

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

Monday, January 27, 2025 at 6pm via Zoom

In Attendance:

Eric Lopez (President)

Darci Hanna (Secretary)

Cindy Lee

Melanie Kessler, Representative of the Superintendent

Linda Dubuque

Quorum Attained

- Approval of past minutes from 12/19/24 approved
- Eric agrees with adjustments to scholarship application from December meeting
- Melanie suggests adding "Please list your school counselor's name and email" so that the counselors can be contacted for official transcripts
- Common application has a series of questions now to determine significant time or significant effort, a model we might want to consider, free response section about financial need, we want to allow them to express in their own words how the money might impact them, we can include a similar list of activities like family duties, assisting with doctor appointments, cooking family meals, caring for children... Committee agrees that we should add these
- Keeping financial aid info, SAI and yearly family income as well
- Melanie says they created a drop-down menu for annual income to make it very clear what they were asking, \$0-\$75,000, \$75,001-\$125,000; also suggests the need to ask for total income from custodial parents if they're divorced/separated
- Committee agrees to spell out acronyms like SAI to make it more clear for students
- Committee discussed asking about adversity instead of activities in the essay section
- We hope to submit it to IT and get it edited and live within a week or so
- Replacement member – Linda has received one application, committee would need to be involved with the interview, we would make a recommendation to the Mayor and they would need to be sworn in, Linda will ask applicant if they're available for an interview with the committee at 5:30pm before our next meeting on 2/20
- Linda has added a solicitation to the outgoing excise tax bills: Commitment 1 – February and Commitment 2 – March
- Deadline will be March 31st for applications, we'll remove the number of awards from the website so we have some flexibility if we want to select more than 5 students
- Agenda for next meeting: Confirm that application is live, check for any errors or updates to the application and website, discuss new candidate for committee (if they have been interviewed), continue discussing advertising strategy to let students know about the opportunity
- Next meeting: February 20, 2025 at 6pm (via Zoom)

Notes submitted by Darci Hanna, SMSC Secretary