

Spencer Cultural Council Minutes
November 20, 2017, 7 p.m.
Richard Sugden Public Library

Present: Joan Eccleston, Denise Farmosa, Rachel Faugno (Secretary), John Green, Diane Johnson (Treasurer), Jan Peters

Membership: The council welcomed new members Denise Farmosa, John Green, and Jan Peters.

Treasurer's Report: Diane reported that the council received \$6,100 from the Mass. Cultural Council for FY 18 and has an additional \$175 that was not requested for reimbursement in 2017. She recommended that the council reserve \$305 (5% of FY allotment allowed by the Mass. CC) for expenses such as postage and outreach, leaving a total of \$6,284 to be awarded in 2018. Members agreed. Denise moved to accept the report. Joan seconded. The report was approved.

Grant Review: The council received 22 grant applications totaling \$11,389. This left a shortfall of \$5,105. Members reviewed each application, prioritizing proposals that reach a wide audience and enrich diverse populations of the community. Deliberations resulted in six denials and 16 full or partial awards.

Letters: Rachel will send out denial letters in early December and approval letters in January 2018. She will send copies of the letters to Diane and notify other board members when the letters go out. John suggested that the council keep a master calendar of events. Members agreed that it would be a good idea to do so. Rachel will add a statement to the approval letters requiring grantees to notify the council in advance of scheduled events. Denise raised the question of grantee recognition of council support, stating that some CC-funded events didn't appear to credit the cultural council. Rachel will stress the importance of acknowledging CC support in the approval letters.

Election of chair: With the departure of Elizabeth Small from the council this year, the position of chair has been vacant. John offered to serve in that capacity and was elected unanimously. Diane and Rachel agreed to stay on as treasurer and secretary, respectively.

Council Priorities: Rachel brought up the issue of community input. The Mass. CC requires town councils to get input from their community in order to align grants with public interest. Members agreed on the need to get community input and discussed ways of doing so. John suggested sending letters to church leaders to learn what kinds of programs would be of interest to their membership. Denise suggested using Survey Monkey on the town website. Joan suggested putting surveys in public buildings such as the library, Town Hall, and Senior Center. Jan suggested reaching out to parent-teacher groups. Rachel suggested putting an article about the survey in the New Leader to encourage public input. Members also discussed the possibility of applying for grants – either from the Mass. CC or elsewhere – to support programs initiated by the council, such as history-themed programs. John will look into grants that might support council-initiated programs. Members agreed to take up the question of community input strategies at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: January 22, 2018, at 7 p.m. at the Richard Sugden Public Library.

Adjourned: 9:05 p.m.