

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 16, 2020**

Board Members Present: Claudia Chapman, Jim Conboy, Clarence Cross, Jim Johnson, Michelle Miller, Gregg Resnick, Diane Speer, Judy Suszek, Anne Belanger, John Caplis, Sue Stender, Janet Young and Kristen Sharpe.

Others Present: Executive Director Chris Witulski, Museum Accountant Marie Williams, newly elected board members Marie Fielder, Jean Thomas, Gary Goren and Mike Beaulac.

Absent: Anne Diamond (excused) and Mike Ableidinger.

Call to Order: President Jim Conboy called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m. via Skype

Minutes: Gregg Resnick moved to accept the May 2020 meeting minutes. Janet Young supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michelle Miller shared her report with the board, followed by Museum Accountant Marie Williams presenting both end of fiscal year financial projections and the July 2020-June 2021 fiscal budget. Those documents are available online at the museum's website. President Jim Conboy commented that given the unfortunate circumstances caused by the pandemic, the financial reports and projections look good, although they could change at any point. Gregg Resnick moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Financials. Jim Johnson supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

New Business:

1. **Log Cabin:** ED Chris Witulski shared that Architect Rick Neumann completed a report on condition assessment and what is needed to restore the Log Cabin. She also reviewed possible funding sources (multiple grant applications and Giving Tuesday money) that would cover the project. President Jim Conboy commented that the report, available online at the museum's website, was very thorough.
2. **Reopening plan:** ED Chris Witulski told the board everything is in place to reopen the museum to the public on June 19 and the planetarium on July 8.

Reports to the Board:

1. **Director's Report:** ED Chris Witulski submitted a written Director's Report to the board accessible online at the museum's website. She discussed with the board the possibility of using leftover Besser Foundation funds from the facilities study conducted by R.S. Scott to cover the cost of building cradles for the Chinook. She also discussed using leftover Besser Foundation funds

for modular art gallery walls to create interpretive signage for the historic buildings located behind the museum. Chris said both potential usages of these leftover funds would first need approval by the Besser Foundation, which is expected to meet June 20.

Ad Hoc Committees:

1. Governance Report: Judy Suszek is taking over as chair from Gregg Resnick, whose term on the board is over as of June 30. President Jim Conboy said an orientation session will be planned for the four new board members approved at the annual meeting. The orientation will be held once COVID guidelines allow for such gatherings.

2. Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:

- a. **Chinook Project:** Jim Johnson submitted an annual report available at the museum's website.
- b. **Katherine V:** An annual report listing projects accomplished last year was completed by Tuffy Cross and is available at the museum's website.

3. Native American Exhibit: Anne Belanger shared that a virtual meeting with the committee overseeing this exhibit took place last month. She said the consultants hired by the museum, Charlee Brissett and Calvin Hartwig of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, have been able to move forward despite COVID-19 constraints and that they put together a very strong document. Another meeting is planned for June 23. Anne said she is very pleased with the intuitiveness of both consultants. ED Chris Witulski said she is very glad Anne has agreed to continue serving on this committee even though her term on the Board of Trustees is over.

4. Fine Art Committee: ED Chris Witulski said work is continuing on getting the modular walls to better display more pieces from the museum's large art collection.

5. Collections Committee: ED Chris Witulski said the collections committee is fortunate to have such good, dedicated volunteers who are moving forward on getting the collection up to proper standards. They have been processing temporary custody items, digitizing accession logs and writing articles about unique pieces found in the collections.

Other Business:

1. **Strategic Plan and Goals:** This will be rescheduled to a future time once the board can meet in person.
2. **Employee Handbook:** Attorney Jim Florip will give a presentation on suggested changes to the Employee Handbook once the board can meet in person.

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members: Outgoing board members Anne Belanger, Ann Diamond, Gregg Resnick and John Caplis were commended for their dedication and contributions to the museum. ED Chris Witulski said each will receive a Certificate of Appreciation and a gift certificate to use at a local downtown Alpena business. She

thanked each for their time of service on the board and gave them a chance to speak as well.

July Board Meeting: The board discussed holding the July 21 board meeting back at the museum. ED Chris Witulski said she will contact members about a week before the meeting to see how they feel about meeting in person. Those who don't want to could still participate via technology.

Adjourn: John Caplis made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Sue Stender. All ayes. The meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary