**Tinmouth Community Fund meeting minutes**

**Nov. 18, 2021**

Present in person: Committee members Jan Krantz (Chair), Cathy Reynolds (Treasurer), Helen Mango (Secretary), Lisa Patry, Melody Squier.

Present on Zoom: Asha Carroll McCullough, Todd Dennis, Casey Voigtlaender.

Jan called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Thanks made to Gail Fallar for setting up the meeting in the room above the Town Office (and warming up the room).

The minutes of May 19, 2021, were reviewed. Cathy moved, and Melody seconded, that the minutes be accepted. Motion carried.

Cathy emailed everyone the treasurer’s report in advance of the meeting. Summary: At the end of the third quarter of 2021, the Continuing Education fund had $335,694, the Endowed Fund had $155,000 and the Reserve Fund had $61,000. The Continuing Education fund increased by $14,000, and the Endowed Fund increased by $7000. The Reserve Fund went down to pay for the second round of grants given out this year. About $6500 is in the checking account, in addition to what is in the report. Cathy wants us to think about possibly increasing the amount of money per grant.

Cathy also brought up that we have in the past just been giving students checks, and we should perhaps have more oversight regarding the use of the grant money. If students don’t actually follow through with further education, we need to know that and recoup the grant. Perhaps we need to go back to invoicing, although this does make for more work for the Town Treasurer. The camp scholarships are paid directly to the camps. We can’t do that for higher education because it can affect a student’s financial aid. Cathy and Melody both commented that more documentation is needed to ensure that the money is used according to the grant’s stipulations. Lisa agreed but suggested that we need to retain flexibility because of the different uses that people use their funds for. Dennis thought it would be difficult to have a blanket policy since recipients are doing very different post-graduation types of activities. There was general agreement that the committee needs to come up with methods for tracking fund use.

Cathy explained that by using 5% of the Community Fund (currently $10,800), we can give out 16 grants at $500 each; 11 grants at $750 each; or 8 grants at $1000 each. Cathy noted that the $500 amount hasn’t changed in over 20 years. Asha supported the idea of giving out more. Lisa suggested having different tiers of funding. Cathy suggested offering grants “up to $750,” with a note that the grants may be competitive and recipients may need to accept less.

Cathy put $1000 for small business and $1500 for camp scholarships into the financial plan. Melody supported the $1000 amount for small business grants. This could be two $500 grants, or one competitive $1000 grant. Jan recommended putting a cap on the total that can be spent for Small Business grants, but not giving a limit to an individual applicant.

Discussion ensued about when to make the awards. Should we do them all at once? Move the date later? Casey liked the event we had last summer when most grant awardees could be present. (Last year it was on June 15.) Having one deadline for all grants would simplify matters significantly. It will also allow people to see what the TCF really does across all these different grants. If the due date for grants is changed, we will need to advertise this well.

Cathy suggested a deadline of May 1 for all grant applications (continuing education, community grants, small business grants, camp scholarships).

Jan reported that a 2020 grant to the Fire Department didn’t get used for the original purpose, but the group wished to use it for a different purpose. How should the committee handle such “mid-cycle” change requests? Cathy moved that we enable the officers (4 people) to resolve any mid-cycle grant modifications as requested. Jan seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Jan noted that we still need to have an annual meeting – this could happen on the same day as the awards ceremony in June. Todd noted that moving the date of the meeting will require a Bylaws change (the Bylaws currently state that the annual meeting of the TCF shall be on the same date as Town Meeting). Lisa, Melody and Todd all volunteered to help re-write the Bylaws. Cathy will also be part of that working group. This also needs to go to the Select Board. Lisa suggested that the actual date of the annual meeting be made more general (rather than stating a specific date).

Cathy recommended that we do another round of follow-up with some 2020 grants as the fund is carrying a liability of $2845 for grants from 2020 that haven’t been paid out yet. There are still Covid restrictions on some grants being used. Jan offered to help Cathy with contacting people.

Jan brought up the December insert for Tales – do we want to do two appeal letters a year, or go with once a year? We can try doing one appeal, and see how it works this year. Jan recommended we do a December appeal this year, and see how it works. Lisa suggested noting on the insert that there will only be one appeal this year. Jan suggested putting a general article in Tales to this effect.

Cathy suggested making the appeal letter shorter. Dennis suggested describing how much grant money was awarded in each category rather than listing each individual grant. Jan offered to re-write the letter. All comments should be directed to Jan.

Jan asked for volunteers to help staple the letter and envelopes. Helen, Melody, Casey, Cathy and Lisa all volunteered. Jan will make the “packets” for each volunteer to take home for stapling.

There was some discussion as to whether to allow mid-year grant applications; discussion ensued and the committee agreed that this would not be a good idea. People need to plan ahead so that we can keep the grant funding cycle as it is planned.

Motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m. made by Cathy, seconded by Helen. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Mango

TCF Secretary