

South Hadley Cultural Council

MEETING MINUTES: Tuesday, January 20, at 6:00 pm

PRESENT: Geraldine de Berly, Joy Jarne, David Solender-Clark, Dien Vo, Eric Weiss

Summary

1. Meeting called to order precisely at 6:00 pm
2. Minutes from 12/16 meeting were approved
3. Council discussed an awardee, Gaia Roots. They originally asked for \$700, and were awarded \$200. Given the partial amount, they asked if the Council is willing to let them use the funds for a different concert in Holyoke.
 - a. Related to this awardee, but also as general policies, the council discussed: what to do when a grant recipient changes their project / program after their project was approved; what to do if changes are requested, but we still need more details; whether applicants should adhere to what they wrote as backup plans if they don't receive full funding.
 - b. Conclusions: We will reach out to MCC to decide what to do next. There was a desire to stick to the rules, which state that funds must be returned if the project cannot be delivered.
 - c. Gerry discussed how such issues happen when we fund such small amounts. She proposes that we try to solve this in general for the next grant cycle. It's a challenge when a project doesn't have 50% of its funding. In future, should we fund less projects but with larger amounts?
4. Joy provided the Treasurer's report. Main update: we have earned interest.
5. Joy raised, and group discussed what timelines are to pay awardees. Conclusion: it's up to Treasurer, but should be paid out in 4 weeks. Joy will connect with town office on how to proceed.
6. Gerry provided an update: there are 46 approved projects; 19 have not sent in their financial info and agreements info yet.
7. Leo Labonte came to the meeting as part of public comment. Thanked CC for the grant, and confirmed things are moving with project. Asked if CC will participate in any events on the American Revolution and grave markers. David: We've not been approached about any of it. Eric: The council is happy to add that to our public calendar.
8. Council discussed the community planning survey. We should make sure our funding priorities for next cycle are better aligned with expressed public interest. We need to confirm our funding priorities by early Sept. This means we should have published a poll, gathered responses, and had all necessary internal discussions by the end of summer. The group agreed that the last survey is a good starting point.
9. As follow up: the group will think of questions to add to the survey
10. Gerry brought up an awardee, Donald Longly. It's another case when a project can run into issues if there's such little funding. Do we have ideas where we can get more funds? David proposed sending Donald a list of sponsors from last year's showcase. David will reply to Donald's email.
11. Eric: Will we share the work of contacting awardees? Council decided we will stick with Gerry handling correspondences.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dien Vo

February 11, 2026