

DATE: February 11, 2021
TIME: 9:02 AM

BELMONT CULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING MINTUES
(Approved on 1/5/21)

September 30, 2020 – 6:30-9PM - Virtual Meeting Via ZOOM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Vicky Amalfitano, Evelyn Corsini, Volkan Efe, Annette Goodro, Nancy Linde (Chair), Haixi Liu, Millie Rahn, Rebecca Richards

ABSENT:

Jenny Angel, Juliet Jenkins, May Ye

Before the meeting formally began, council members introduced themselves and welcomed new members Volkan Efe and Haixi Liu

1. MINUTES FROM Feb. 5, 2020 MEETING

Accepted as written.

DISCUSSION ON MCC ALLOTMENT FOR 2020

Chair Nancy Linde gave a brief informal history of past BCC allotments from the Mass Cultural Council (MCC) (averaging \$6500 per funding cycle) and how those funds have typically been distributed. She told members that the MCC will likely need to greatly reduce its 2020 Allotments due to the COVID pandemic and how it's affected the state budget. She said it's difficult moving forward without knowing the allotment amount and what projects the BCC can support this funding cycle. She said the BCC wouldn't be publicizing the granting process until the MCC has announced what Belmont's allotment will be.

2. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Annette Goodro said she's been working on the 2020 year-end Reconciliation Report. She said there are no glaring differences. She also told the group that the BCC has accrued a substantial amount—over \$700—in interest in town account. She said the BCC needs to decide if we want to use some of those accrued funds for grants and/or to cover administrative expenses.

3. NEW OFFICERS APPROVED

Vicky motioned that we vote on formalizing the BCC's new slate of officers: Nancy Linde, Chair, Annette Goodro, Treasurer and Jenny Angel, Secretary. Evelyn Corsini seconded the motion. All voted in favor to accept.

5. MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL/COVID PANDEMIC ISSUES

Nancy outlined the MCC's new funding priorities with an emphasis on virtual programming due to the impact of COVID-19. She asked the group to consider the revised language for the new priorities. Annette reminded members that the deadline for posting the new priorities is Oct. 1. Nancy made a motion to accept the new priorities. Vicky Almafitano seconded the motion and all approved.

6. DISCUSSION ON EXTENDING GRANTEE DEADLINES DUE TO COVID

Nancy asked council members if the BCC should extend the deadlines for when funded projects need to be completed. Should we give them a year? Or even more time—until 2021? In response, Annette gave a detailed update on the status of grantees: those that were able to complete their projects/whose events took place and those that will need more time.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding how best to approach this issue. Several suggestions were made as a result of the discussion:

An extension one year from the date in the BCC award letter. Grantees would be notified by an informal email.

Nancy asked the group if we should consider extending the deadline through Dec. 2021 or automatically extending the deadline to Jan. 2021.

Evelyn Corsini asked specifically about the Delvena Theater Company. Could they present their performance to the Senior Center virtually? Especially since seniors are more vulnerable to the COVID virus. It was suggested that Dana Leavitt of the Council on Aging could help promote a virtual performance. Nancy Linde said Delvena would likely need an extension until Sept. 2021.

Annette then listed the BCC funded groups and events that still needed to take place.

Volkan asked if a grantee doesn't need the BCC funding, should they simply return it?

Several members were reluctant to ask for funds to be returned—especially for individual artists who have been hit so hard by the pandemic.

Annette motioned that the council delay voting on this issue until its next meeting. Nancy seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

7. COUNCIL ORIGINATED GRANT

Nancy introduced a motion that we abandon the Council Originated Grant Proposal due to the pandemic and return the \$1000 grant back into funds to be distributed. Millie Rahn seconded it. All voted in favor.

8. ANNUAL BCC SURVEY

The group noted that while it was important to do the survey and take the pulse of the community, COVID-19 has upended the typical ways of gathering information to use. Rebecca offered to contact residents by phone; Millie Rahn then suggested using social media platform Next Door and/or Survey Monkey. She said she would design a simple survey to use. Nancy suggested also developing a BCC database –she added that both Jenny and Juliet should be contacted to help coordinate the survey as well.

9. MCC ALLOTMENT

Nancy told the group if it's only around \$3,000, the council will need to discuss what we could fund with such a small allotment. She suggested that each BCC member come up with two (2) ideas of what to fund for the next meeting. Annette emphasized the idea of the council supporting the local schools. Millie then asked about how to make the money go further in the schools—maybe by funding something that would benefit 4th graders town wide?

Council members then discussed the Belmont Art Association's Transformer Boxes Public Art project and how successful it has been. Several ideas about funding other Transformer Boxes were discussed. Rebecca told the group that the BGA and the BAA had a long history of working together and she thought they could come up with other public art projects and events to benefit the community. Millie mentioned it could be interesting to do something connected to when the Marquis de Lafayette visited Belmont in the 1800's. She said she'd send the group more info.

10. BCC WEBSITE

The website was started in 2019, with the help of former council member Nien and two Belmont High School community service students who were recruited by Juliet Jenkins. The council discussed the Pros and Cons of keeping the website active.

Cost: Annette said it costs \$173 per year for subscription/online domain name. Charges come due on Jan. 1st. She said we could pay for it out of the accrued interest funds. Rebecca looked up the website and saw that it had been updated/was updated to reflect COVID issues.

The group decided to table the website conversation until the next BCC mtg.

11. HOLD BACK 5% ALLOCATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Annette said we could add the \$1,000 returned from the council originated grant and the \$100 from the library's canceled graphic novel talk and add it to our FY2021 allocation to give towards grants. Annette proposed that we not take 5% of the 2021 funds for administrative costs but that we use the accrued unused interest in the account to cover our administrative costs for the year, increasing the 5% allocation for administrative costs

Mille told the group she heard the allotments would be announced/distributed in mid-October. Annette encouraged BCC members to attend MCC virtual meetings for funding updates, etc.

MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS ASSIGNMENTS

Evelyn asked about the organizations/assignments we get as BCC members.

She asked specifically about the Payson Park Music Series. Annette said she'd take it over since previous liaison Sarah Ellison has left the council. Evelyn said she'd be happy to take over as the contact with the Senior Center and the Council on Aging. Vicky said she'd take on the Library. Annette said she'd continue to work with Habitat and the school PTO's. Millie and Rebecca said they'd work together on the Belmont Women's Club and the Homer House. Volkan said since he's a musician, he'd like to work with the Powers Music School. Nancy suggested that Haixi work with May on the Chinese Cultural Group.

BCC FUNDRAISING DISCUSSION

Volkan asked if the BCC is able to do its own fundraising. Rebecca and Annette said yes and described an earlier effort by former members of the BCC who initiated a fundraising effort several years ago—ultimately resulting in gifts of \$400. Rebecca expressed concern that council members be asked to donate money when they already donate time and experience. Annette suggested Volkan visit the MCC's website to learn more about LCC fundraising ideas.

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:00PM

12. NEXT MEETING (Via ZOOM)
TBA