The Groton Cultural Council (GCC) held its publicly announced meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2023via ZOOM. The meeting was recorded by ZOOM software. Present were members Deb Busser, Nancy Muller, Kathleen Phelps, and Harris McWade. Christine Brooks and Judith Romatelli were absent. Co-Chair Harris McWade opened the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Muller said that she contacted former Council Chair David Zeiler for minutes of the April meeting. He is out-of-state on family business, and the minutes have not yet been fully drafted. She noted that state guidelines for transparency ask that minutes be made available publicly within 10 days of a council’s meeting. The group agreed that this is practical only after minutes have been approved. Approval, it was noted, must take place in an in-person meeting, not via email. Muller will follow-up with Zeiler prior to the next GCC meeting, as well as prepare and distribute to GCC members draft minutes of today’s meeting, with the goal of approving both at the next meeting. Muller offered as well to type a roster of all GCC member names and contact details for its members.

**New Member Status:**

Following the posted agenda, each newly elected member shared her status. McWade has completed her Conflict of Interest (COI) training. Busser has been sworn in but still needs to complete her COI training. Phelps noted that the Town wants to have such training completed by early May. Muller needs to be both sworn in by the Town Clerk and complete her COI training. She said she would do this promptly, and Phelps sent her the contact links to do so.

**PR:**

Muller reminded the group that she had volunteered at the April meeting to write short articles about several grant recipients, with the goal of having them published by *The Groton Herald* as a means of generating interest by others to apply with a proposal for funding from this year’s pool of funds. Three were suggested: 1) #21 and #22 “Print-Making” and “Collage-Making” workshops submitted by Harris McWade on behalf of the Nashoba Valley Artists and held at The Groton Center in April and May 2023, awarded $225 and $800, respectively; 2) #23 “Wake Up, My Spirit” submitted by Rosie Latto on behalf of the 70+ member Nashoba Valley Chorale to perform classical music by Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color composers, awarded $500; and 3) #34 for multidisciplinary visual arts therapy classes at the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden, Inc., covering such topics as creative mindfulness, rock painting, meditation, etc., awarded $1,000. Muller asked if the Council agrees on these three to be spotlighted and whether a fourth grant recipient should be added that benefits children and youth. It was agreed that #33, submitted by The Sizer Foundation, for the musical performance of Studs Turkel’s **Working** at The Parker Essential School in Devens, should be added. It was awarded $400.

Muller shared a recent discussion with John MacLeod, who took her phone call, at *The Groton Herald* office regarding such articles. He suggested that she send all of them together as Letters to The Editor, each the length of approximately 500-600 words. Busser said we would be better served if the articles appear sequentially, spread out across the summer months. It was suggested that Muller instead contact Deborah E. Johnson, the paper’s Publisher and Editor for direction on when and how to best submit essays from her interviews with the named recipients.

As for upcoming publicity, Phelps noted that the GCC news release she sent last year of grant recipients was generously published by the newspaper in Dunstable. This step should be taken again by the GCC, she advised.

**Events:**

There was discussion about holding a public meeting, as a “workshop” with Q&A, late summer but well in advance of the October 15th submission deadline to encourage new proposals. Muller said that we also need to do more to stimulate proposals that specifically benefit children and youth in the community, as this is a specific question asked on the standard state form for applicants to use. Because teachers scatter when the school year ends in June, we need to communicate before the end of June the grant opportunity to teachers throughout Groton’s public and private schools. It was noted that we must caution teachers not to ask for funds covering items already in their school budgets. Phelps offered to research appropriate wording to safeguard against such duplication. McWade volunteered to investigate how to best reach relevant teachers across the spectrum addressed by the pool of grant monies provided to the GCC by a combination of Massachusetts state funds and federal funds from The National Endowment for the Arts.

It was also agreed that the Council should host a reception for the next group of grant recipients selected and that an appropriate public space for such an event should be investigated.

**Open Discussion:**

Based on discussion at the previous meeting in April, David Zeiler was asked via email if he wished to assume ex-officio status as a member, having rotated off of the GCC. Since he has not responded, Muller offered to follow-up for closure on this question when she pursues in the days ahead his draft of April meeting minutes.

The next meeting date was established to take place on Tuesday, June 20th, at 3 p.m. via ZOOM. McWade will contact her co-chair Judith Romatelli to develop a meeting agenda to be posted publicly. Phelps offered to have this meeting agenda from Romatelli as well as the ZOOM link posted on the Groton Town’s website.

**Adjournment:**

At 3:50 p.m. McWade motioned the meeting be adjourned, and Muller seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Muller, secretary

May 17, 2023