



Besser Museum Board of Trustees Orientation Packet

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Welcome to the Board of Trustees!

We appreciate your willingness to serve as a trustee of our museum. The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan fills an important need in our community, and we believe that you will find serving on the board a rich and rewarding experience. Your presence enriches and renews the board.

This manual will help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a trustee so that you can effectively carry out these duties. We encourage you to refer to it whenever you have questions about your board service. Additional information concerning the museum can be found on our website and Facebook page.

<http://www.bessermuseum.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/bessermuseum/>

Again, we want to express our appreciation of your willingness to serve as a trustee of our museum. There are many exciting challenges ahead, and we are grateful that you have accepted the responsibility of being a member of the board. As an organization, we are committed to giving you the resources you need to succeed. If you have any questions or if there is anything we can do to assist you in your service, please speak to the officers of the board or the executive director.

Thank you for joining us.



Board of Trustees Responsibilities

Our mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit authentic articles and artifacts of art, history, and science to inspire curiosity, foster community pride, and cultivate personal legacy.

As a trustee, you and your fellow board members are responsible for overseeing the museum's operations while maintaining our commitment to its mission.

The Board of Trustees has three main foci:

1. The board guards the museum's mission and, through guidelines, steers it in the right direction.
2. The board monitors the activities, health, and ethical behaviors of the museum.
3. The board ensures the museum is well-equipped to fulfill its mission by having adequate finances, a capable staff, and an esteemed reputation.

What are the responsibilities of individual board members?

- Attend all board and committee meetings and as many functions, such as special events, as possible.
- Be a member in good standing of the museum.
- Be informed about the museum's mission, services, policies, and programs.
- Prepare for board and committee meetings by reviewing the meeting agenda and supporting materials.
- Serve on committees or task forces and offer to take on special assignments when your capacity allows.
- Inform others about the museum. Advocate for the museum.
- Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the museum's financial statement.
- Follow conflict-of-interest and confidentiality policies and the museum's code of ethics.



Standards of Conduct

Under well-established principles of nonprofit corporation laws, a board member must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out his or her responsibilities to the organization. These standards are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of loyalty, and the duty of obedience.

Duty of Care

The duty of care describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member and is commonly expressed as the duty of "care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances." This means that a board member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when he or she makes a decision as a steward of the museum.

Duty of Loyalty

The duty of loyalty is a standard of faithfulness; a board member must give undivided allegiance when making decisions affecting the museum. This means that a board member can never use information obtained as a member for personal gain but must act in the best interests of the museum.

Duty of Obedience

The duty of obedience requires board members to be faithful to the museum's mission. A basis for this rule lies in the public's trust that the board will manage donated funds to advance the museum's mission. The duty also requires board members to obey the law and the museum's internal rules and regulations.

BYLAWS

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan, Inc.

Adopted June 7, 2001; Revised May 20, 2004; Revised June 19, 2007;
Revised March 19, 2013; Revised October 21, 2014, Revised June 23, 2015,
Revised October 21, 2015, Revised June 21, 2016

ARTICLE I – NAME

The legal name of the organization shall be Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan, Inc.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan is an educational institution dedicated to serving the public of all ages and abilities in art, history, and science. Through research, it collects preserves and interprets artifacts, specimens, and information concerning fifteen counties in Northeast Michigan. Through programs and exhibits, it promotes understanding and appreciation of the past and present.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Qualifications. Any interested individual, business, or organization can hold membership, on an annual basis, through the payment of membership dues.

Section 2 – Membership Categories. The Board of Trustees shall establish membership categories and dues.

Section 3 – Membership Term. Membership fees are due on an annual basis.

Section 4 – Number of Votes. Every membership in good standing is entitled to one vote.

Section 5 – Nominations to the Board of Trustees. Every member in good standing is eligible to submit nominations to the Board of Trustees within procedures and deadlines as specified by these bylaws and the Board. These nominations will be made in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governance Committee.

Section 6 – Benefits. All members receive basic benefits determined by the Board of Trustees and these include the opportunity to join museum-affiliated organizations.

Section 7 – Expulsion. Any member who fails to pay dues or any properly levied assessment, or engages in activities that jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the Corporation, shall be expelled from membership or have such other actions taken against them as the Board of Trustees in its discretion determines to be necessary.

Section 8 – Honorary Members. The Board may award honorary life membership to those individuals who have rendered extraordinary service or support to the Museum. Such membership shall be non-dues paying and shall carry with it the same privileges as regular membership.

ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 1 – Annual Meeting. There shall be an annual meeting of the membership in the month of May or June on a date and at a place in the State of Michigan designated by the Board of Trustees. The purpose of the annual membership meeting is to vote in new Trustees and to receive the annual report from the Director and the Board.

Section 2 – Notice of Annual Meeting. Notice of the annual meeting shall be given by mail to each membership eligible to vote. This notice is to be communicated at least ten (10) days before the time fixed for the meeting.

Section 3 – Special Meeting of Members. Special meetings of the membership may be called at any time by the President of the Board of Trustees, by a majority of the Board of Trustees, or by at least forty (40) memberships of the Museum upon written notice not less than ten (10) days in advance. Only business stated in the notice shall be transacted at a special meeting.

Section 4 – Voting. Each membership shall be entitled to one vote in person, by proxy, or by mail at any annual or special meeting of the membership, except that a person who is not at least eighteen (18) years of age shall not be entitled to vote. Proxy documents shall be provided with the notice of the annual or special meeting. A vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the memberships and proxies at the meeting is necessary to pass motions.

Section 5 – Proxies. Any membership in good standing may designate and authorize in writing another membership in good standing to act or vote for the membership by proxy. A proxy shall be signed by the member, clearly identified as such, and delivered to the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan. The proxy shall be revocable at the pleasure of the member executing it. If the membership executing the proxy, or the other membership authorized to act or vote by it, lacks good standing, the proxy shall be invalid.

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1 – General Powers. The business, property, and affairs of the Museum shall be managed by a Board of Trustees, which shall define the duties and responsibilities of its officers and the Executive Director of the museum.

Section 2 – Number of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than twelve (12), or more than twenty-one (21) elected Trustees who are members of the Museum. Until the maximum number is reached, the Board may appoint additional board members at any time. Each appointed member must stand for election at the next annual

meeting. When the maximum number of Trustees is reached, Trustees shall only be elected at the annual meeting. The twenty-one (21) members of the Board of Trustees shall include the board officers and the President of the Founders Society (or Founders Society member appointed by the Founders Society Board to serve in this capacity).

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF TRUSTEES (continued)

Section 3 – Ex Officio Members. The immediate Past President of the Board of Trustees (if his/her term has expired and he/she is ineligible to serve), the Executive Director of the Museum, and Emeritus Trustees may serve as ex officio Members.

Section 4 – Election of Trustees. The Trustees shall be elected by the membership from a slate of nominees presented by the Governance Committee at the Annual Meeting of the Membership. Their election shall be arranged so that one-third (1/3) are elected each year. A person shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive three-year (3-year) terms, provided, however, that service of a partial term of not more than two years shall not be counted against this term limit. All Trustees shall take office immediately. A former Trustee is again eligible for nomination and election to the Board after an absence of one year.

Section 5 – Vacancies. Whenever a vacancy exists on the Board of Trustees because of death, resignation, or removal, the Board of Trustees may appoint a Trustee to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting.

Section 6 – Removal of Trustees. A Trustee may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Trustees present at any lawfully called meeting of the Board.

Section 7 – Meetings of Trustees. A minimum of ten (10) regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held at such time and place as may be agreed upon by the Officers and the Board. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the President, by any two other Officers, or by the Executive Director, and must be called upon request of any five (5) members of the Board with ten (10) days advance notice.

Section 8 – Voting and Quorum. All Trustees shall be entitled to vote at any regular or special meeting of the Board. A majority of Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Motions may be passed by a majority of Trustees present.

Section 9 – Emeritus Trustees. The Board of Trustees may confer Emeritus status on a board member who has served three (3) consecutive terms with a distinguished record of service to the museum. Emeritus Trustees are invited to attend all board meetings in an Ex Officio capacity.

Section 10 – Policies. The Board shall establish and maintain a Policy Manual, which shall include all the Museum's policies, including such documents as the mission statement, vision and values, personnel policy, code of ethics, collections policy, and such other policies that the Board may adopt.

Section 11 – Actions by Written Consent. During any month that a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is not scheduled or is adjourned for lack of a quorum, and upon the determination by the President that timely action will be in the best interests of the Museum, any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Trustees may be taken without a meeting if after notice three-fourths of the Trustees then serving consent thereto in writing, including by electronic transmission such as electronic mail. No such action shall become final until five days after notice of the proposed action is sent to each Trustee. Notice may be by electronic mail unless a Trustee requests copy of the notice and the written consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Trustees.

Section 12 – Telephonic Attendance. The President may allow a Trustee to participate in a meeting of Trustees by a conference telephone or similar communication equipment by which all persons participating in the meeting may hear each other if all participants are advised of the communications equipment and the names of the participants in the conference are divulged to all participants. Participation in a meeting pursuant to this Section constitutes presence in person at the meeting. The participation of a Trustee in a meeting via this method shall be determined by the President of the meeting based on availability of the Trustee, availability and functionality of appropriate equipment, the need for a quorum, the length of the meeting, and input from other members attending the meeting. This provision shall not be deemed a Trustee right, but rather for the convenience of the Board of Trustees.

Section 13 - Trustee Nonparticipation. A Trustee who is absent from three or more regular meetings of the Board of Trustees during a year, unless excused in accordance with this section, shall be deemed to have vacated his or her term of office as of his or her third unexcused absence within the year. The remainder of such abandoned term shall be filled in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 5 and 4 above. For purposes of this section, the year shall commence at the annual meeting, which shall be deemed a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees for the purposes of this section, and shall end upon adjournment of the May regular meeting of the following year, and shall include any regular meeting adjourned for lack of a quorum. An absence shall be deemed excused when the absence is due to illness or injury, professional or work related conflict, travel, or any other reason deemed excusable by the President, provided that the absent Trustee shall have notified the President or Director at a reasonable time prior to the scheduled meeting time of the anticipated absence and the reason therefore. In extraordinary circumstances, the President may waive the requirement for prior notification.

A Trustee who attends all or any part of a meeting in person or by telephonic conference, or who has given reasonable notice and details of his or her availability for attendance pursuant to Section 12 above, shall not be considered absent for the purposes of this section.

The minutes of a meeting shall list for each non-attending Trustee whether or not his or her absence is excused in accordance with this section or whether he or she has provided notice of availability pursuant to Section 12.

Within ten days after a Trustee's third unexcused absence from a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees within the year, the Secretary shall notify the Trustee and the Chairperson of the Governance Committee that the Trustee's term has been vacated pursuant to this section. The Governance Committee shall nominate a person to fill the vacancy for consideration in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 5 and 4 above.

Within ten days after a Trustee's third unexcused absence from a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees within the year, the Secretary shall notify the Trustee and the Chairperson of the Governance Committee that the Trustee's term has been vacated pursuant to this section. The Governance Committee shall nominate a person to fill the vacancy for consideration in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 5 and 4 above.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Section 1 – Officers. There shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS (continued)

Section 2 – Election and Terms of Office.

- A. The Board of Trustees shall elect officers for a term of one year at its October or November meeting. The officers will take their respective offices on January 1 of each year. A person must serve on the Board of Trustees for a minimum of one year to be eligible to serve as an officer. Officers will serve no more than two consecutive terms in a particular office, unless otherwise stated. However, the Board of Trustees at its October or November meeting may vote to extend the tenure of any officer for an additional one year term if it finds that it is in the best interests of the Museum
- B. The First-Vice President shall automatically succeed to the office of President when that office becomes vacant. The Second Vice-President automatically succeeds to the office of First Vice-President when that office becomes vacant and then to the office of President.
- C. The immediate Past-President will serve on the Executive Committee for one year providing s/he remains on the Board. If the Past-President's Board term expires at the end of his/her Presidency, the Board may extend the term for one year for purposes of fulfilling this provision. If the term of any officer extends beyond that officer's Board term, the Board term of that officer shall be extended until his or her term as an officer ends.

Section 3 – Vacancy. If a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the First Vice-President shall serve the unfinished term of the President plus the year for which s/he was elected. The Second Vice-President will serve the unfinished term of the First Vice-President plus the year for which s/he was elected. The Board of Trustees will elect a member to fill the position of Second Vice-President within sixty (60) days.

Section 4 – Duties. Among the duties of the officers of the Museum are the following:

- A. The President shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the full Board, the Executive Committee, and the Museum; be authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Museum; be responsible for giving notice of the time and place of all meetings at least ten (10) days in advance; appoint all standing committees and be an ex-officio member of each; and assign specific committee liaison responsibilities to the Vice-Presidents.
- B. The First Vice-president shall assume the duties of the President in the absence of the President; be authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Museum; assume the office of President should it become vacant; and perform such other duties as delegated by the President or the Board.
- C. The Second Vice-President shall assume the duties of President in the absence of the President and First Vice-President; be authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Museum; and perform such other duties as may be delegated by the President or the Board.
- D. The Secretary shall record and provide minutes of all meetings of the Museum membership, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee. In addition, the Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the Board of Trustees.
- E. The Treasurer shall give regular, complete, and accurate accounts of all financial transactions to the Board of Trustees and Executive Director. The Treasurer shall chair the Finance Committee and be authorized to sign checks on behalf of the Museum. The Treasurer shall prepare and present a complete financial report for the annual meeting. In addition, the Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the Board of Trustees.

Section 5 – Removal of Officers. Any officer of the Museum may be removed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Trustees present at any lawfully called meeting of the Board.

ARTICLE VII – INDEMNIFICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Corporation shall indemnify all persons who were or are directors, officers, agents and employees against liability and expenses to the extent that the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act permits and so long as their acts or omissions constituting the grounds for alleged liability were performed in their official capacity and, if actionable, were based on good

faith business judgments and the belief that the acts or omissions were in the best interests of the Corporation.

ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES

Section 1 – Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees may create an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Board of Trustees, the most recent Past President remaining on the board, and the Executive Director of the Museum. The Committee shall be elected by the Board to serve at the pleasure of the Board for one year, commencing with their election at the May or June meeting and terminating with the election of a new Executive Committee at the next May or June meeting. The Executive Committee may meet between regular board meetings to develop strategies, advise the President, monitor the affairs of the museum, and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee may also act in all matters pertinent to the business of the Corporation, with the full authority of the Board in only two instances: 1) when the Board has authorized such action; or 2) when the President determines that an emergency exists and the Board cannot meet in time to address the emergency. In case of emergency, the President shall make every effort to convene a special meeting of the Board, and, if such a meeting is not possible, explain that determination in the minutes of the executive Committee meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES (continued)

Section 2 – Standing Committees. There shall be Standing Committees, which shall include, but not be limited to, a Finance Committee, Development Committee, Governance Committee, Collections Committee, and Facilities Committee. The Board will approve the Chair of each Standing Committee, who will be a member of the Board of Trustees, and who will report to the full Board at regular meetings. Within the discretion of the Board of Trustees, membership on any Standing Committee is not limited to those persons who are members of the Board of Trustees. Members of all committees shall hold office until the next Annual Membership Meeting or until their successors shall have been appointed, or as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

Section 3 – Duties of Standing Committees.

- A. Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall monitor the financial affairs of the Besser Museum Corporation and shall make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
- B. Development Committee. The Development Committee shall supervise and/or conduct all fundraising activities and shall make recommendations to the Board of Trustees.
- C. Governance Committee. The Governance Committee shall develop and recommend to the Board for adoption; policies of the Museum periodically review the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, and the Policy Manual and, as necessary, recommend amendment thereto. This committee shall develop and implement policies regarding Trustee recruitment, orientation, and on-going

- Board Education, and develop and maintain a pool of potential future nominees. The committee shall nominate persons to serve as Trustees and Officers. Nominees should represent the people and communities served by the Museum. Only board members and emeritus board members may serve on this committee.
- D. Collections Committee. The Collections Committee is responsible for evaluating the Director's recommendations for major accessions and all deaccessions to the Museum's collections, and establishing policies regarding the permanent collection based on the guidance of the Museum Director.
- E. Facilities Committee. The Facilities Committee shall oversee the development, implementation and regular review of the Museum's site plan. This Committee is also responsible for supervising the program of maintenance and expansion of the Museum's grounds and buildings.

