

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 18, 2020**

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

Others Present: Executive Director Chris Witulski and Guest Attorney Dan Florip

Absent: Mike Ableidinger, Kristen Sharpe, Sue Stender (excused) and Jean Thomas (excused)

Call to Order: President Jim Conboy called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. via Skype

Minutes: Janet Young moved to accept the July 2020 meeting minutes. Mike Beaulac supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michelle Miller shared her report, which is available at the museum's website, with the board. Jim Johnson moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Financials. Mike Beaulac supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

Employee Handbook Revisions: Guest Attorney Dan Florip, who at the request of the board reviewed and made suggested revisions to the Employee Handbook, outlined the importance of a handbook. He said a well-written and comprehensive handbook protects the museum, ensures best practices, serves as a roadmap for employees in terms of actions and protects the director. Dan fielded several questions from board members. President Jim Conboy thanked Dan for the impressive product he produced. A decision on the suggested revisions was delayed until the September meeting so that board members can continue to look the revised handbook over and submit any additional questions.

New Business: Nothing to report

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.

Ad Hoc Committees:

1. **Governance Report:** Nothing to report
2. **Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:**
 - a. **Chinook Project:** ED Chris Witulski shared that Moran Iron Works and the Industrial Arts Institute of Onaway have agreed to take on the project of building the cradles for the Chinook. Jim Johnson shared that the shrink wrap has been taken off the vessel and in the ensuing weeks he will begin the process of prepping and painting. He is hoping the cradles can be completed by early September and the Chinook moved into place.
 - b. **Katherine V Project:** Tuffy Cross shared that deck had been installed between the Kat V and the engine shed. Other updates include putting out the wheel, making a mannequin to go with the wheel, landfilling in low spots, installing drain systems and landscaping around the handicap access pathway. President Jim Conboy thanked both Tuffy and Jim Johnson for all their hard work on both the Chinook and Kat V Projects.
3. **Native American Exhibit:** ED Chris Witulski and President Jim Conboy shared that the contract of one of the two consultants on the Native American Exhibit was terminated. The second consultant plans to move forward with Phase I of the project on her own.

4. **Fine Art Committee:** ED Chris Witulski shared that the modular walls for displaying fine art have been ordered and paid for from Besser Foundation Anniversary grant funds. Lighting also was ordered and the receipt submitted for payment from the same funds. Additional grant funds still remain, and Chris will check to see if they can be used for collections storage needs.
5. **Collections Committee:** The committee shared a list of 25 items for accession into the museum's Permanent Collections. Janet Young made a motion to accept the 25 items, supported by Judy Suszek. All ayes. Motion carried. The committee also shared for information purposes only a list of 29 items for the museum's Education Collections/Props. Those items do not require accession.

Old Business:

HVAC System: The board learned Attorney Dan Florip reviewed the proposed contract between the museum and R.S. Scott that involves subcontracting for a new chiller unit and HVAC upgrades. The contract initially limited the liability of R.S. Scott to \$12,000. Based on the board's concerns that the liability amount was too low, Florip recommended that the amount be increased to \$1 million and he said R.S. Scott has agreed to that. Jim Johnson made a motion authorize ED Chris Witulski to enter into a contract with R.S. Scott to move ahead with subcontracting for the HVAC system. Motion seconded by Mike Beulac. All ayes. Motion carried.

Log Cabin Renovation Project: ED Chris Witulski shared with the board a bid recently received for the renovation project from Robert Kenel, a professional contractor specializing in log cabin restoration. She said she wants to wait before taking any action on the bid until hearing back on grant requests that she submitted to help cover the renovations. Those grants were submitted to Alpena County Youth & Rec and Alpena County Older Persons.

Adjourn: Gary Goren made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Beulac. All ayes. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary