

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 15, 2016 @ 4:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Mike Ableidinger, Anne Belanger, Claudia Chapman, Ann Diamond, Jim Johnson, Steve Lappan, Michelle Miller, Judy Suszek, Carol Witherbee and Janet Young (Dan Stevens, via phone)--also Christine Witulski, Executive Director

**Absent--Excused:** Tuffy Cross, Margaret Henschel (resigned), Chris Lombardo, Don MacMaster, Gregg Resnick and Kristin Werth

**Called to Order:** President Steve Lappan called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

**Minutes:** Carol Witherbee moved to accept the October Minutes, Claudia Chapman supported. All Ayes. Motion carried. (Ann Diamond abstained--not present)

**Treasurer's Report:**

Judy Suszek reviewed the Treasurer's Report and ED Witulski explained that the Museum is in the process of revamping budget reporting and bookkeeping procedures to give a clearer picture of what is actually happening (donations and expenditures reflected by project). No questions were posed and the report will be filed as presented.

**Director's Report:**

- Executive Director Christine Witulski submitted her report in writing, which is filed with the Minutes.
- ED Witulski updated on the Capital Campaign--which is complete, closing with \$500,000+ raised--a success! A motion was made by Ann Diamond to close the Capital Campaign, Jim Johnson supported. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
- ED Witulski reported that the "Season of Light" event will be November 19, 2016 with JJ's catering and Kat Tomaszewski providing music. There will be short mini Planetarium shows.
- Bruno Hirzel, a local artist, has donated 50 of his books recently published describing his artwork. Proceeds will be donated to the Museum.

**Standing Committee Reports**

**Governance:** A motion was made by Dan Stevens, supported by Janet Young, to approve the 2017 slate of officers, as follows: President, Ann Diamond; 1st Vice President, Carol Witherbee; 2nd Vice President, Anne Belanger; Treasurer, Judy Suszek; and Secretary, Michelle Miller. All Ayes. Motion Carried. Dan Stevens complimented Steve Lappan on an outstanding job over the past 2 1/2 years--Steve was key in a successful Capital Campaign.

**Ad Hoc Committee Reports:**

**Katherine V:** Tuffy Cross was absent but ED Witulski reported that the hip roof is completed.

**Chinook:** Jim Johnson reported that the 3rd Annual Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Conference was held at the Museum and several potential contacts for this project were fostered. The Chinook has been shrink wrapped with a door left for entrance into the vessel for access to the engine. The grant proposal has been drafted and ED Witulski is working on her portion. The Great Lakes Fisheries Trust Grant has a deadline of December 10, 2016 (\$225,000 for a 2-year project). The Committee will hopefully receive feedback from the Great Lakes Fisheries Staff on the grant in January 2017--the Grant will be awarded in April 2017.

**Planetarium:** Steve Lappan reported that the Planetarium is up and running and staff members are in the training process. Steve has cleaned the seats. Next week Jeff Gray from NOAA will be bringing his staff to the Planetarium to discuss how the two facilities can collaborate to make the most of what each has to offer. NOAA also wants to use one of the Museum's traveling Native American Exhibits.

**Fine Art:** A motion was made by Anne Bellanger, supported by Claudia Chapman, to request \$1,800 from the Candace Smith Endowment to cover the remaining cost to frame the American Print Makers collection. All Ayes. Motion Carried. There are 28 pieces to be framed.

#### **Old Business:**

- **Doug Bliss Maintenance Contract:** It is too late to pursue this contract this season. The contract has been deferred to the Facilities Committee to investigate and get clarification from Mr. Bliss.
- **Meridian Contract:** The contract is signed but it is too late in the season to begin work. Mike Ableidinger will check into covering the area for the winter.
- **Donor Wall:** Steve Lappan, Ann Diamond and Chris Witulski are still working on this project. The existing tree will be used as the base and the project will hopefully be completed in January.
- **Field Trip Admission Price:** A motion was made by Dan Stevens, supported by Janet Young, to ratify the letter that will be sent to schools with the new field trip rates of \$3 for the Museum and \$2 for the Planetarium. These fees will be in place while the new fee structure is explored. Perhaps the Harry Johnson Fund will be used to subsidize the admission price if necessary.

#### **New Business:**

- **Liquor License for January 21, 2017.** A motion was made by Dan Stevens, supported by Michelle Miller, to request a liquor license for the January 21, 2017 Capital Campaign finale. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
- **Unknown Soldier Sculpture:** This sculpture is badly in need of repainting. The Museum doesn't have the financial means to accomplish this project and no organization has stepped up to assist. Moran Iron Works (Marilyn Moran) will not pay for the refurbishing but will repurchase if the Museum would like this option. The sculpture would then be part of the Awaken Sculpture Park in Onaway, Michigan. Steve Lappan will check into the legality of re-gifting the sculpture back to Moran Iron Works, via one of their non-profit charities. There would be a plaque acknowledging it was a gift from the Museum. Not sure if the Museum can donate to another 501-3(C). An email vote was taken regarding donating the Unknown Soldier Sculpture to the Awaken Sculpture

Park. The vote was as follows: Yes: Gregg Resnick, Michelle Miller, Claudia Chapman, Don MacMaster, Kristen Sharpe, Ann Diamond, Tuffy Cross, Janet Young, Judy Suszek, Jim Johnson, Anne Belanger, Michael Ableidinger, Carol Witherbee and Steve Lappan. No: Dan Stevens. Not Yet Voted: Chris Lombardo. The sculpture has been moved to its new location.

- **Update Bank Accounts:** The Museum's bank accounts need to be updated to reflect the 2017 officers. Janet Young, supported by Claudia Chapman, made a motion to have the bank accounts updated to reflect 2017 officers. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

**Adjourn:** President Lappan adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting will be Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.  
(NO December Meeting)**

**Submitted by Michelle Miller, Acting Secretary**