

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 18, 2021 via Skype**

Board Members Present: Claudia Chapman, Jim Conboy, Clarence Cross, Jim Johnson, Michelle Miller, Diane Speer, Judy Suszek, Janet Young, Mike Ableidinger, Sue Stender, Marie Fielder, Gary Goren and Mike Beaulac.

Others Present: Executive Director Chris Witulski

Absent: Jean Thomas (excused)

Call to Order: President Michelle Miller called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. via Skype.

HVAC Control System proposal: General Manager Matt Klimczak presented two bids from Control Solutions and Air-N-Energy for a temperature controls upgrade to the museum's HVAC system. He recommended that the board go with Control Solutions.

Minutes: Janet Young moved to accept the minutes of the April 20, 2021. Tuffy Cross supported. All in favor. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Sue Stender presented the Treasurer's Report, which is available at the museum's website. The report was filed as presented.

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 shared that according to MIOSHA guidelines, the museum is to continue with COVID-related mask usage, limited contact and 6-foot social distancing through Oct. 12. She spoke about the museum opting to mark Log Cabin Day this year with a virtual event on June 26 that staff member Amanda Kucharek is currently developing. Chris also mentioned a change in scheduling with several art exhibits due to the newly refurbished art gallery, and that the museum received a large donation of Christmas trees and ornaments from the Alpena Mall, courtesy of Omni, the current owners of the mall. She told the board that guest services employee Katrina Brooks has given her notice and that Planetarium Coordinator John Winckowski is interviewing for positions out of the area. She will be looking at different staffing needs and options.

Ad Hoc Committees:

1. **Governance:** Judy Suszek presented the name of Ashley Wilmot as a potential new board member. Judy made a motion to nominate Ashley for an available board seat to be voted on at the annual membership meeting in June. Seconded by Jim Conboy. All in favor. Motion carried.
2. **Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:** Both Tuffy Cross and Jim Johnson provided updates. Tuffy said no large events can be planned at the Kat V due to COVID restrictions but that it will be partially open. Jim reported on some grant possibilities for the Chinook. Both are hoping that work progresses on a walkway between the two exhibits.
3. **Native American Exhibit:** ED Chris Witulski shared that progress continues on this exhibit. She noted that consultant Charlee Brissette is unable to continue the Phase 2 work she was

contracted for due to health issues but that she still will serve as a committee advisor. Chris will handle the Phase 2 work moving forward.

4. **Fine Art Committee:** Board members who have seen the new art gallery as well as ED Chris Witulski expressed how impressed and pleased they are with the outcome. Chris also praised Brian Schorn for his development of the first exhibit in the new gallery, "Modern Art at the Besser," and his 3-year exhibit schedule plan.
5. **Collections Committee:** Claudia Chapman presented the following items for accession by the board:
 - a. Child manikin doll from Kotwicki's Department Store
 - b. Early 19th century wheelchair
 - c. Doll carriage, circa 1900
 - d. Seven 19th century portraits taken by local photographers.
 - e. Wood souvenir key from Alpena

Claudia made a motion to accession all of the items proposed into the museum's collections. Seconded by Judy Suszek. All in favor. Motion carried.

Claudia then presented a collection of manuscripts from the Nordmeer for deaccession by transfer to the State of Michigan's maritime archaeological collection cared for by Wayne Lusardi at GLMHC. Jim Johnson made a motion to deaccession the collection of manuscripts. Seconded by Janet Young. All in favor. Motion carried.

Old Business:

HVAC System: Based on the recommendation of Matt Klimczak, Jim Conboy made a motion to accept a bid of \$9,535 from Control Solutions for a temperature controls upgrade to the museum's HVAC system. Seconded by Mike Ableidinger. All in favor. Motion carried.

Log Cabin Renovation Project: ED Chris Witulski reported that the logs for the project have finished the drying process and the museum is awaiting delivery.

New Business:

Annual Museum Membership Meeting: The annual membership meeting is June 15 and will take place in a virtual format.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary