The Groton Local Cultural Council (LCC) held its publicly announced meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023,at the Groton Town Hall in the small, first floor meeting room. Present in person were Co-Chair Judith Romatelli, members Deb Busser, Nancy Muller, and Kathleen Phelps. Co-Chair Harris McWade participated remotely via ZOOM due to illness. Members Christine Brooks and Leslie Lathrop and were absent.

Romatelli opened the meeting with a quorum at 7:02 p.m., introducing Olive Coté, also in attendance and a senior at Groton-Dunstable High School, as our non-voting student representative for a one-year term.

The first agenda item was approval of minutes of the October 24th meeting, previously distributed electronically to all members. Busser moved approval, seconded by Romatelli. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Treasurer Phelps said that Janet Applegate, again requesting $350 as awarded last year for her lectures in schools on “Hate and Prejudice,” has not responded to her reminder to submit expenses for reimbursement. She has until January 2024 to do so and may have only recently given such lecture(s). If such encumbered funds are not eventually claimed, they will roll into 2025 balances.

Those present discussed individually, in the order of submissions provided by MCC, each request, identifying those worthy of approval and agreeing on partial or full funding as provided by the $8,205 to be distributed among approved grantees. Those not meeting published guidelines were identified and segregated. The group made minor adjustments in award amounts until the total sum equaled the $8,205 available. Muller moved that the list be approved based on consensus of those present and Busser seconded the motion. The list was approved unanimously.

To ensure no applicant was being denied unfairly, the group reviewed the list of reasons for denying a request and subsequently examined each applicant segregated for denial, concluding in each case, there was “weak public benefit for Groton residents as participants and/or attendees” in the proposed event/workshop/lecture. In some instances, this was because of the distance of the venue from Groton, while in other cases location was not specified or firmly known.

Phelps stated that the Secretary has the responsibility to use the MCC SmartSimple software online to trigger automatic notification of denials. They are given 15 days to appeal to MCC. If no such appeals are approved by the MCC - who in turn would otherwise notify the GCC of the need to meet again to re-consider the appealing applicant – the Secretary will then complete the online Decision Report and send approval correspondence by email to each grantee detailing amount and how to obtain the approved funds. Muller said that she will confer with Hanako Brais on precisely how to proceed and language to use.

Assuming there are no such appeals, the group agreed to cancel at this time its December 12th meeting as unnecessary and agreed to next meet on January 9, 2024. The agenda at the January meeting will be a final review of all grantees and completed correspondence of notification with all applicants, as well as to discuss planning for an event in the spring to recognize the FY ‘24 grantees, inviting Groton’s Select Board, selected public officials, and others. The venue for such an event will be finalized.

Busser made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Phelps. Romatelli thus adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Nancy Muller, Secretary