



FY2019 mid-year Report: RiverCulture Program

Approved by the RiverCulture Steering Committee on February 21, 2019, for the purpose of updating the Select Board on the overall effectiveness and fiscal health of the program.

Presented by Eileen Dowd, Chair of the RiverCulture Steering Committee

Our Cultural Coordinator, Suzanne LoManto, **has brought about \$97,545** to the Town of Montague in FY2019 year so far, which represents funds raised from sponsors, program income, grants, and in-kind donations resulting from partnerships. Suzanne has definitely been busy. The breakdown follows:

FY2019 SPONSORSHIP, \$12,800

Current sponsors: Judd Wire (\$4000), Republic Services (\$3500), Greenfield Savings (\$1400), Greenfield Coop Bank (\$1400) New Sponsor: NorthEast Solar Design, \$2500. (8/18)

INCOME, \$1245

River Valley Ice Cream Ride: \$750 (8/18)
other programming income: \$495

GRANTS AWARDS, \$45,500

MCC YouthReach Grant: \$15K for 3 years awarded to the Brick House. (8/18)
Suzanne brought this grant opportunity to the director and provided input in the application
Mass Cultural Council FY219 Cultural District Grant: \$5,000 (11/18)
Mass Cultural Council Festival Grant: \$500 (11/18)
Dhed Technical Assistance Grant: \$15,000 for a Millers Falls Creative Placemaking Plan (2/19)
Community Foundation of Western Mass: \$10K for roof repair at Montague Common Hall (3/19)
Suzanne brought this grant opportunity to the Common Hall Board.

FY2019 IN-KIND PARTNESHIP INVESTMENT, \$38,000

Nolumbeka Project: Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, August 2018, \$10,000 investment
FCCC: Franklin County Cider Days, November 2018, \$8,000 investment
Human Error Publishing: Great Falls Word Festival, November 2018, \$2,000 investment
Village "Vitality Survey" with UMASS phd student John Delconte, Feb.-Mar. 2019, \$10K investment
Eggtooth Productions: Radical Interconnectedness Festival, April 2019, \$8,000 investment

The programming balance for RiverCulture on February 19, 2019 is \$14,184. It is expected that there will be a carry-over budget around \$6,000 for FY2020. RiverCulture has not yet investigated the necessity/responsibility of having 501c(3) non-profit status. Both Suzanne and the Steering Committee are confident that money will increase as she is able to strategize a long term plan to attract new sponsors, generate income, attract programming partners, and apply for larger grants.

With an eye toward efficiency, and knowing the quality of the applications, the Cultural Coordinator granted the Montague Cultural Council \$2,000 siting the number of grass-roots programs in need of funding.

Most recently, Suzanne received a \$15,000 Dhed Technical Assistance Grant for a Millers Falls Creative Placemaking Plan to be implemented this spring. This plan will be a valuable tool to position Millers Falls for future grants and to advance strategically. Additionally, RiverCulture is working with the Town Administrator and the Montague Historical Commission to refurbish the much loved Historic Montague Center marker. These projects are progress toward the goal of town-wide program expansion.

The Cultural Coordinator has been tremendously effective in attracting cultural partners. In FY2019 helped to produce: The River Valley Ice Cream Ride, Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, Fairy House Day, Unity Park Night Skate events, Paperjam events, Fab Fashion Passion, the Great Falls Word Festival, Cider Days, The Migration Festival, and It's A Wonderful Night.

Joining the Shea Theater Board (as a non-voting member) has been a positive development for Suzanne, who now has more information about the theater's operation, finances, and programming. The growth of this partnership has been a great benefit of the Town and region.

The Cultural Coordinator is working on expanding community input in the Turners Falls Cultural District, which manages the \$5,000 annual grant from the MCC, particularly with regards to the downtown summer "Family Movie Nights" now in the planning stage with Jon Dobosz and the Friends of Sheffield group.

Suzanne regularly discusses the evolving RiverCulture mission with the Town Planner and Steering Committee. In addition to all the above, there are ongoing, parallel conversations which include ideas aimed to spur creative entrepreneurship in Montague.

Suzanne LoManto was invited to represent the Town of Montague at the Downtown Summit Conference sponsored by the Mass Department of Housing and Community Development. High praise was received, indeed, for presentation "What We Learned in the Turners Falls Cultural District" offered in the session "Economic Development through Arts, Culture, Recreation and Entertainment." The Town of Montague receives regular attention from the Commonwealth as a small community on the forefront of economic development through the Arts. Having this kind of exposure and positive response adds to the strength of our RiverCulture endeavors and expands regional tourism.

A few housing keeping notes:

Unfortunately, Steering Committee member Hilary Emerson- Lay resigned from the Board in February, siting work-related scheduling difficulties. However, Lucinda Kidder of Silverthorne Theatre would like to join the committee representing Montague City. A representative for Lake Pleasant is being sought, to insure that all the villages in this Town of Montague have a voice in the growth of our town. – Eileen Dowd, Chair, 3/7/19