Section 4 - Ad Hoc Committees. The President, in consultation with the Board, may appoint ad hoc committees, and for such term and with such objectives as seem desirable. As authorized by the Board, the Museum Director may organize advisory committees and special committees to further the aims of the Museum, and appoint a chair for each committee.

ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES (continued)

Section 5 - Board Committee Meetings.

- A. Every committee shall meet at the call of its Chair or of the Board President and shall report to the Board. If the Chair is not available to run the meeting, the Chair of the Committee or the Board President shall appoint a committee member to run the meeting.
- B. Committees may meet in person, by conference call or electronically as needed. The actions of all committees shall be subject to approval by a simple majority vote by the Board unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws.
- C. All Committees shall take minutes in the same manner as the Board. Such minutes shall be sent to each member of the Board as soon after the Committee meeting as possible but no later than the Board's monthly meeting.

ARTICLE IX – Fiscal Matters

Section 1 – Fiscal Year. The Fiscal Year of the Museum shall begin July 1 and end on the following June 30.

Section 2 – Execution of Instruments. All checks, drafts and orders for payment of money, grant requests, contracts or other notes, shall be signed in the name of the Museum by the Executive Director who is the registered agent of the Museum. They shall be countersigned by such officers or agents under policies established by the Board of Trustees.

Section 3 – Audit. A Certified Public Accountant shall audit the books and accounts annually with an appropriate report submitted to the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE X – DISPOSITION OF ASSETS IN THE EVENT OF DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution or the winding up of the affairs of the Corporation for any reason, all net assets shall be paid and delivered to appropriate organizations selected by the Board of Trustees that meet the qualification of the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) or the equivalent Section.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended or repealed by:

- A. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board of Trustees present at any properly called Board meeting, providing that written notice of such proposed change shall be sent to such Trustees at least ten (10) days prior to such meeting, or
- B. Two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members present at any special meeting or annual meeting at which notice the proposed amendment shall have been given at least ten (10) days in advance.

ARTICLE XII – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority for all questions of procedure not specifically stated in these bylaws.

ARTICLE XIII - THE DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Board shall appoint a Director, whose powers and duties shall be defined by the Board and whose compensation and tenure shall be set at the pleasure of the Board.

Section 2. The Director shall be the chief executive officer of the Museum, acting under the authority of the Board. The Board shall delegate to the Director the day-to-day operations of the Museum, implementing its policy and managing its programs. The Director shall also be responsible for maintaining effective communication between the Board and Staff. The Director's duties are set forth in more detail in the "Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan Executive Director Position" which may be amended by the Board from time to time.

Section 3. The Director may attend all meetings of the Board and its committees and serve as a non-voting advisor. The Director shall submit at any regular or special meeting such other reports or recommendations as may be deemed advisable or as the Board may require. The Director shall also submit, at the Annual Membership Meeting, a report reviewing the work of the Museum for the previous year.



BESSER
MUSEUM
for Northeast Michigan
ART • HISTORY • SCIENCE

2017- 2021 Strategic Plan

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan



Founder Jesse Besser with one of his company's first hand-tamp block machines produced in Alpena. A similar machine is on exhibit at the museum.

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Why We Do What We Do

The Besser Museum aspires to be much more than a collection of artifacts and static exhibits. We realize the museum has the potential to provide life-changing experiences.

The museum celebrates the genius of men and women: their past accomplishments; their present-day endeavors; their future possibilities. The museum encourages social engagement by inspiring visitors to imagine the advancements throughout time; their connection to the past; their contribution to the present; and their impact on the future. The Besser Museum elevates the status of the human experience and their relationship to the natural environment.

The goals set forth in the 2017-2021 Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan Strategic Plan have been established to strengthen the overall operations and ensure the vitality of a long-standing institution that exists to serve the public of all ages and abilities in Northeast Michigan.

A well-crafted strategic plan will guide the Besser Museum Board of Trustees, the Executive Director, and all Museum staff as they pursue the mission of being a living and learning museum, which Jesse Besser and the founders envisioned for Northeast Michigan when the museum opened to the public in 1966.

Our History

Looking Back

We celebrate a legacy of countless citizens whose lives have been enriched by their experiences at the Besser Museum. The strength of our longevity is attributed to staying true to the founders' vision and mission throughout the course of time.

1962

- Alpena manufacturer and philanthropist Jesse Besser sought the advice of Alpena Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Russell Wilson about establishing a public museum for the community.
- Dr. Wilson suggested that if a museum was created it should be "donated to some governmental unit to give permanence to the collections, and tax support for the expense of operation."
- The Alpena Public Schools Board of Education agreed to accept and operate the museum.
- Mr. Besser, Dr. Wilson, and local historian Mr. Fred Treelfa formed the Alpena Museum Association, Inc., a non-profit corporation and started discussing building plans.
- They all agreed that the museum should be a living and learning museum to enrich the area schools' programs as well as give educational and cultural advantages to the general public.

1963

- During the museum's planning and designing phase, the idea of installing a planetarium was proposed to honor Jesse Besser for his generous gift to the community.
- The placement of a sizable Foucault pendulum was included in the building's design.

1966

- The museum officially opened as an integral part of the Alpena Community College/Alpena Public School system until 1970.
- The 42,000 square-foot building was named the Jesse Besser Museum.

1970

- The Alpena Museum Association began leasing the museum from Alpena Public Schools.
- The Besser Foundation committed to providing funding for operational expenses.

1992

- Alpena Community College Trustees transferred ownership of the museum building, historic structures, and grounds to the Jesse Besser Museum.

2004

- To better encompass the true scope of the museum, the institution was renamed The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan.

Today

The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan carries on our founders' vision to be a '*living and learning*' museum ... an active center for the cultural life of the community and the schools ... a museum of art, history, and science ... for public enjoyment and instruction...



Located in the lakeside city of Alpena, the Besser Museum is a tourist destination on the US 23 Pure Michigan Byway.

The Northeast Michigan geographic region of commonality with which the Museum interacts comprises all the counties situated north of Bay City and east of the US 127/I-75 corridor. Included are Alpena, Alcona, Cheboygan, Iosco, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle County.

Families and school districts from counties that lie within a hundred-mile radius take advantage of all the museum's cultural resources and educational programs. Large numbers of individuals and groups attend our Log Cabin Day and the Fall Harvest/Fossil Fest.

Our uniquely blended, multidisciplinary mission focuses on art, history, and science. We provide a broad overview of Northeast Michigan's natural resources, developing industries, artistic expressions, and cultural heritage. This approach is exclusive to the Besser Museum as visitors will discover when experiencing our wide variety of exhibits and collections:

Throughout the year, the Besser Museum hosts tens of thousands of guests as well as thousands of area K-12 students on school sponsored field trips. Visiting teachers appreciate the educational advantages their students receive from engaging in the museum's numerous hands-on "STEAM" activities that are designed to align with the Michigan State Benchmarks.

Our Highlights

Art

Fine Art Collection Exhibits rotate through an extensive collection of fine art from local, regional, national, and world-renowned artists. Included are works from Dali, Cezanne, Renoir, Picasso, Warhol, Rivera, Chihuly, Clewell, and others.

History

Avenue of Shops An assemblage of ten historic shop fronts representing downtown Alpena in the 1890s.

Historic Village Five original, independently-standing outdoor structures from Alpena County. Each building is over 100 years old and available for educational and private events.

Jesse Besser and the Besser Company Exhibit Artifacts and signage showcasing the past, present, and future of the Besser Company, honoring the business of the museum's founder and namesake.

1911 Alpena Flyer Vehicle and Alpena Motor Car Company Display An exhibit highlighting one of the influential companies in Alpena history. We host the only known Alpena Flyer vehicle in existence.

People of the Lakes and Forest Exhibit A significant collection of artifacts representing prehistoric and historic Native American influences on Northern Michigan.

Great Lakes Fisheries and Heritage Exhibit Two watercraft from Michigan's past, the *Chinook*, a retired DNR Great Lakes research vessel, and the *Katherine V*, a 1928 wooden gill-net commercial fishing tug, convey the challenges of maintaining a sustainable fishery. This unique exhibit is part of the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium and the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail.

Science

Newly-Digitized Sky Theater The newly-equipped planetarium with cutting-edge technology seats fifty-two people. Visitors experience a wide range of presentations from local night skies to a virtual tour of the Sistine Chapel.

Natural Wildlife Exhibit An impressive assortment of mounted wildlife found in Michigan and around the world, a Great Lakes Fish Exhibit, and an extensive Herbarium. Additional nature exposure through our Nature Trail continually being developed on campus.

Lafarge Fossil Park Once covered by an ancient shallow ocean, Northeast Michigan is now a treasure trove of Devonian Period fossils. Visitors will be able to discover and keep fossils found in the crushed Devonian fossil material generously donated by Lafarge Alpena Plant and Specification Stone Products, while also learning how limestone is used in the making of cement.

What's Important to Us

Vision

Our vision is a community that can explore the dynamic story of Northeast Michigan's interconnected natural resources and cultural heritage through the ability to navigate the past, illuminate the present, and imagine the future.

Mission

Our mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit authentic articles & artifacts of art, history, and science to inspire curiosity, foster community pride, and cultivate personal legacy.

Values

Stewardship

Believing that history, art, and science collections have the power to educate, inspire, and transform individuals of all ages while embracing the responsibility to plan and manage the resources accordingly.

Knowledge

Providing educational experiences that promote an understanding and appreciate of art, history, and science.

Community

Contributing to the region by engaging and providing access to all while demonstrating and fostering community pride.

Legacy

Maintaining the founder's legacy to be a living and learning museum, honoring the community's history and achievements.

Professionalism

Adhering to the museum industry standards with utmost competence, courtesy, and discretion.

What's Next

The Besser Museum creates unique experiences through permanent and rotating exhibits, educational programming, and special events that appeal and connect to diverse audiences of all ages, abilities, and interests. These exclusive experiences promote an understanding and appreciation for the natural and cultural heritage of Northeast Michigan.

As we move forward, it's important that we stay focused on specific goals to help us realize our mission and vision. Below are the six goals we will achieve from 2017-2021.



Goal 1

Foster an appreciation for art, history, and science



Goal 2

Engage all ages, abilities, and interests of the public



Goal 3

Present the interconnected stories of Northeast Michigan



Goal 4

Increase community awareness of museum services



Goal 5

Attract, train, utilize, and maintain Ambassador Volunteers



Goal 6

Ensure financial stability to protect museum's assets



Goal 1: Foster an appreciation for art, history, and science

Goal 1: Foster an appreciation for art, history, and science			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
1.a Establish and maintain a welcoming museum environment that encourages engagement with art, history, and science	Immediately - Ongoing	All museum staff, Besser Museum Board of Trustee Members	Staff time, Board members, American Association of Museums online resources
1.b Develop a three-year rotating exhibit schedule with a suite of complimentary educational programs and special events	Within 12 months	Executive Director, Exhibits Manager, Education Outreach Coordinator	Staff time
1.c Create virtual tours that are available through online and mobile platforms	Available by 2019	Media & Educational Outreach Coordinator	Staff time
1.d Create digital content of Art, History and Science to present in the Digital Dome Theater to enhance the visitors' experience with various museum exhibits.	Within 12 – 24 months. Extended content available by 2019	Digital Dome Director	Staff time



Goal 2: Engage all ages, abilities, and interests of the public

Goal 2: Engage all ages, abilities, and interests of the public			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
2.a Ensure museum exhibits provide a culturally enriching experience that inspires curiosity, fosters community pride, and cultivates personal connection and legacy.	Ongoing	All Museum Staff, board appointed ad-hoc committees	Staff time, special project endowments and grants
2.b Ensure facilities and grounds are accessible to all visitors, workers, and volunteers.	Ongoing	Facility Manager	Staff time
2.c Gather and analyze feedback concerning museum experience from visitors and stakeholders to better provide desired public programming and improve museum visits.	Within 12 – 18 months	Guest Service Specialists, Education & Outreach Coordinator, Education Committees	Staff time, Board members, American Association of Museum professional resources, Ambassador Volunteers
2.d Design museum exhibits and educational experiences to be conducive and inclusive to all visitors utilizing AAM best practices.	By 2021	All museum staff	Consultants, staff time, endowments



Goal 3: Present the interconnected stories of Northeast Michigan.

Goal 3: Present the interconnected stories of Northeast Michigan's natural resources and cultural heritage.			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
3.a Develop a strategic plan for writing and designing interpretative exhibit labels that will result in a comprehensive and cohesive storyline throughout the museum permanent exhibits connecting Northeast Michigan's natural resources and cultural heritage.	Within 12 months	Exhibit & Collection Director, Media & Education Outreach Coordinator, Education Committee, Executive Director	Staff time
3.b Develop strategic plans for each permanent exhibit that addresses all the necessary components of good exhibit design (Historical Village, Native American Gallery, Avenue of Shops, Katherine V, Chinook, Planetarium, Wildlife Gallery)	Within 12 months	Executive Director, Exhibit & Collections Manager, Media & Education Outreach Coordinator, Board appointed ad-hoc committees	Staff time, consultants



Goal 4: Increase community awareness of museum services

Goal 4: Increase community awareness of museum services			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
4.a Draft and execute marketing plan and budget; identify media resources available and costs associated with marketing in Northeast Michigan.	Within 12 months	Marketing/Development Committee, Media & Educational Outreach Coordinator, Executive Director	Staff time
4.b Create cohesive brand and image of museum across all media and promotional materials	Within 12 months	Media & Educational Outreach Coordinator, Marketing/Development Committee	Staff time
4.c Develop mature online presence through website and social media platforms	Within 6 months - ongoing	Media & Educational Outreach Coordinator	Staff time
4.d Create marketing materials to promote the museum's field trip programs to area educators and make educators aware of the extensive collection of AMA/ESD teaching kits available for check out at the museum.	By 2018 School season	Media & Educational Outreach Coordinator, Marketing/Development Committee	Staff time



Goal 5: Attract, train, utilize, and maintain Ambassador Volunteers

Goal 5: Attract, train, utilize, and maintain Besser Museum Ambassadors Volunteers			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
5.a Develop and execute recruiting plan that utilizes community networks to attract ambassador volunteers. (first)	Within 12 months	All Museum Staff, Founders Society, Executive Director,	Staff time Board of Trustees Time
5.b Provide ambassador volunteers with training and standardized instruction sheets for the following roles: docent/gallery guides, greeters/gift store associates, reception hosts, fundraisers, maintenance/grounds supervisors, etc. (second)	Within 6 months - ongoing	Guest service specialists, department leaders	Staff time
5.c Create recognition and award programs to express gratitude and maintain ambassador engagement.	By 2018	Department leaders, Guest Service Specialists, Executive Director	Staff time



Goal 6: Ensure financial stability to protect museum assets

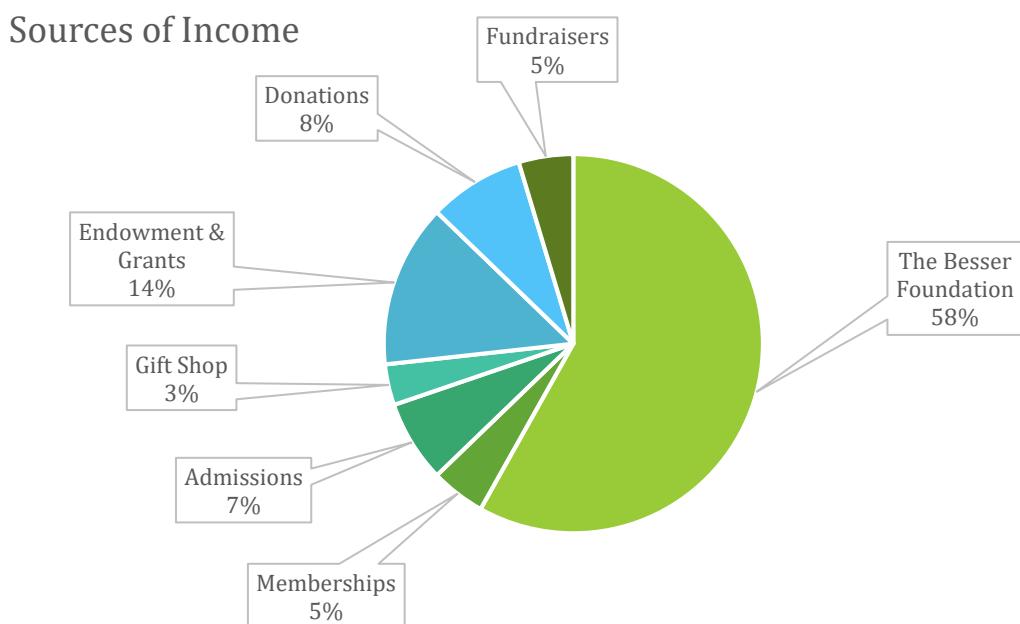
Goal 6: Ensure financial stability to protect museum assets			
Objective	Timeline	Responsible	Resources
6.a Create 5-year financial plan that address immediate, regular, and long-term needs for entire museum campus.	Within 12 months	Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, Facility Committee, Executive Director,	Staff time, consultants
6.b Create and implement a development/fundraising strategy to secure financial stability for ongoing operations and special projects	Within 12 months – Ongoing	Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, Executive Director	Staff Time CFNEM
6.c Employ AAM standards in all storage areas to ensure the proper care and preservation of museum facility and collection of artifacts.	Immediately - Ongoing	Facility Manager, Collections & Exhibits Manager, Museum staff	Staff time
6.d Execute daily routines to ensure a clean and safe environment for museum guests and museum collections.	Immediately - Ongoing	Facility Manager, Volunteer Ambassadors, Guest Services Specialists	Staff time

Funding the Future

The Besser Museum is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit, membership corporation stewarded by its own Board of Trustees. The museum receives no continuing financial support from federal, state, or local governmental entities or millage.

The annual operating budget for the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan is approximately \$430,000.

Operational support is generated through admission fees, membership dues, donations, awarded grants, and fundraising efforts. The Besser Foundation also continues to provide operational support honoring Jesse Besser's original intent *for the museum to become an active center for the cultural life of the community and the schools.*



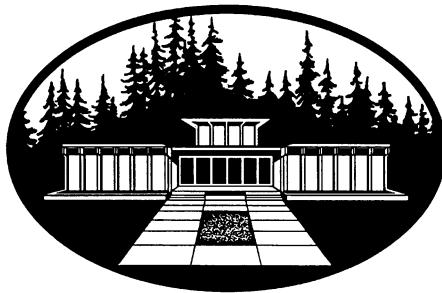


BESSER
MUSEUM
for Northeast Michigan
ART • HISTORY • SCIENCE

491 Johnson Street

Alpena, MI 49707

www.BesserMuseum.org



BESSER
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for Northeast Michigan
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CODE OF ETHICS

Revised and Approved by the Board of Trustees on February 19, 2004

Effective February 19, 2004

Replaces Statement Concerning Conflict of Interest adopted June 26, 1979,
the AASLH Statement of Professional Ethics adopted by the Executive Committee on November 12, 1996,
and the Code of Ethics adopted May 3, 2002.

This *Code of Ethics* for the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan is derived from several sources. Most prominent are the *Code of Ethics for Museums* from the American Association of Museums, 1994; the *Code of Ethics for Museum Friends and Volunteers*, from the World Federation of Friends of Museums, 1998; *Writing a Museum Code of Ethics, Resource Report, AAM 1993*; *Of Mutual Respect and Other Things*, by Helmuth J. Naumer, 1989; *Guidelines on Exhibiting Borrowed Objects*, AAM, July 2000; and *Guidelines for Museums on Developing and Managing Individual Donor Support*, AAM, November 2002.

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INTRODUCTION

Museums make their unique contribution to the public by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the world's natural and cultural resources. As stewards they own and use specimens and artifacts to advance knowledge, promote understanding, and nourish the human spirit. Although diverse in their various missions, museums have in common their nonprofit form of organization and a commitment of service to the public. Their collections are the basis for research, exhibits, and programs that invite public participation. It is incumbent on museums to be resources for humankind and in all their activities to foster an informed appreciation of the rich and diverse world we have inherited. It is also incumbent upon them to preserve that inheritance for posterity.

Museums in the United States are organized as public trusts, holding their collections and information as a benefit for those they were established to serve. Members of their Boards of Trustees, employees, and volunteers are committed to the interest of these beneficiaries. As nonprofit institutions, museums comply with applicable local, state and federal laws and international conventions, as well as with the specific legal standards governing trust responsibilities. This *Code of Ethics* takes that compliance as given. But legal standards are a minimum. Museums and those responsible for them must do more than avoid legal liability; they must take affirmative steps to maintain their integrity so as to warrant public confidence. They must act not only legally but also ethically. Therefore, a *Code of Ethics* can outline the ethical standards that frequently exceed legal minimums.

Loyalty to the museum and to the public it serves is the essence of museum work, whether volunteer or paid. Where conflicts of interest arise – actual, potential, or perceived – the duty of loyalty must never be compromised. No individual may use his or her position in a museum for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the museum, its mission, its reputation and the society it serves.

In subscribing to this *Code of Ethics*, the Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan (Besser Museum) assumes responsibility for the actions of the members of its governing authority – the Board of Trustees and Executive Director--its employees and its volunteers in the performance of museum-related duties.

GOVERNANCE: BOARD OF TRUSTEES & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Museum governance is a public trust responsible for the museum's service to society. The Board of Trustees and the Executive Director protect and enhance the museum's collections and programs and its physical, human, and financial resources. They ensure that all these resources support the museum's mission, respond to the pluralism of society, and respect the diversity of natural and cultural heritage.

Regarding the board's general responsibilities:

- ◆ The Trustees must ensure that all those who work for or on behalf of the Besser Museum understand and support its mission and public trust responsibilities. Good stewardship evokes the highest public trust and must be carried out with integrity.
- ◆ The museum must act in accordance with its basic documents and with applicable state and federal law. The Trustees and Executive Director ensure that no policies or activities will jeopardize the nonprofit status or mission of the museum or reflect unfavorably upon it as an institution devoted to public service.

- ◆ Trustees must understand and fulfill their trusteeship and act corporately, not as individuals. A board can act only at properly called meetings at which a quorum exists or through proper delegation of some part of its authority to a committee. Secret meetings, hidden agendas, innuendoes, or power plays are unacceptable in the museum.
- ◆ As a publicly accountable institution, the museum shall take reasonable steps to make its actions visible and understandable to the public, especially where lack of visibility could reasonably lead to appearances of conflict of interest.
- ◆ All Trustees must be members of the museum to demonstrate their leadership and support.
- ◆ Professional standards and practices inform and guide museum operations. Policies are articulated and prudent oversight is practiced.
- ◆ All Trustees understand that the primary responsibility for museum financial stability resides with them. Each board member accepts responsibility to provide for the physical security and preservation of the collections, and to monitor and develop the financial structure of the museum so that it continues to exist as an institution of vitality and quality.
- ◆ All board committees are responsible to the board as a whole. Only matters specifically authorized by the bylaws or by special action of the board fall within their purview. No committee, including the Executive Committee, may establish policy.
- ◆ All persons (staff, volunteers, vendors) selling items at the museum shall be fully aware of their source, quality, authenticity and educational worth. Misrepresentations, whether intentional or not, reflect upon the reputation of the museum.
- ◆ The Trustees shall maintain the intellectual integrity of, and the museum's control over, all its activities.
- ◆ Board members shall use museum property only for official purposes, and shall make no personal use of the museum's collections, property or services in a manner not available to a comparable member of the general public.

