

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
January 2020

1. **Board Retreat:** The meeting on Saturday, January 18th was a good start to updating our strategic plan and focusing on our top 3 goals. An update on the 6 Main Strategic Goals was given, along with an overview of the major projects underway and the budget.
 - a. **Facilitator, Ron Bloomfield:** Should have a report ready by the January 28th Board meeting.

2. **Collections:**
 - a. Great progress is being made by volunteers who are continuing to work on data input into Past Perfect. Several accession logs have been catalogued.
 - b. Volunteers are making great progress with the Temporary Collection objects. The Collection committee will soon be tasked with deciding which objects to accept and which need to be returned to their owners.
 - c. A workshop to train members of the Genealogical Society how to properly store the glass negative plates was postponed. However, the museum is working with Laura Quackenbush to establish procedures to care for this collection. The first phase has begun, which includes testing the storage envelopes for acid and cataloging the collection. We will work on the proper way to handle, view and move the negatives into safer storage boxes under Laura's guidance in the near future.
 - d. R.S. Scott has provided a proposal for space reallocation. The study needs to be reviewed and decisions made as to how to proceed.

3. **FUNDRAISING Activities:**
 - a. **Winter Blues Non-Juried Art Exhibit:** will open February 13th and run through April. We have had several new artists enter this year's exhibit. Entry fee is \$20 per art piece. This is the 3rd year we have hosted this event and it seems to be maintaining a level of interest and participation.

4. **Education:**
 - a. Education Coordinator, Amanda will be preparing for the Spring Field Trips.
 - b. Amanda is also working on the graphic layout for the Historic Village signage. She will use the visitor guide that has been created and in use now, along with further research to find more photos associated with each building. The goal is to have the new signage up by the June Log Cabin Day event.
 - c. Amanda is also continuing to work on developing the Besser Buddy idea. This is geared to our youngest visitors. The idea is to create cartoon characters young visitors can relate to/identify with. Signage will be in each gallery with about fun facts or questions that will help initiate conversations with their adult.

5. Planetarium Highlights:

- a. Please refer to the Planetarium Coordinator Report. Johnathan is continuing to develop shows and network with other agencies around Northern Michigan, including the Headlands Dark Sky Park, the Alpena County Library, and the local Dark Sky Preserves (Rockport and Negwegon).

6. Other:

- a. Chinook: We are still waiting on the Besser Company for the cradles. They said they should have them completed by June in time of our Log Cabin Day. Once completed and in place, the Chinook can be moved into its permanent position. The committee continues to work on funding streams and exhibit design details. We will be speaking with Adams Polls, Planning and Development Director for the City of Alpena about the Fisheries Exhibit and where it might fit into the City's plans and what type of support the City may be able to give to our project.
- b. Katherine V: Tuffy would like to see an accessible pathway put in from the sidewalk to the exhibit. There are other projects that Tuffy would like to finish up this summer as funding permits. We are at a stage where these two separate projects need to be considered one Great Lakes Fisheries Exhibit campus as we decided on sidewalk paths, water, electric, and signage and such.
- c. Giving Tuesday raised over \$13,000 for the Historic Village.
We will be working on the strategic plan for the Historic Village.
 - i. There have been renovations to all building except the Log Cabin. The Log Cabin needs repair. A log cabin builder came to the museum last week to inspect the cabin and give us ideas of what we can do to preserve the cabin. I will need to contact an architect.
 - ii. All the buildings could use more props and better exhibit development
 - iii. All the buildings need interpretive signage outside of the buildings.
 - iv. We are looking into ways we can make the buildings accessible throughout the year by adding Plexi-glass entries that allow visitors to see the interiors without being able to go in when there are no volunteers hosting the buildings. We have researched and visited other museums for ideas. We have already added Plexi-glass to the School and Log Cabin, whoever if someone wanted to step over it and get in the building they could. More works needs to be done.
 - v. We are also making plans for pioneer gardens and flowerbeds around the historic buildings.
- d. Accounting:
 - i. The audit should be completed shortly.
- e. Besser Foundation 75th Anniversary Gift of \$25,000. A proposal for the use of this money needs to be submitted for their consideration. The Board has decided this will be used to elevate the art collection. Investing in module walls for the Wilson Gallery are being considered. Vicki Wright will assist with curating an exhibit of the museum's fine art.