

HARWICH CULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 12, 2019 - Harwich Cultural Center 4:00 PM

Present: Tina Games, Dinah Lane, Laurinda Raquel, Chris Banks, Charlie Barnes, Rosanne Shapiro, Kathy Teahan

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Tina Games.

Public Comments and Announcements:

Carolyn Carey, Director of the Harwich Community Center and Harwich Cultural Center, presented an invitation from Jamie Goodwin, Studio Director of Channel 18, to televise our meetings in the studio at the Community Center. This is potentially a great opportunity for the public to see the work of the Harwich Cultural Council first-hand. We will let Carolyn know our decision as well as additional information we may need. Tina suggested that we discuss this proposal more fully as part of "Other Business."

Old Business:

- We reviewed the June 13, 2019 meeting minutes and approved them unanimously. Motion by Chris; seconded by Rosanne. Tina explained briefly the process of posting minutes on the town website once they are approved.
- There was no financial report to present at this meeting; Tina will have one for our October meeting. She is still looking to fill the vacancy created when Joan Sacchetti (our previous treasurer) finished her term at the end of June. Joan has been helping out over the summer, and we are grateful to her for this assistance. However, we need to fill this position as soon as possible. Joan is available to train our new treasurer and has material to assist in tracking our finances which is the treasurer's main responsibility. There is some reporting to the Town Finance Director, Carol Coppola, at the beginning and end of the fiscal year, but tracking is the treasurer's main responsibility.

Tina also mentioned that the State has increased its share to \$4,900 for this grant cycle.

- We still have two vacancies on the Council. Tina will put together a roster of current membership and send them to us by email.
- Fundraising Committee Report – Laurinda was in contact with Bernadette Waystack over the summer re: an art project to create cards that can be sold. She is waiting to hear from Bernadette once the school year is in full swing; Laurinda will be away for almost a month, so Kathy will follow up with Bernadette. She will also follow up with Peter Mark at Cape Cod Tech re: a similar project there. We need to explore other sources of artwork that can be used to produce cards, and it was suggested that there might be photography teachers in the system who can assist us. Local camera clubs are another potential source.

We need to be clear about our expectations re: remuneration/stipends for students whose artwork we use. It was suggested we pitch this as a win-win for both students and the Cultural Council.

It was suggested that Tina meet with the Chatham Cultural Council since they appear to be very successful in fundraising, and she is in the process of doing so. Apparently, their efforts have been assisted by a group called the “Art of Charity,” although this group is being phased out.

Since there were some newer Council members present, Tina shared briefly about the history of past fund-raising efforts, focusing on the trips we offered that – at one time – brought in a significant amount of money; however, their effectiveness has dwindled. For the current year, we have about \$9,000 or \$10,000 which is small in comparison with past years.

We discussed briefly some fundraising ideas that tie in with the cultural district project. However, since they would involve partnering with the Chamber, we need to factor in the need to split the profits with our partner(s). We also discussed the project previously considered involving a tour of local cemeteries where many female authors are buried. Robyn Kelley, Cemetery Director, is very knowledgeable about this, and Dinah offered to work with her as part of the fundraising effort. One possibility is a tour followed by a tea featuring a talk by a local author, e.g., Joan Anderson or Anne LeClaire. We will explore this possibility further; it will not include the Chamber as a partner.

- Grant Informational Session – Tina reported that it was well attended. Dinah, Chris, and Kathy were present. In addition, Erica was able to have it go live on Facebook for five minutes. Perhaps next year, the session can be live on Facebook for its entirety. Tina did a media release to publicize the program, and we are looking to expand our network in the future to include Community Journal on Ch. 18.

New Business:

- Introduce New Council Members – Dinah was introduced last time and reviewed her experience with Watertown Cultural Council, the Performing Arts Student Series (PASS), and an art center she started in Watertown. Currently, Dinah is the Musical Director at the Latham School and a member of the Cape Cod CAN consortium at the Cotuit Center for the Arts.

Charlie has lived on the Cape – on and off – since the early 50’s. He has always been involved in the arts and art history as well as music and had a jazz band in high school. He was in productions at the Harwich Junior Theater as a child. His work has been primarily in the insurance industry, and he has also been on the boards of several nonprofits with extensive experience in fundraising.

Current members introduced themselves briefly and shared their background/connection with the arts.

- Opening for HCC Treasurer– This topic was discussed previously at this meeting (see under “Old Business”)
- 2020 Grant Application Process – The application period opened on September 1 and runs through October 15, with the application available online. The Mass Cultural Council (MCC) puts together a panel book in a PDF file which will contain all the grant applications. HCC members need to review these on their own – beginning on October 16 – and be prepared to discuss them at our November meeting which might be longer than usual. We make notes about the disposition of each request; Tina then sends out denial letters ASAP which applicants can query (if they wish) and request reconsideration. Our decisions are finalized at our December meeting with time to discuss any requests for reconsideration. By end of December we will have our final list of grantees (along with amount of money they will receive). Tina will then send acceptance letters to all grantees which include a packet of materials/instructions.

We discussed the decision-making process, emphasizing that we try to work towards consensus. We need to be mindful of the total amount of money available for grants and consider partial funding, i.e., we are not obligated to fund every project in full. It's important to look at other sources of funding for each project, i.e., the local cultural council cannot be the sole funding source. Tina will send us a link to a PDF grant application to provide a visual – especially for new members who have not been through this process. There was also a brief discussion of the need for back-up, i.e., proof that the project/program has been completed, when the reimbursement request is submitted.

A question was asked re: conflict of interest. Tina clarified that if a Council member has a vested interest, s/he needs to recuse her/himself. If you know the applicant but do not have a vested interest, Council members will decide if recusal is needed.

Dinah suggested that for projects that we fund, we might think about having a way to check in with the grantees, e.g., watching a rehearsal, watching an art class. In this way Council members can be engaged more actively.

A question was asked about applicants using our funds as seed money, i.e., do we need to steer applicants to other sources? If we get requests from the same applicant every year, should we do this? We encourage applicants to find other sources and not depend on the efficacy of using our grants as seed money because of the risk that a project may not be funded.

- 2020 Grant Selection Process – The timeline was covered in the previous sections.

Other Business:

- Visioning/planning for FY 20 – This is an ongoing process that includes fund raising (discussed above). Tina encouraged us to think about increasing our visibility in the community and anything else we want to explore. She observed that partnering with the Harwich Cultural Center has been a positive experience and we will continue to look at ways to strengthen this relationship.
- Ch. 18 proposal – We discussed this proposal more fully and decided to keep having our meetings at the Cultural Center. We have enjoyed the visibility that the venue has provided, as well as the relationships that have created with the artists in the building. We discussed a possible interview/program on Ch.18 about the grant application process and will explore the idea further.
- Annual Report at Board of Selectmen on 9/30 @ 6:30 – Tina will make this presentation. Council members are invited to attend.
- Written Report (as part of town annual report) – Tina clarified that this report is more inclusive than the presentation to the Board of Selectmen and includes information about grant recipients.
- Clarification re: Cultural Compact – Tina briefly described the process by which Harwich was selected and emphasized that it was the only town selected to participate in a pilot program due to the town's commitment toward an annual funding allocation (voted on in Town Meeting) as well as our collaboration with the Cultural Center. This program was renewed for another year and includes the creation of two cultural districts with continued grant opportunities.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m. – motion by Rosanne; seconded by Tina.