Regarding possible conflicts of interest:

- ◆ Each Trustee and the director must endeavor to conduct his/her activities, including those relating to persons closely associated with them and to businesses or other organizations, in such a way that no conflict will arise between the other interest and the policies, operations or interest of the museum. Each Trustee shall avoid carefully the reality and the appearance of using their positions on the board, or the information and access gained from their positions, for personal gain.
- ◆ Trustees, persons close to Trustees, or persons acting for Trustees must not acquire objects from the collections of the museum, except when the object and its source have been advertised, its full history has been made available, and it is sold at public auction or otherwise clearly offered for sale in the public marketplace.
- ◆ Prior to joining the board, all Trustees must fully disclose to the board the extent of their personal collections. All Trustees shall refrain from personal collecting in any manner that conflicts with the interests or credibility of the museum. No Trustee is to compete with the museum for objects; no Trustee is to take personal advantage of information available to him/her because of board

membership; and, should conflict develop between the needs of the individual and the museum, those of the museum shall prevail.

- ◆ Governance promotes the public good rather than individual causes. It is unethical for Trustees to engage in any activity that may compromise the integrity of the museum or undermine the confidence of the museum staff and the public.
- ◆ Whenever a matter arises for action by the Board of Trustees, or the museum engages in an activity where there is a possible conflict or the appearance of conflict between the interests of the museum and an outside or personal interest of a Trustee or that of a person close to the Trustee, the outside interest should be made a matter of record. In those cases where the Trustee is present when a discussion or vote is taken in connection with such a question, the Trustee should avoid discussion of any planned actions and should abstain from voting. When neither disclosure nor abstention is sufficient to avoid conflict or the appearance thereof, the Trustee must resign.

Regarding the board's relationship with the Executive Director:

- ◆ The Executive Director must be a person of character and integrity with both professional stature and administration experience to deal with ethics, changing legislation, regulations, and public demands. This individual must be responsive to Trustees, the community, and staff. The board should expect, welcome, and encourage this leadership.
- ◆ The Executive Director shall provide the Trustees with current and complete financial information in a comprehensible form, to bring before the board any matters involving policy questions, and to keep them informed on a timely basis about all other significant or substantial matters or intended actions affecting the museum.
- ◆ As the operational head of the museum, the Executive Director is recognized as a peer by Trustees. The board establishes policy; the director carries out that policy and oversees operations. The jobs are equal but divided, and this division should be the basis for communication and progress, not disrespect or mistrust. Both parties have the same objective: to provide a properly run museum of the highest quality. The relationship must be honest, straightforward, and without personality conflict. Mutual respect is the key.
- ◆ The Trustees must act as a full board in appointing or dismissing the Executive Director, and the relationship between the director and the board shall reflect the primacy of museum goals over all personal or interpersonal considerations.

Regarding the board's relationship with staff:

- ◆ Trustees must avoid giving directions to, acting on behalf of, or soliciting administrative information from employees unless the Executive Director is apprised.
- ◆ Trustees must respect the professional expertise of the staff, and acknowledge that the Executive Director alone handles all aspects of human resource management including staff employment and discharge, determining staff duties and organizational structure, and setting salaries within Board approved budget parameters.
- ◆ The board maintains a relationship with staff in which shared roles are recognized and separate responsibilities respected.

- ◆ The board bears final responsibility for the collections, but the director and curatorial staff are best qualified to assess the pertinence of an object to the collections or programs. Only for clear and compelling reasons should an object be disposed of or added to the collections against the advice of the museum's professional staff.
- ◆ Trustees shall not seek staff assistance for personal needs to an extent greater than that available to a member of the general public in similar circumstances.

VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, TRUSTEES, AND MUSEUM MEMBERS

This *Code of Ethics* applies to all who contribute support in any way to the Besser Museum. This includes Trustees, the Founders Society, the Docents, committees or other auxiliary groups, individuals, donors, associated organizations (such as Northeast MI Artists' Guild, Thunder Bay Woodcarvers, Genealogical Society, Doll Club, Garden Club, Weaver's Guild, etc.), and museum members who contribute towards the museum's development, operations, public presence and influence. All act on a voluntary and non-remunerative basis. Their support is moral, financial, or consists of voluntary work or expertise.

Volunteers and friends are afforded special access to the activities of the Besser Museum. They must keep in mind that their privileged status mandates ethical obligations towards the museum.

Regarding the general responsibilities of volunteers and friends:

- ◆ Volunteers must carry out their activities in an open manner and in a spirit of cooperation with the museum staff. There is no room for secret meetings, hidden agendas, innuendoes, or power plays.
- ◆ Volunteers shall support the Besser Museum and its activities with generosity and enthusiasm, but shall not interfere with the administrative application of the policies established by the Board of Trustees and carried out by the Executive Director and staff.
- ◆ They expect no benefit, financial or other, save the satisfaction of contributing to the maintenance and development of the museum and to the satisfaction of the public it serves.
- ◆ All volunteers that serve the museum on a regular, continuing basis (Docents, departmental volunteers, Founders Society) must be museum members so that they are fully knowledgeable about museum operations and activities. This does not apply to occasional or single event volunteers.
- ◆ Each individual or group within the museum's organization shall work within a structured framework with a designated staff liaison. This promotes a fully beneficial partnership as well as continuity and a lasting relationship. To that end, the museum shall delegate a staff representative to attend meetings and to work with each museum group.
- ◆ Volunteers must conform to the health, safety and security regulations of the museum, and respect its operational guidelines.
- ◆ Volunteers must honor the confidentiality of any information they may have regarding the management and activities of the institution.

- ◆ When friends and volunteers donate works of art, historical artifacts or specimens, they must make every effort to ensure the object's authenticity and origin and should follow the regulations of the museum. Major donations of artifacts or specimens should be made to the museum only with the advance approval of the Executive Director and in accordance with the museum's acquisitions policy.
- ◆ Volunteers should not represent the museum to media unless directly authorized to do so by the Executive Director.
- ◆ When carrying out voluntary work in areas of operation controlled by staff—particularly in the collections, research, exhibits and education fields—volunteers and friends should act only with the agreement of the relevant staff. They should respect the obligations to which regular staff are subjected, and must be careful that their activities do not overlap with staff responsibilities.
- ◆ Departmental volunteers are asked to operate within staff definitions of tasks to be performed and their means of execution. They must hold confidential matters of program function and administration.
- ◆ Volunteers should not accept gifts, favors, discounts, loans or other things of value that accrue to them from other parties in connection with carrying out their duties for the museum.
- ◆ Extreme care is required whenever a volunteer collects objects similar to those collected by the museum. No volunteer may use his/her museum affiliation to promote his/her or any associate's personal collecting activities.

Regarding the Founders Society and Museum Docents:

- ◆ The Founders Society and the Docents are auxiliary (subsidiary) organizations that operate within the museum and under the direction of the Executive Director. As such they work closely with staff and act as official representatives of the museum in all their activities.
- ◆ Actions taken by the Founders Society and the Docents should show loyalty to both the museum and their group.
 - (1) The goals they set and the programs they adopt must be aligned with the museum's mission and within the policies established by the Board of Trustees, and with the participation and agreement of the museum's Executive Director.
 - (2) Their boards and officers must maintain an open relationship with the Executive Director who will facilitate cooperation with the Trustees, staff and other museum entities. The Executive Director, or the director's designee, will serve as the official liaison between these organizations and the museum.
 - (3) They must coordinate their fundraising and programmatic activities with the plans and programs of the museum. When raising money, or soliciting contributions or in-kind gifts on behalf of the museum, volunteers must do so with integrity and must use donations only for the donor's intended purpose.
 - (4) All members of the Founders Society and the Docents must be members of the museum.
 - (5) Members of these organizations will not make requests of staff or use museum resources without first securing approval from the Executive Director.

