

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 18, 2025 @ 4:30 p.m.**

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

Board Members: President, Mike Beaulac (virtual), **Vice President**, Ashley Peterson, **Secretary**, Jim Johnson, **Treasurer**, Sue Stender, Michelle Miller, Claudia Chapman, Tuffy Cross, Jon Gougeon, Janet Young (virtual), Dan Florip, Sara Winter, and Brian Bartosh.
Absent: Gary Goren (excused), Ashley Peterson (excused), Julie Austin.

1) Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 pm.

2) Review January 21st, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes for approval (action item)

Correct “*plant walk*” to *Planet walk*. The motion to accept the minutes as written was made by Janet Young and seconded by Brian Bartosh. All in favor. Motion carried.

3) TREASURER’S REPORT: (Sue Stender)

- a. Treasurer’s report on January 2025 financials. Grants and special donations totaled \$23,000 last month. The treasurer’s report was filed as submitted.

4) Reports to the Board:

a) **DIRECTOR’S REPORT:** Full report can be found on the Museum’s website.

- 1) Attendance was much higher after reopening compared with last February.
- 2) A full-time museum assistant, Isabel Rudy, was just hired. She is a graduate from CMU with a Major in Anthropology and a Minor in Museum Studies. Isabel will start on March 2.
- 3) Still looking for a person to fill full-time Museum Assistant position.
- 4) Display drawer labels not working; looking for a new design. Cost still unknown.
- 5) Omega is working on the donor wall, estimated cost is still pending.
- 6) Staff is working with Split Rock on the Alpena Flyer Exhibit reader rails. Estimated cost = \$16,000, subject to change as work and ideas flow.
- 7) We currently have about \$164,301 in the DNEMH fund, distributed across three accounts and some outstanding pledges. In addition, Roger Cook has promised future donations of about \$100,000.
- 8) Surplus from Phase I will be used for Phase II
- 9) Chris and Mike assisted Gary Goren in a grant application requesting \$1,000,000 toward Phase II from Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Community Museum Grant Program. Application deadline was January 30; not sure when we will hear outcome.
- 10) Janet Young is donating her recent book about the Anishinaabe of Northeast Michigan to Besser; printing costs will need to be covered. Board will need to decide how to pay the printing costs – which discretionary accounts? Cost approx. \$8 to \$9 per book.
- 11) Staff has inventoried computers, purchased two replacements, and has generated a replacement schedule for the remainders.
- 12) Executive Director has been working on field trip education plans for History project, perhaps similar to that developed in 2024 for Fisheries Exhibit. Consulting with teachers/educators in community. This points to need to reactivate education committee. Can we recruit recently retired teachers? (Committee members do not need to also be Board members.)

- 13) Planetarium is still operating on just one projector; it is designed for two. (These projectors are no longer made or serviced). John Heath requested we add some new dome-formatted videos to Besser's library.
- 14) Planet History Walk: We have \$7,000 from Giving Tuesday in this account. Gary Goren leads this project and would like to apply for a Youth and Recreation Grant. Working on signage.
- 15) Friday, February 14th, we hosted approximately 100 people to a History Lovers presentation. Tim Kent was the guest speaker.

5) AD HOC COMMITTEES:

- a. **GOVERNANCE REPORT:** (Dan Florip no report)
- b. **GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:**
 1. **Chinook Project:** (Jim Johnson report) – continued to work with Good Design on the interpretive design. John Metcalf is seeking bids from Omega and Fossil Inc. for signage. We filed for and received a one-year no-cost extension for the Invasive Species Grant, which will not expire April 30, 2026. Working with DNR to seek validation of and suggestions for the interpretative plan. Attended the annual Great Lakes Stewardship Place Based Education networking meeting to give them an update on our exhibits.
 2. **Katherine V:** (Tuffy Cross, no activity to report).
 3. The Michigan Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium Conference will be held in South Haven this spring. May 21/22 are the tentative dates. Jim will share with the board the meeting announcement when it comes out.
- c. **DISCOVER NORTHEAST MICHIGAN HISTORY:** (Mike Beaulac)
 1. The downstairs, Phase II, area has been little changed for last 25 years.
 2. Awaiting outcome of grant application. Application period closed Jan 30.
 3. Need a schematic for Phase II to be used for grant applications. Cost could be near \$70,000 for this.
 4. Need a scoping/brainstorming committee to help with the “Vision-level” and schematics for Phase II.
- d. **COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE:** (Claudia Chapman):
 1. Sarah's and staff's digitization and other activities were listed – see February Collections Report. Much has been accomplished.
 2. Collections Committee asked Board to accept the following items into the permanent collection:
 - i. Black ash basket
 - ii. Milk bottle from Dietz Diary.
 - iii. “A Century in Alpena School” book from Ella White with letter to Fred Trelfa from Annette Trelfa.
 - iv. 1939 Sousaphone with original case and stand. Played by Ollie Rouleau in the Alpena City band.
 - v. Painting of Alpena veteran, Willard Diem in uniform.
 3. Claudia Chapman moved that these items be accepted, Brian Bartosh seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.
 4. Committee asked the following items be deaccessioned, mostly because of poor condition and mold, suggesting they be disposed as trash:
 - i. Two Men's felt hats
 - ii. Five pairs of leather shoes
 5. Brian Bartosh moved these items be deaccessioned as recommended by the Committee; seconded by Sara Winter. Motion carried with all in favor.

6) Old Business:

- a. Brian Bartash offered to chair an ad-hoc committee for marketing. Will work on forming a committee.
- b. Sara Winter inquired if the education committee will be activated. Chris: Yes, it is time to convene the committee.

7) New Business: No new business.

8) Adjourn: Brian Bartosh moved, Claudia Chapman seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Johnson, Secretary