

WEEFC Board Meeting
December 8th, 2020
9:30 am (via Zoom)

Present:

Board Members: Dickie, Augustine, Bradner, Covington, Golin, Hanser, McGrath, Taylor

Administration: Carter (Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning),
McCanne (Director of Technology and School Libraries)

School Committee: Muzila

PTO: Rassiger, Trodden

Grant Discussion & Vote

1) Weston Rail Trail Mural Grant or Weston Public School Art Mural Grant

Submitted by Julie Hom-Mandell for WHS students, the grant is asking for \$4,298 to paint 2 social justice themed murals. The murals will be painted on the underpass walls of the Weston Rail Trail if the design is chosen and approved by the Weston Art and Innovation Center, Friends of the Legacy and Rail Trail in Weston, and the Mass DOT. If the design submitted is not chosen or approved, the mural would be painted at WPS, potentially at Field School. The mural requires a two-step approval process.

Discussion:

Because the grant is sizable and final approval by other parties is unknown, the board discussed potentially approving some funds to get the design created to submit for the initial approval process. The grant must be broken down and resubmitted in parts for consideration and potential approval.

A motion to indefinitely postpone the mural was presented and members unanimously approved. (Voted in favor: Dickie, Bradner, Covington, Golin, Hanser, McGrath, Muzila, Taylor)

2) Kate Messner Virtual Author Visit

This \$5,000 grant, submitted by the Creative Arts Committee, is for four virtual author visits by Kate Messner. The presentations to Kindergarten and First Grade classes at Country and Woodland Schools will take place February 24th and 25th, 2021. The purpose of the author's presentation is to teach the students about inspiration for stories, how to conduct research and the writing process for creating an informational book. This is a new grant, and its STEM focus connects with science and language arts curriculums.

Discussion:

This grant was proposed before the meeting to accommodate scheduling and deposits necessary to hold the author visit dates. The board's questions were answered via email. The cost of this author visit is in line with our usual spending on similar author visits. Creative Arts estimates they will apply for fewer author visit grants this year and no requests for performing arts performances in 2020.

A motion to approve the grant was presented and members unanimously approved.
(Voted in favor: Dickie, Bradner, Covington, Golin, Hanser, McGrath, Muzila, Taylor)

3) Classroom Audio & Remote Streaming Enhancement Proposal

This sizable grant was presented by Lee McCanne and Kimo Carter to further equip classrooms in the district with audio and visual equipment to improve sound amplification and visual delivery of live-streaming. While many classrooms in the district already have some of this Sound Lift audio technology (approximately 90 learning spaces and the Field School), there are still 46 classrooms that need/would benefit from installation of this technology. COVID has highlighted the need to amplify sound through mask usage and students being spaced far apart. In addition, there are needs for improved cameras to deliver cleaner audio and visual of live-streamed and recorded classes. The grant does not ask for a new camera for each learning space, but rather it focuses on adding them to AP/Honors classes or classes with greater visual needs such as math and science. This equipment would benefit students and teachers during the COVID pandemic, and it would also provide future benefits. There are 4 options of this proposal with decreasing numbers of classrooms outfitted and quality/longevity of the equipment requested. Note that funds may be available for this grant from the Town of Weston through the Cares Act. The exact amount is TBD.

Option A - \$150,000*

(Full request completes sound systems in remaining 46 classrooms and includes 42 high quality web streaming cameras)

Option B - \$100,000*

Option C - \$75,000*

Option D - \$50,000*

(*Please reference specific details in the grant request for these tiered options.)

Discussion:

While the board agrees there are definite benefits to having improved AV during and after the pandemic, there are several concerns and questions regarding this grant and its sizable monetary request. Main concerns from the board discussion were teacher use and student use during COVID with safety restrictions; the equipment enhances live-streaming, but it's not required to livestream; concerns about the limited lifespan of cheaper equipment options; availability of equipment and speed of installation. Biggest concern was how to raise \$150,000 and WEEFC's ability to specify cost/benefit per student and ensure teacher use of said equipment.

A motion to indefinitely postpone the AV grant was presented and members unanimously approved. (Voted in favor: Dickie, Bradner, Covington, Golin, Hanser, McGrath, Muzila, Taylor)

Treasury Report

Cara McGrath updated the board that WEEFC's YTD funds were \$104,295, which included some donations from the fall. However, WEEFC has approved approximately \$143,900 in grants so far in 2020. As a result, about \$40,000 has been used from WEEFC reserves. To note, of the grants approved to date this year, \$137,000 was used for the air purifiers grant. Some of this amount was raised and some of it came from WEEFC reserves. Cara expressed concern about WEEFC reserves and the challenge of managing the Town account balance.

Chair Report

Winter Appeal:

Kate Dickie and Emily Golin will start talking about a potential fundraiser related to the larger grant ask or for general funds.

Additional Meeting Next Week:

WEEFC will hold another board meeting during the week of December 14th (after the School Committee meeting Monday, December 14th when the new academic plan and increased secondary school schedule will be presented) to further discuss the AV grant. Meeting date TBD.

Approve Minutes

A motion to Approve Minutes of the meeting on November 17, 2020 was presented and all members unanimously approved. (Voted in favor: Dickie, Bradner, Covington, Golin, Hanser, McGrath, Muzila, Taylor)

Next Meeting: December 17th, 2020 at 8pm (via Zoom)

WEEFC supports innovative and creative grants which enrich the learning experience beyond the regular school budget.