Regarding the museum's responsibility to its volunteers and friends:

- ◆ Volunteers and friends should expect a professional and courteous relationship with museum management and staff. It is important that the museum for its part acknowledges the value of their contributions and assists in implementation so that a fully productive collaboration results.
- ◆ Staff shall be supportive of volunteers, receive them as fellow workers, and willingly provide appropriate training and opportunity for their intellectual enrichment. Volunteers shall be assigned meaningful tasks and provided with the necessary tools to complete those tasks.
- ◆ Trustees and staff shall recognize volunteer commitment and contributions, both inside and outside the institution.
- ◆ The museum shall support the ventures agreed upon by volunteer organizations and the Executive Director. The museum shall put at their disposal the necessary resources to pursue goals common to the institution and the group.
- ◆ To guide volunteers, the museum shall do its best to ensure that they are fully informed of its mission, short and long-term goals, future plans, programs, and administrative procedures.

STAFF

A comprehensive treatment of museum responsibilities and ethics is documented in the *Employees' Handbook* approved by the Board of Trustees on February 1, 2001. However, some warrant expansion or emphasis and they are included here.

Regarding the general responsibilities of staff,

- ◆ Staff shall perform their jobs with the highest ethical and professional standards and shall act with integrity and objectivity. Staff shall accept, as conditions of employment, the restrictions that are necessary to maintain public confidence in the museum and in their profession.
- ◆ Staff's primary work responsibility is to the museum. Any outside employment must be reported to the Executive Director and may not interfere or compete with the operational needs of the museum or compromise the professional integrity or the reputation of the museum. Staff shall not engage in any business or activity with or without remuneration that involves a conflict of interest, or is a violation of local, state or federal law.
- ◆ Full disclosure and strict ethics are followed in the area of personal collections. Acquiring, collecting or owning museum-type objects is not in itself unethical, but it can raise ethical questions. Extreme care is required whenever an employee collects objects similar to those collected by the museum. No employee may use his/her museum affiliation to promote his/her or any associate's personal collecting activities. No employee may participate in any outside sales dealing in objects similar or related to those collected by the museum.
- ◆ No staff member may furnish appraisals of monetary value for any reason, of any object, for anybody including trustees, donors, and museum volunteers. Persons requesting appraisals, even if they are donors of the object to the museum, must secure their own appraisal at their own expense. The museum must avoid assisting the donor in what may appear to be an improper tax deduction.

Instead, a list of qualified appraisers may be given to the inquirer for personal pursuit and care must be taken so that no appearance of personal favoritism in referrals is created.

- ◆ The related areas of identification, authentication and description must be confined to professional museum work and should not be used in connection with outside activities.
- ◆ Employees may not borrow or use for personal purposes any artifact or specimen that is part of the museum's collections.
- ◆ Personal collections other than reference books shall not be stored at the museum.
- ◆ Employees and members of their families must not accept gifts, fees, tips, favors, loans, discounts, *quid pro quo* arrangements, or other dispensations of value that may become available to them in connection with their duties at the museum.
- ◆ Staff must immediately report all gifts accepted on behalf of the museum to the Executive Director, and shall not receive, solicit or offer a bribe in the course of their museum employment.
- ◆ Staff may not buy or sell commercial goods or personal services for personal gain on museum time. Neither shall they use any museum tool, equipment, supplies or services for private gain, personal use or convenience.

Regarding communication and interpersonal relations:

- ◆ Staff and the Executive Director must communicate openly and honestly with each other. The director ensures that the resolution of issues involving professional matters incorporates the opinions and professional judgments of relevant members of the staff. The responsibility for final settlement of differences resides with the Executive Director. All employees are expected to respect and support these decisions and those made by the Board of Trustees. However, no staff member can be required to reverse, alter, or suppress his/her professional judgment to conform to a management decision.
- ◆ On administrative matters or concerns, staff shall first discuss them with the Executive Director, and may communicate with trustees or volunteers only with the Executive Director's knowledge.
- ◆ Employees must not share confidential records on museum personnel, finances, donors or other privileged information with anybody without the approval of the Executive Director. Staff must respect the privacy of individuals and groups that support the museum.
- ◆ Employees should present a positive attitude and professional conduct with staff, colleagues, volunteers, members, and visitors; treat everyone with respect and courtesy; and appreciate diverse audiences regardless of their age, abilities, disabilities, sexual orientation, and ethnic, religious, or economic backgrounds.
- ◆ Staff must be loyal to the museum and not harm the museum's relationship with visitors, other employees, volunteers, suppliers, agencies or the general public. They should act constructively and avoid malicious gossip and derogatory comments against each other, the trustees, director, and volunteers, and must not spread rumors or engage in any behavior that creates discord and hurts the museum's interests.

COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH

Museums generally achieve prominence and importance from their collections, which constitute the primary difference between them and other institutions. Since the collections are the essence of the museum, they are its first responsibility.

The distinctive character of museum ethics derives from the acquisition, ownership, care, and use of artifacts and specimens representing the world's natural and cultural heritage. This stewardship of collections entails the highest public trust and carries with it the presumption of rightful ownership, permanence, care, documentation, accessibility, and responsible disposal.

Regarding field studies and collecting:

- ◆ Field programs must be executed legally and responsibly in acquiring specimens and data. Staff must discourage unethical and destructive practices associated with acquiring, transporting and importing objects and they must avoid even the appearance of engaging in clandestine activity.
- ◆ Field programs must be preceded by investigation, disclosure and communication sufficient to ascertain the full knowledge, approval, and collaboration of the individuals and entities to which the activity is appropriately of concern.
- ◆ Collections-related activities must promote the public good rather than individual financial gain. They are conducted for scholarly or educational purposes only.
- ◆ Staff and their volunteers may not support an illicit market or trade or contribute to the degradation of natural resources to acquire collections in art, history, or science.
- ◆ Normally, no artifact or specimen should be acquired that cannot be properly cared for and used.
- ◆ In both act and appearance, staff shall honor the beliefs and customs of individuals and societies.

Regarding the museum's responsibility to the collections:

- ◆ The museum's collections must support its mission and public trust responsibilities.
- ◆ The collections are not to be thought of as financial assets, and may not be used as collateral for loans or sold to secure funds for operations, buildings or expansions of the museum.
- ◆ The collections must be protected, secure, unencumbered, and preserved.
- ◆ The collections must be accounted for, documented, maintained and periodically evaluated.
- ◆ The museum must have in place a written Collections Policy and Procedures Manual, approved by the Executive Director and Board of Trustees, that is publicly accessible on request, to protect the museum's assets and reputation and to guide institutional actions.
- ◆ Accessioned collections shall not be made available to any individual on any basis for personal use, either on or off the premises, or for any other purpose contrary to the adopted collections policies.
- ◆ Reasonable public access to the collections and related information is permitted and many items may be displayed for predetermined periods of time. However, the museum's primary responsibility is to

safeguard the artifacts and specimens and, therefore, it shall regulate access to them or refrain from exhibiting them if such activity is deemed detrimental to their safekeeping.

- ◆ The unique and special nature of human remains and American Indian funerary and sacred objects are securely and respectfully housed and carefully maintained as archival items. They are available to qualified researchers, educators and Native Peoples, and all scholarly work on them is performed with dignity and sensitivity to various beliefs.
- ◆ When disposing of objects from the collections, the museum must first determine that it has the legal right to do so. The museum must not allow objects from its collections to be acquired privately by any museum officer, volunteer, member of the board or his/her representative, unless the objects are sold publicly and with complete disclosure of their history. Staff who are part of the deaccessioning procedure may not acquire deaccessioned objects by sale or any other means.
- ◆ Disposal of collections through sale, trade, or research activities is solely for the advancement of the museum's mission and due consideration must be given to the museum community in general. Proceeds from the sale of collections are to be used consistent with the established standards of the museum's discipline, but in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections.

PROGRAMS, EXHIBITIONS AND SALES

Museums serve society by advancing an understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural world through exhibition, research, scholarship, publications, educational activities and Museum Store sales. These further the museum's mission and are responsible to the concerns, interests, and needs of society.

The museum should assume a position of leadership in the effort to halt continuing degradation of artistic, historical and natural history resources.

