Chester Cultural Council
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 16th, 2026

Attendance
Chair: Muriel Hall
Members: Karen Kaminski-Marchetto (via Teams), Melissa McAuliffe, Carol Hepworth and Kim Fox.

Muriel called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
Previous Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

- **General Information:**

Muriel discussed June updates from the Mass Cultural Council, including a session she attended on local fundraising for local cultural councils.

Members discussed potentially requesting additional funding through the Finance Committee next year. The Council is currently funded through state funding only.

Members discussed the possibility of establishing a revolving account for donations and additional funding.

Members discussed partnering with the Historical Society on a tour of historical and cultural sites in town.

Members discussed the possibility of connecting with Karen's husband, who has historical knowledge and a YouTube channel that may be useful for collaboration or linking resources.

James Higgby was noted as someone who also conducts many tours.

- **2026 Grant Recipient Contract Status:**

Gateway's Mass MoCA trip paperwork was received, allowing the check to be issued.

Gateway's accounting team confirmed that Gateway was double paid last year. The Council decided to send $50 to cover the difference between this year's award and last year's overpayment.

The North Hall Association and Gateway Guest Artist Series have not yet submitted reimbursement paperwork for their projects.

Muriel reached out to both project organizers to remind them to submit the required paperwork.

- **Chester on Track CCC Presence, Brochure, and Information:**

Chester on Track was successful, and many community surveys were collected.

There was a discussion about ways to make the survey available online, including a possible poll through the Town Facebook page.

Melissa suggested focusing on STEM-related activities for children, as well as nature walks and education rather than entertainment.

Muriel asked Carol to prepare a questionnaire to gather residents' feedback on what the Cultural Council should prioritize for requested programs.

Muriel noted that survey results could help inform the local guidelines and priorities that need to be updated in August.

- **250th Anniversary CCC Banner:**

Muriel presented a draft banner.

Members agreed that the banner looked strong and provided a good visual overview of Chester's cultural milestones.

The Council hopes to display the banner once finalized.

- **2027 Chester Cultural Council Local Guidelines and Priorities:**

Members discussed revising the guidelines to allow programs in surrounding towns, while continuing to prioritize programs in Chester.

The current wording typically refers to Chester only; the revised language will state that Chester will be prioritized rather than required as the sole location.

- **Grant Reception / Cultural Council Community Chat:**

Melissa suggested holding the event at Common Table. The theatre program will conclude on August 23rd, and members discussed holding the reception the following weekend.

Members discussed holding the event before grant applications are due so interested applicants can learn about the process, ask questions, hear about past funded programs, and learn more about historical events in Chester.

There was discussion about partnering with Historical Society.

Melissa and Carol suggested having stations focused on Chester history and projects the Council has funded. The event would give residents and artists an opportunity to learn more about arts, cultural programs, and opportunities in Chester.

The proposed event title is “Cultural Council Community Chat,” with light snacks, community conversation, and surveys available. Members discussed scheduling the event for Sunday, August 30, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. There was discussion about inviting the Gateway School band to perform, as the band received funding this year.

Members discussed adding a demographics section to the community survey to help identify respondents’ ages, communities, and interests.

- **Community Input and Council Organization:**

Members discussed reorganizing the Council after the start of the fiscal year. Muriel stated that she is willing to continue serving as Chair for the next year.

Melissa made a motion to appoint Carol as Co-Chair. Kim seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Carol made a motion to adjourn. Kim seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Submitted by

_____ _____

Kim Fox Date

Reviewed by:

_____ _____

Member Date

_____ _____

Member Date

_____ _____

Member Date