Medfield Cultural Council  
Case for Municipal Support, November 14, 2013

“Unlike most industries, nonprofit arts and culture organizations leverage a significant amount of event-related spending by their audiences. For example, when patrons attend a cultural event they may pay to park their car, purchase dinner at a restaurant, shop in nearby stores, eat dessert after the show, and pay a babysitter. This spending generates dependable, sustainable commerce for local businesses.” – Americans for the Arts

REQUEST
- The Medfield Cultural Council seeks municipal support to match the state appropriation of $4,250 within the Selectmen’s Committee Expenses
- The Council intends this to be an annual allocation in subsequent years for evaluation as a future line item in budget appropriations

ISSUE
- Medfield receives the minimum appropriation from the MA Cultural Council
- Volunteer run Medfield Cultural Council re-invests 100% in Medfield programs
- With state funds, Medfield Cultural Council can only fund a small percentage of program requests, from a low of 20% in 2005 to a high of 60% in 2007, with steep declines since, able to fund less than 25% of the requests in the past 2 years

OTHER COMMUNITIES
- 15 communities provide municipal support to their local Cultural Councils
- Of these, 12 also receive the state minimum from MA Cultural Council, like Medfield
- Of these 12, all but one have lower median household incomes than Medfield

REASONS TO PROVIDE MUNICIPAL FUNDING (– Americans for the Arts unless otherwise identified)
1. **Arts are good for local merchants** . . . The typical arts attendee spends $24.60 per person, per event, not including the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and babysitters. Attendees who live outside the county in which the arts event takes place spend twice as much as their local counterparts ($39.96 vs. $17.42)—valuable revenue for local businesses and the community.

2. **Arts are the cornerstone of tourism** . . . Arts travelers are ideal tourists—they stay longer and spend more. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that the percentage of international travelers including museum visits on their trip has increased from 17 to 23 percent since 2003, while the share attending concerts and theater performances increased from 13 to 16 percent (only 7 percent include a sports event).

3. **Stronger communities** . . . University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates. A
vibrant arts community ensures that young people are not left to be raised solely in a pop culture and tabloid marketplace.

4. Social attachment...The Knight Foundation reports that social offerings, followed by openness and aesthetics explain why we love where we live. They beat out other possible drivers such as perceptions of local economy, leadership and safety across all 26 cities [studied]. The survey found a significant connection between residents’ love for their community and the area’s local economic growth.

5. Stabilizing influence...Even during the 2007-09 economic recession, when New England’s total population grew only 0.9%, personal income fell by 0.5%, and the number of employers fell by 0.6%, New England non-profit arts and culture organizations increased their number by 1.1% and their spending by 11.5% even as their total assets declined by 6.9%. This juxtaposition is testament both to the commitment of the region’s sector to maintaining its programming in the face of economic adversity and to the stabilizing influence of this sector on their communities – New England Foundation for the Arts.

6. Arts attract businesses...Research shows that arts active communities provide the amenities and lifestyle that attracts creative businesses and entrepreneurs, a skilled workforce, and young families. Additionally, businesses are increasingly selecting locations based on amenities rather than tax incentives. A high standard of living ranked second just below salary in surveys related to job appeal for technology workers, therefore increasing the attractiveness of a job by 33%. – NM Dept. of Cultural Affairs

7. Arts are an Industry... Arts organizations are responsible businesses, employers, and consumers. Nationally nonprofit arts organizations generate $135 billion in economic activity annually, supporting 4.1 million jobs and generating $22.3 billion in government revenue. Investment in the arts supports jobs, generates tax revenues, promotes tourism, and advances our creativity-based economy.

8. True prosperity... The arts are fundamental to our humanity and reach across generations and communities and create meaningful shared experiences. They ennable and inspire us—fostering creativity and beauty and sharing our heritage. The arts help us express our values, build bridges between cultures, and bring us together regardless of ethnicity, religion, or age.