

## **Newbury Cultural Council Meeting Minutes November 13, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. ET**

### **Council Members Present:**

Robin Lawson, Chair  
Bart Bracken, Treasurer  
Jeanne Anderson, Secretary  
Marguerite “Minnie” Flanagan  
Margaret Russell  
Lloyd Hamovit

- **Call to order:** 5:35 p.m.
- **Approval of September 25, 2023 meeting minutes:** Voted to approve.
- **Treasurer update:**

Bart worked with the Town of Newbury’s incoming financial accountant (Eva Pastor) to complete and submit the council’s year-end 2023 financial statement (on October 16th). That filing established the amount of carryover funds that can be applied to FY2024 grants in addition to the state funding budgeted at \$5,600. Total funding available to distribute in FY 2024 through Newbury Cultural Council (NCC) grants is currently set at \$6,868. The funding total could be higher if some FY2023 grantees do not claim their funding.

In October, Bart sent reminders to those grantees that have not submitted reimbursement requests. There was one response to date.

- **FY23 grant modifications:**

None needing votes at this meeting.

PlumFest organizers reached out to NCC via email for guidance on requesting and/or modifying their FY2023 grant given the PlumFest cancellation caused by Hurricane Lee on 9/16/2023. Robin Lawson contacted them via email and included a link to MCC’s Smart Simple Grant Management System. Given a change in fund-raising volunteers and knowledge of the MCC timeline, PlumFest missed the FY2024 proposal cycle. NCC anticipates that a modification request will need to be submitted to allow FY2023 funds to be applied to the anticipated FY2024 event. NCC is willing to hold the PlumFest grant of \$700 in reserve until the situation is further clarified.

To that end, NCC unanimously approved a motion stating that the organizers of PlumFest should be encouraged to ask for a modification of their FY2023 grant prior to the end of 2023 (or the pertinent time frame established under MCC guidelines) to allow for use of FY2023 funds in FY2024. Robin Lawson and/or Bart Bracken will reach out to them to follow-up on next steps.

- **Update on new Town employees and status of email access:**

The Town of Newbury IT manager (Jon Temple) has explored relevant state guidelines that pertain to establishing a new town e-mail for the cultural council to replace the existing Gmail account. It remains unclear whether this change will happen in the near future.

Bart has obtained access to the existing Gmail account and will be able to forward communications received on that address to the new email address (once established). He is continuing to monitor the incoming messages. To date, Robin does not have access to the NCC Gmail account nor the NCC sub-section of the town website.

- **Update on Newbury Town Day committee and funding:**

At the September 26, 2023 meeting, the Newbury Select Board voted to approve the mission statement drafted by the Newbury Town Day co-chairs and to continue future iterations of Newbury Town Day under the auspices of the town since the event is Town-funded. Co-chairs Robin Lawson and Heidi Fram, who founded the event in 2021, had already alerted town officials of their decision to step aside going forward. They agreed to be available to help make the transition to new leadership once a volunteer team is identified. The third annual Newbury Town Day is tentatively scheduled for August 17, 2024. The town will be establishing a new standing committee of volunteers to organize the event. As a result, there will be no Newbury Town Day grant requests in the future. Monies granted by the NCC to fund Newbury Town Day 2023 events have been reverted to the NCC for use in FY2024 grant awards.

- **Newbury Cultural Council survey update**

An annual NCC survey was conducted by council members at both the pancake breakfast (Byfield Community Arts Center) and at the welcome desk (Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm) during Newbury Town Day. Fifty usable surveys were collected. They reflect a cross representation of Newbury citizens of all ages and neighborhoods.

The compiled results indicated that music, local and regional history events, outdoor cultural activities, children's programs, nature appreciation workshops, cultural festivals, theater, and literary readings were the highest interests (in order of preference). Respondents also recommended that NCC give priority to funding community-wide gatherings including festivals, concerts and plays, nature and science education programs, restoration and historic preservation projects, as well as school and summer vacation programs (also in order of preference). Residents reported that they learn about NCC-sponsored events primarily through social media, word of mouth, printed flyers, and the local newspaper.

The 2020 resident survey was removed from the NCC sub-section of the town website in September. The NCC plans to explore with the Town of Newbury IT staff ways to expand the reach of future surveys to all Newbury residents, perhaps by providing a link to an online survey (e.g., Survey Monkey) as well as continuing the on-going surveys by council members at Newbury Town Day and PlumFest.

- **FY2024 review of grant applications**

The Newbury Cultural Council received 23 applications for funding for FY2024 totaling \$10,900. These proposals covered events scheduled within an 18-month window from July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024. The proposals covered several requests from in-town or with in-town support (Newbury Library, Council on Aging, Byfield Community Arts Center, etc.). Additional requests were received from organizations from Newburyport, West Newbury, Salisbury, Amesbury, and Georgetown among others. The council reviewed all grant requests and awarded 19 grants totaling \$6,750. \$118 was set aside for NCC administrative expenses.

- **Recruitment of new council members and review of current member terms**

The terms of four NCC members end in 2024 (Lloyd Hamovit, Margaret Russell, Minnie Flanagan and Jeanne Anderson). Jeanne Anderson's term expires on January 31, 2024; the other terms conclude on June 30, 2024. There is a need to recruit new members and existing NCC members were encouraged to reach out to other Newbury residents. Robin will continue her efforts to recruit potential members and report back at the next meeting.

- **Additional business: none**

- **2024 NCC meetings**

**January 29, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

**May 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

**September 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

- **Adjourn: 7:20 p.m.**

- **Reminder of next meeting: Monday, January 29, 2024 5:30 p.m. ET**  
Newbury Town Hall, 12 Kent Way, second-floor meeting room