

Minutes of Somerville Municipal Scholarship Committee - Open Meeting (Online)

Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 6pm

In Attendance:

Eric Lopez (President)

Shari Pitkin (Vice President)

Darci Hanna (Secretary)

Cindy Lee (Member)

Linda Dubuque (Somerville Treasurer)

Quorum Attained

- Eric began by asking Linda for clarification of the Dollars for Scholars paperwork that was sent to members and what next steps are tonight: Group needs to fill out forms to gain access to Dollars for Scholars platform and move forward with training on the platform
- Eric confirmed that the contract has been signed, Linda explained that we (Eric, Shari, Darci, and Cindy) are the committee, Linda is not a member but she will act as treasurer, Linda said that the bank account has around \$90,000 and previous scholarship amounts were around \$2000
- Shari discussed that we need to decide who is eligible and if graduating parochial, charter, and home school students can apply, Group consensus is to keep it as open as possible to Somerville residents graduating from any school
- Cindy shared her screen to collectively edit Dollars for Scholars document as a group
- Group decides to add additional selection criteria to academic merit and financial need, adding “community leadership and special hardship” as areas for consideration
- Group discussed allowing named scholarship donations, Eric wanted to encourage donors, Darci asked if named funds were challenging to manage, Linda indicated that tracking and keeping small funds separate would be extremely challenging within the city systems; Named scholarships declined
- Group discussed award amounts, and agreed that \$1000-\$2000 was a good range
- Linda confirmed that Dollars for Scholars is being used to check academic records and financial need but that the checks will be cut from the city treasury, money can be put toward any educational use as allowed under MA general law
- Shari read IRS rules that allow funds to be tax-free for students if it goes to tuition, fees, books, and materials for classes (computers, tools for trade schools, etc...)
- Deadline for Scholarship Acknowledgment Form to be June 15
- Group agrees to keep language that recipients have 4 years from the award date to attend an accredited college and must notify committee by August 15
- If a recipient doesn't use the award in four years, it goes back into the fund
- Group discussed and inserted language prohibiting conflicts of interest with committee members selecting relatives for awards, and Eric inserts language that selection process will be “objective and non-discriminatory”
- Darci noted that the selection language should include that the graduate should reside in Somerville to be considered for an award

- Cindy shared her screen to edit the Bylaws document, group agreed it should be no fewer than 4 people, “Massachusetts” inserted in relevant sections
- Cindy shared her screen to edit the Gift Acceptance Policies, nothing was added

Next steps:

- Submit contract to Dollars for Scholars to gain access to their platform
- Need to schedule training to use Dollars to Scholars platform, Eric will reach out to see if the trainer can meet with the group on one of the following dates:
 - Monday, December 12 @ 6pm
 - Tuesday, January 3 @ 6pm

Notes submitted by Darci Hanna, SMSC Secretary