
Council's current stance:
- Too early to consider any structural changes; complete at least one full grants cycle first.
- Welcome Suzanne's participation as a non-voting advisor during grant discussions (her knowledge of applicants and RiverCulture plans is useful), subject to MCC rules.

Action: Jon-Marc to contact Summer Smith (Mass Cultural Council advisor) to confirm whether applications may be shared with an outside advisor and the appropriate way to include RiverCulture's input.

5.4 Member Access / SmartSimple & Panel Book

Members should verify access to SmartSimple (Council profile) to view submissions as they arrive (drafts vs. submitted).

Note: Last year's "panel book" had a technical failure; expectation is that normal access will be available this cycle.
Action: All members to log into SmartSimple and confirm they can see submitted applications.

5.5 Prior Grantee Support Request

A prior grantee (project lead currently facing medical/memory issues) requested access to last year's materials to guide the new application.

Actions:
- Jon-Marc to search the Council email for the request, identify the grantee and project, and, where appropriate, provide last year's documents.
- Refer the grantee to Mass Cultural Council technical support for account/portal credential help.

5.6 Membership & Quorum

Quorum challenges discussed; smaller bodies struggle when one member is inactive.
Jasper D. Adams has been largely unresponsive; term reportedly ends around June next year.

Actions:
- Maggie Martin to provide Jasper's contact details to Jon-Marc.
- Julie to reach out to Jasper to confirm continued commitment or invite formal resignation (through Town Clerk/Selectboard, as required).
- If Jasper resigns, Maggie Martin will stay on until a replacement is seated to maintain quorum.

Maggie's transition: Intends to phase out; will stay through the current voting cycle at minimum. Available as a resource thereafter.

5.7 Conflict of Interest Training

Reminder that all members must complete the required Conflict of Interest training; members will recuse on conflicts.

6) Next Meeting

Application deadline: Thursday, October 16, 2025.
Next meeting proposed: Tuesday, October 21, 2025, 6:00–8:00 PM (target: initial review and "reject" decisions).
Coordinate with Ben to confirm availability; aim for full attendance; in-person preferred if feasible.

7) Adjournment

Motion: Adjourn the meeting.
Moved by: Maggie Martin
Seconded by: Kate Martineau
Vote: Unanimous approval.
Meeting adjourned. Recording stopped.

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Secretary Signature / Date