

April 20, 2021

**With the release of robust federal funds for restaurants and small businesses,
the Rhinebeck Responds Small Business Grant Committee
is suspending operations until further notice.**

This project supplied more than \$130,000 in direct and cooperative funding to 42 small businesses and non-profit organizations—far exceeding our initial expectations and, from all we can see, provided much-needed operating cash for a Village economy that was struggling under the weight of the pandemic.

Our Small Business Grant Fund, managed by the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, distributed direct grants of \$118,950 to 39 applicants. In addition, three non-profit groups, who initially applied to our Grant program, received grants totaling \$15,000 from The Frost Foundation.

We want to express our appreciation for the leadership demonstrated by Martha Honey and Lila Pauge, who helped organize this program for Rhinebeck Responds, and we want to thank Tom LeGrand for his excellent work as Grant Committee Chairman.

We also want to acknowledge the key role played by several key local funders: Michael Clark, Guy Lawson, and Maya Kaimel, who provided the seed money that allowed us to launch this program when Rhinebeck Responds was just getting organized.

The way in which recipients used our funding tells us a great deal about the impact of the 2020 local recession: for many of our local small businesses just paying rent was the dominant concern, followed by payroll. Consequently, almost all the grantees put the largest share of their support to rent. One retailer was able to “bring staff back”; another cited her ability to increase employee hours and wages; a third used our grant to increase salaries. Other grantees used our funding to cover insurance and overdue invoices for supplies. A few business owners launched innovative initiatives. One art gallery used part of its grant to jumpstart a socially distanced “invitational exhibit.” A wellness business owner, in a part of the economy hard hit by COVID concerns, used her grant stay in contact with her base of local studio clients.

How important were these small grants of \$5,000 to \$1,500? One shop owner told us “[Your grant] is appreciated so much more than I can express.” Another wrote to say that our grant provided “... [an] opportunity to keep our business alive. We are so grateful...” A third spoke for many grantees, “thank[ing] the committee for helping myself as well as the other small business owners. These past few months have been very challenging, and their generous grant will help get my business back on track.”

Signed Small Business Grant Committee

Tom LeGrand

Martha Honey

Julie Turpin

Jon Berry

Vicki Haak

Carra Bartles

Daniel Walkowitz