Responsibility of the museum to educational programs:

- ◆ The programs must support the mission and public trust responsibilities of the museum. They support the public good rather than individual financial gain.
- ◆ The programs must be accessible to everybody and should encourage participation of the widest possible audience consistent with the museum's mission and resources.
- ◆ The programs must respect pluralistic values, traditions, and concerns.
- ◆ Revenue-producing activities that involve relationships with external entities must be compatible with the museum's mission and support its public trust responsibilities.
- ◆ All interpretation in programs and exhibitions must be based on sound scholarship and intellectual integrity. The museum may address a wide variety of social, political, artistic or scientific issues, but it must do so accurately, objectively and without prejudice as the facts have been documented, avoiding myths and stereotypes.
- ◆ There must be a clear connection between the exhibition of objects and the museum's mission, and the inclusion of objects must be consistent with the intellectual integrity of the exhibition.

- ◆ History exhibits must convey to the visitor an understanding and appreciation of the lives of those who lived or live under very different circumstances. Science exhibits must convey respect for all life forms. Art exhibits must respect the variety of perception in human imagination.
- ◆ Docent interpretation must take special care not to dilute or ignore accuracy for the sake of public entertainment, popularity, or personal views. Docents must interpret human cultures and sensitive artifacts with tact and a deep respect for human dignity for all cultures represented.
- ◆ The museum retains full decision making authority over the content and presentation of exhibitions, and shall identify all exhibited artifacts and specimens accurately.
- ◆ The museum shall not accept any commission or fee from the sale of objects borrowed for exhibition.

Responsibility of the museum concerning the sale of items through a Museum Store:

- ◆ The museum may sell merchandise (but not its accessioned collections) through a Museum Store, but all items must be related to the Art, History, or Science mission of the museum. Items sold that are not mission-related jeopardize the museum's non-profit 501(c)(3) classification.
- ◆ The museum may not make a commission on items displayed and sold from an exhibition mounted by the museum. Any artwork or other objects for sale on which the museum does make a commission must clearly be identified as part of a sales show rather than an exhibition.

INDIVIDUAL DONOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees on September 25, 2003

The Besser Museum has always benefited from the generosity of individual donors and they, in turn, have benefited by their association with the museum. In recent years this relationship has become more complex and it is appropriate to develop policies and practices to manage real and potential ethical issues involved in the association. In this manner, the museum will fulfill its public trust by promoting policies and procedures concerning its relationship with individual donors as they support mission-related activities and comply with pertinent state, local and federal laws.

The policy shall be approved by the Board of Trustees, be made known to the staff and be accessible to the public. The Trustees may make changes in policy as museum standards and/or the mission of the Besser Museum changes.

Individual donor support refers to cash, real property, or planned gifts from an individual, family or family foundation, regardless of the use of the support and/or the tax implications of the gift. It does not include donations of objects to museum collections. These are governed by accession policies and procedures stated in the Besser Museum's Collections Management Policies and Procedures Manual approved by the Board of Trustees on June 7, 2001.

Regarding Acceptance Procedure for Donor Support:

- ◆ The donor speaks with the Executive Director about the gift: its purpose, use, museum obligations and public recognition of the donor. If the donor is deceased, the same points are discussed with his/her heir(s) or representative of the estate.
- ◆ If the gift exceeds five thousand dollars (\$5000), the Executive Director presents the information to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for approval or acceptance.

Regarding Conflict of Interest:

- ◆ No trustee, staff member or individual may take advantage of his/her position for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the museum. Trustees and staff shall conduct themselves in such a manner that no conflict with other organizations or businesses shall arise between them and the museum's interests and policies.
- ◆ Whenever there is a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the interests of the museum and the personal interest of a trustee, staff member or individual, or a person close to them, the outside interest should be made a matter of record.
- ◆ A trustee with a conflict of interest should avoid participating in a discussion of a planned action and should abstain from voting on the matter. If disclosure and abstention are not sufficient to avoid conflict, or the appearance of conflict, the trustee may need to resign.
- ◆ The Board of Trustees may establish an Ethics Committee composed of the Board President, the Executive Director and two (2) board members. The Committee shall meet when necessary to make recommendations to the Board on conflict of interest matters.
- ◆ If a board member, a staff member, or a member of the public has an ethical concern, s/he should bring it to the attention of the Board President or the Director. The matter should be discussed to see if it could be clarified and resolved at this level. If the matter cannot be resolved in this situation, it is brought to the Ethics Committee. The committee makes a recommendation to the board and the board makes a decision regarding the concern.
- ◆ If a board, staff or committee member is involved in the matter under consideration, the person must recuse him/herself from the Ethics Committee and from board discussion, and abstain from voting on the matter.
- ◆ As the Development Committee approaches potential donors, it must first ascertain if there is a conflict of interest. The committee should respect the anonymity of those being solicited until the solicitation has actually happened. If a donor requests anonymity, the request should be publicly respected, but not in museum record keeping. This must be clarified with the donor.
- ◆ If a potential donor is unable to participate in a project, event, etc., a notation should be made so as to protect the donor from similar approaches in the near future.

Further information on conflict of interest can be found in the Code of Ethics approved by the board on May 3, 2001.

Regarding Donor Communication:

- ◆ The Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, after consultation with appropriate staff, may suggest changes in an agreement with individual donors. Modifications should be made only when there are major changes in finances or other circumstances. The changes will be in written form and signed by the donor or his/her designee and the museum's Executive Director.
- ◆ The museum will not provide financial, tax or legal information to the donor but will urge consultation with the donor's legal and financial advisors.

Regarding Types of Support Accepted:

- ◆ The museum will accept gifts of support from wills, trusts, insurance policies, real estate transactions, stocks and bonds, and donations for all operational expenses and board-approved restricted funds.
- ◆ The gift, if accepted, must fit within the mission of the museum and be reasonable and achievable under the museum's current fiscal and other responsibilities. The museum will have the final word on the appropriateness of the designation.

Regarding Recognition of Donors:

- ◆ The museum shall recognize donors publicly through Newsletter announcements and other publicity acknowledging the gift and its use, unless the donor requests anonymity. The donor's name may be kept confidential but the gift and its purpose will be noted. The donor's name, however, must be noted on museum records of the gift. The official record of the donation is available only to the Executive Director, the Staff Accountant, the Executive Committee of the Board, and to those functionaries who, by law, have access to such information.

Regarding Uncollected Pledges:

- ◆ If a donor does not or cannot honor a pledge, the Ethics Committee will consider the overall impact of the gift on the museum and the museum's past relationship with the donor before deciding on the action to take.
- ◆ If the Ethics Committee finds that some action should be taken, the following procedure is recommended:
 - (1) The President of the Board sends a letter of notification to the individual as a reminder of the purpose of the pledge, amount pledged and amount paid, with a request for payment of the unfulfilled amount.
 - (2) If the first letter does not bring the desired result, a second letter is sent asking for closure by a specified date with a copy of the letter to be signed and returned to assure that the donor is aware of the unpaid pledge.
 - (3) If the donor does not respond, the board President or the Ethics Committee will recommend action to provide closure.
 - (4) If the loss of the pledged funds creates a significant financial problem for the museum, the Board of Trustees may initiate legal means to secure the funds.

Regarding Documentation of Individual Donor Support:

- ◆ The Museum's Executive Director, the Staff Accountant and the Finance Committee are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and retaining documents related to individual donor support.

Regarding Procedures for Documenting Individual Donor Support:

- ◆ Documentation of donor support will be done by the Executive Director or his/her designee by means of a letter or Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties.
- ◆ The document should include: the activities for which the support may be used, the purpose of the activity, dollar amount given, time limitations, benefits to donor and to the public or museum, and manner of donor recognition. If a donor wishes to advertise the event, the museum retains the right to have final copy approval.
- ◆ If significant changes must be made in the original plan, the donor must be kept informed, options discussed, and significant changes documented and signed.
- ◆ An agreement between a donor and the museum may be terminated if either party is unable to carry out its responsibilities due to unforeseen circumstances.

Regarding Application of Policy:

- ◆ Any person requesting funds or services on behalf of the museum should not do so unless they have obtained the approval of the chair of the Development Committee and the Executive Director.
- ◆ Individuals cannot make commitments for the museum unless they have the consent of the chair of the Development Committee and the Executive Director.
- ◆ All groups meeting at or using the museum must follow the policies of the museum.