

Minutes of Somerville Municipal Scholarship Committee - Open Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 7pm (via Zoom)

In Attendance:

Eric Lopez, President

Cindy Lee, Vice-President

Darci Hanna, Secretary

Melanie Kessler, Representative of the Superintendent

Matt Iglesias, Committee member

Linda Dubuque, City of Somerville Treasurer & Collector

Quorum Attained

- Approval of past minutes from 5/15/25
- High school print shop made the awards for the ceremony, had a nice envelop, Eric was able to attend, Mayor will host an honorary luncheon soon, date TBD
- Linda needs the W-9s for schools and address, student ID numbers, then city will cut checks to Bursar's Offices
- Eric will email the students for the necessary info and collate it for Linda
- Sometimes the schools take out the award from the students' aid package, Eric will research any way to make sure that the students get access without being penalized
- Melanie suggests we consider adding the photo release to the app so we have it already
- Cindy suggests revising the activities and work experience sections, committee agrees to merging them but not putting a limit on the number they can list
- Matt suggests having only 2 essays, maybe not including the hardship essay
- Melanie isn't sure we're clear on our focus, the website says it's "merit-based," which includes overcoming hardships (financial or otherwise), maybe it should really be about what Somerville means to them ("tell us your Somerville story"), we need to figure out what's the most important thing and then shape the application to better reflect that
- Cindy suggests updating the website to say "merit and needs based" to reflect that fact that we are taking financial need into account
- Melanie suggests that our ESL students may not be served well by the three essays, perhaps shorter questions and answers might be better
- Cindy and Melanie suggest meeting in the fall to map our priorities to the questions to see if they align with what we're looking for
- We will need to revisit the scoring system as well after reformulating the questions
- We should make a timeline to follow so we can make the application live sooner: ideally it should go live the first week of January
- Next meeting: 9/9 @6pm In-person at Somerville Public Library & 9/23 @7pm (virtual)
 - Agenda: Review of priorities for committee, review of application questions and scoring rubric for improvements, establish the timeline for next year, identify dates for October meetings

Notes submitted by Darci Hanna, SMSC Secretary