Newton Cultural Council

Committee Meeting

December 9, 2020

Minutes

Attendees: Rebika Shaw Bendayan, Jane Feigenson, Rich Frost, Paula Gannon, Kathy Hassinger, Grey Held, Lakshmi Narayan Kadambi, Jen Kaplan, Amelia LeClair, Danielle Moriarity, Emily O’Neil, Chris Pitts, and Kathleen Wright.

The meeting began at 10:09 AM.

Chris began the meeting letting us know that our new member Pat Costello was not able to attend today’s meeting.

Approval of Minutes with the following corrections.

Robin Stein is not on the Adjudication committee.

Add Emily O’Neil to the Adjudication committee.

correct spelling of adjudication.

Ameiia made the motion to approve minutes with the corrections and Kathleen Wright second. All approved.

Financial:

* Kathleen Wright recently had a thorough meeting with the city of Newton Comptroller. The Comptroller manages the councils funds and had been concerned that the NCC was not spending all its money. Kathleen went through the past five years and to her records the NCC has spent all the funds. The Comptroller’s indicated that the NCC had an extra $10,000. What was the discrepancy? Or how did this come to be?
* Funds not spent are to be rolled over. Therefore, Kathleen rolled over the $5,000 per the direction of the Comptroller. However, this was an error by the Comptroller. Funds were not there, which translates into roughly, $4,500 in the negative.
* The good news is that many people have postponed their projects and it may even out. Kathleen has made multiple attempts to remind grantees to submit paperwork to receive their grant money.
* There was much discussion on last year’s allotment. Kathleen said that Newton gave $15,000, and the MCC was roughly $16,900. The issue is what was rolled over or not.
* The issue was what we were told we had at the end of last year to what we started the year off this year.
* Chris commented that the way the MCC suggest we handle funds and what the City of Newton does is different and may make things confusing.
* As of December 1, 2020 there is $11,600. This includes the City of Newton’s and rolled over money.
* Paula said there is $22,000 remaining to distribute for 2020.
* Paula reiterated that there is a discrepancy from the Comptroller’s office, where an error was made. There was an overpayment from previous years of $4,400. However, with 2020 Covid, some monies look like it will not be distributed and it may help to compensate for this loss.
* Starting fresh in 2021 is the goal. The city of Newton contributes $15,000 and with the discrepancy it is closer to $11,000.
* January 15, 2021 is the deadline to distribute the 2020 funds. Otherwise we can roll over what is the account. After January 15, 2021 no reimbursement applications will be accepted.
* To date there is $24,500 that has been requested to be refunded. With $17,000 outstanding to be claimed.
* Funding received from the MCC can be rolled over, however, the City of Newton funds can not be rolled over.
* This has been quite an unusual year with Covid and let’s clean it up and move on.
* A motion by Kathleen was made to rollover what funds we have. Emily second the motion and all approved.

Grants:

* Chris and Emily met with the Cambridge Arts Association to discuss the adjudication forms.
* CAA split the grants between individual and organizations and then allocates half to each. This may not be appropriate for Newton.
* Chris has reworked our form into a google form to automate spreadsheet input.
* Rebika suggested a 1, 2, 3 rating and suggests having a top 3 reasons to grant. With a quick summary.
* Danielle said Medford does a 1-5 and then takes an average.
* Fewer rating numbers may be easier such as a low, medium or high level. Keep the criteria simple and easy to manage.
* The Adjudication Committee has spent 2 years working on this form including the 3-6-9 scoring which was utilized to expose outliers more easily than closer numbers. The NCC will use this from this year as is, then review again after the grant cycle.
* One of the benefits of the form is to explain why or why not someone was to receive a grant.
* Paula reported that to date there has been 28 applications asking for $11,000 and there are 12 that are in the draft form.
* The deadline is December 14.
* Paula does not have funds to print books so the council will review all on line.
* Kathy H suggested that instruction be distributed to help the council navigate through the adjudication process.
* Paula asked that someone on the Nominating committee reach out to Pat Costello to update him on each committee and see where he wants to serve.
* Jenn Kaplan asked if we should do another grant push but the council felt the deadline was Monday and enough push has been done.
* Grey asked if it was possible to give more money than requested but the council said no.
* The council felt that if there was extra money, it could be used toward taking videos of the grantee events.
* Monies could also help to fund annual surveys to help to identify the NCC in approving grants and identifying needs.
* Emily asked if the mayor could include a survey in her newsletter to help gather helpful data.
* The Marketing Outreach Committee will spearhead this.
* Lakshmi suggested that there are roughly 80 city commissions and it would be most helpful to gather other data and feedback to see what the needs are in regards to the culture in Newton
* Perhaps we can add members to our Council that represent other diverse organizations.

Diversity:

* Emily has been in communication with the newly forming Newton Coalition of Black residents.
* Chris also suggested reaching out to the Asian Cultural groups in Newton.
* Kathy H has also reached out to the Myrtle Baptist Church.

Next Meeting:

* *January 13, 2021 from 7:00P to 9:00P*
* *January 9, 2021 from 10:00A to 12:00P*

***DATE CHANGE AS OF 12/21/20***

* ***JANUARY 23, 10AM ZOOM ADJUDICATION MEETING***
* ***FEBRUARY 6TH, 10AM ZOOM ADJUCATION MEETING, FINAL TALLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS***