

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
March 2021 – April 2021

The Besser Museum was closed, and employees were quarantined for 10 days starting the afternoon of March 24th when a staff member tested positive for COVID.

During that 10-day closure, I camped out at the museum and continued to work. I was able to finish painting the Wilson Fine Art gallery, my office, and the conference room. I also completely cleaned and sanitized the building before reopening April 5th.

During the closure, I also continued my administrative duties and held a few virtual meetings while staff worked from home.

The Besser Museum has been hosting visitors in limited capacity since reopening. We have had a few requests from schools and travel companies wanting to book larger group visits. Due to the rise of coronavirus cases throughout Michigan, including Alpena, it was decided that the museum will not be hosting any fieldtrips or large tour groups this season.

Considering the current situation, the museum is also looking at developing virtual programming for the June Log Cabin Day event. Although, at first thought, one would think this is an outdoors event and would pose no risk. However, the historic buildings have bottlenecks entrances and small indoor space. The historic interiors would also be challenging to disinfect.

The special opening event of the Wilson Fine Art Gallery for past board members that I would have like to have planned will be done through a letter acknowledging their service to the museum, informing them of the recent renovations, and inviting them to tour at their discretion and leisure. I will start drafting that letter.

The Besser Museum continues to follow CDC health guidelines until further notice.

- The Besser Museum will be opened for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Visitor capacity continues to be limited to 25 people in the building at a time. Planetarium capacity is limited to a maximum of 15 people in the planetarium at a time.
- CDC guidelines are still in place: masks, social distancing, disinfecting.

JUNE 15TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- I have been working with Judy and Jim on the Proxy Letter for the members to cast their vote.
- I have also been working with Judy on the Board member application form.
- The application has been sent to 3 potential candidates.
- The staff is working on the museum newsletter. It will be mailed out by May 24th with information about the June 15th meeting and the Proxy letter to cast their vote for Board members.

THE FOLLOWING IS A BREAKDOWN OF REVENUE RECEIVED FOR COVID RELIEF SINCE MARCH 2020 THROUR CURRENT:

Date	Name of Fund	Amount Received
4.15.2020	PPP Loan/Grant	42,700
5.1.2020	Michigan Humanities Hope Grant	5,000
6.12.2020	MCACA Emergency Relief Grant	2,500
1.28.2021	Small Business Relief Grant	15,000
3.12.2021	PPP Loan/Grant Second Draw	46,500
	Employee Retention Credits	
	2 nd Quarter 2020	2,405
	3 rd Quarter 2020	1,484
	4 th Quarter 2020	23,202
	1 st Quarter 2021	30,920
	Total to date	169,711

Since the museum received the 2nd draw PPP funds in March 2021, we will not be able to apply for this credit until after the PPP funds are spent. The Retention credit is set to expire in April, unless extended by the Governor.

ONGOING PROJECTS

FACILITY:

- **HVAC: Mechanical Phase of Renovation Project**
 - April 20th: Susan Edwards will present the best bid to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.
 - Susan is recommending the bid from Johnson and Woods at \$195,000.
 - Please see attached Proposal for
- **HVAC: Controller Phase of the Renovation Project**
 - The computer that maintains the HVAC control system will be obsolete in July and will no longer be able to receive updates. (think Microsoft 10).
 - A separate vendor handles the controls. The controls communicate between the chillers, boilers and air handler and regulates the temperature and humidity throughout the building. We have been having issues with our control system for several years now. Updating the Control System is part of the overall project.
 - The new mechanical units will need to be hooked up to the control systems for everything to work.
 - We are seeking a bid from another company for the control system. Control Solutions submitted two separate bids. One is just for the upgraded computer and hooking up the new mechanical for \$10,330. The second bid is to replace all sensors and controls throughout the building, \$39,875.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin project:** The contract with Robert Kenel LLC is waiting on the logs to be ready. They have been kiln drying all winter. Once ready, he will start the project.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook**
 - I need to reach out to City Planner, Andrea Kares and reschedule our meeting.
 - Jim and I spoke with a representative from the DNR about the Invasive Species Grant program. It looks like our chance are slim. We need to talk to the director of the grant program now to get clarification. We also need to use the history of the Chinook and their work with sea lamprey as a tool to incite a change in behavior and a call to action to help prevent the spread of invasive species. More work needs to be done to draft a proposal for possible funding.
 - Dustin Black, local engineer, volunteers to design the walkway and ramp for the Chinook exhibit. He also provided a supply list with estimated costs. This will be helpful when pursuing grants.

ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- The committee meet March 30th.
- The next meeting is April 27th.
- Things are moving along in a positive direction.

ART: Wilson Art Gallery Renovation:

- The renovation of the Wilson Gallery is going well.
- Matt is installing the floor tiles.
- Gary Dawley is building a frame to go around the electrical panel the gallery. This panel will also be used to give special recognition to the Besser Foundation for funding the renovation project.
- Local artist, Brian Schorn, has started working on curating the first exhibit and initiating a Fine Art advisory committee. The committee's second meeting will be held April 22nd.
- We hope to open to the public at the end of June 5th.
- Due to Covid, as mentioned above, we will send out a special acknowledgment to all past museum board members thanking them for their service and inviting them to come visit the new gallery space. There have been 140 board members over the past 50 years. (All Board members received a spreadsheet with names and dates of service)

ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS: Major work continues in the collection storage areas.

The Collection Committee will be presenting a list of artifacts for the permanent collection to the Board on April 20th.

- **PastPerfect Data Software**
 - Sarah is continuing to work with volunteers to inventory and properly store the collection of rolled maps and documents.
 - Sarah handles questions from the public at large, conducts research, and continues to organize objects, artifacts and documents found throughout the museum.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
 - Sarah started holding virtual meetings to address the temporary custody items.
 - This work will be ongoing as there is a backlog of Temporary Custody donations.

MISCELLENOUS:

- **Education Outreach:**
 - Both Johnathan and Amanda continue to produce virtual education programs that are reaching large audiences on our social media platforms.
 - EARTH DAY: Amanda and Johnathan are working with the library on special events and virtual programming for Earth Day. Check out our Facebook page.
- **Catholic Central High School Time Capsule**
 - Bruce Dietz found a time capsule behind the cornerstone of the high school when tearing it down.
 - He donated the time capsule to the museum and asked that we help handle the details of opening it. There are several alumni that are interested and want to be present.
 - I am working with the Boys and Girls Club on hosting the event at the old gymnasium and using the event to benefit their capital campaign. The museum has several graduating class photos, other random photos, and news articles about the donation of the land by Jesse Besser and the building of the new school. We are working on creating a mini exhibit, including a media event to highlight Jesse Besser's generosity and dedication to the educational and cultural enrichment for the citizens of Alpena.
- **Child & Family Services of Northeast Michigan - Heart Gallery exhibit.**
 - We will be hosting the Heart Gallery exhibit for the month of April as part of a Michigan wide campaign focusing on adoption and foster care.
- **Other art exhibits**
 - NEMAG exhibit is up in the Trelfa Gallery until the end of June.
 - Bruno Hirzel exhibit will go up on the entrance gallery space (black walls) May through the end of September.