

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY FUND

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: March 11, 2021 at 11 am via Zoom

Invitees: Theresa Mann, Brigid Browning, Amy Brady, Liz Scharf and Rebecca Baruzzi (MRVCF)

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Mad River Community Fund, Rebecca Baruzzi, Mad River Community Fund's Project Manager
 - History, structure
 - Types of assistance, processes, applications
 - Budget, fundraising efforts
- Other business
- Next meeting date & Agenda Items

Notes:

Rebecca:

Challenge in getting information out to people.

No money goes directly to people, it goes to a vendor. Board is 8-9 people that meet once per month. Original grant giving was for hardships that were "no fault of your own" but they have moved away from that. When Irene happened, the fund grew the most. Then in 2017 they raised \$500K for the families of the 5 teens killed on I89. The Valley also has interfaith council that also gives out grants, but they ask fewer questions. They give up to \$750 per year. This is separate from the MRVCF.

Realized both funds were spending a lot of money on fuel. They then partnered with Capstone to solve that need. Rebecca works for the MRVCF but has a link to Capstone resources, so she ends up being the Valley "case manager" of sorts. She then guides people to state programs and other grant programs first then points them to the interfaith council depending on the situation. Her focus is on weatherization issues. The fund is getting more money in than is going out, mainly due to the middle class moving out of the area. As the wealth increases it makes it harder to get to the folks in the community in need.

The detail of how much we are planning to give is important for getting started. She used the example of the "not your own fault" policy and how that changed over the years.

Substance abuse situations require the right people skills.

An example of a time when they gave directly to an individual to help with CC debt. They then asked for another donation for another issue, but the real issue was money management, and that individual was not willing to go to financial counseling.

Liz asked about scholarships: they have added scholarships for Summer camps. No college scholarships currently. Instead, they are helping with drivers ed and transportation so that kids can attend Barre Tech if they want.

No paper trail required for general funding.

For individuals, they also do not report the details to the IRS. They use a bookkeeper, give him the P&L and the 990.

James Caffrey is the attorney on the Board. He works in Waterbury.

Liz will get the name of the lawyer that Capstone uses that has experience with 501C3 organizations.

Board meets monthly, great participation. They do an annual campaign, and they get enough donations to sustain for the year. They are on GuideStar (public info) if we want more information, no budget per se because they have plenty of money to give. They give out about \$100K per year in individual grants, \$60K to organizations and last year was \$140K for Covid bridge grants.

Not part of the town government or town budget.

Annually they receive about 40 applications.

Rebecca suggested that we may be better suited for the interfaith type of grant program to start. It's less "work".

Then the call ended!