

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 4:31 pm

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

Others Present: Executive Director Chris Witulski

Absent: Jean Thomas, Mike Ableidinger

Call to Order: President Michelle Miller called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Minutes: Jim Conboy moved to accept the minutes of the September 2021 meeting. Janet Young supported. All in favor. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Sue Stender provided the written financial report for the combined months of September/October since there was no meeting in October. Her report was accepted as presented and is available at the museum's website.

Director's Report:

1. ED Chris Witulski submitted a written Director's Report to the board accessible online at the museum's website.
2. Chris informed the board that the Log Cabin restoration project is completed.
3. As of the board meeting, there was no heat in the museum, with repair costs estimated at \$6,000, Chris said. Lappan Insurance was checking to see what the museum's policy would cover of the repairs.
4. The board learned more details about the Season of Light Gala set for Nov. 20. As a result of pre-event publicity, many new memberships came in. Chris proposed closing the museum next year for two weeks to decorate for the Season of Light. Museum staff would still be working during this time period. Jim Johnson made a motion to close the museum for two weeks, Nov. 6-Nov. 19, 2022, to prepare for Season of Light. Claudia Chapman supported. All in favor. Motion carried.
5. The museum is looking into installing plexiglass around the Pendulum to keep children from touching it and damaging it. Chris still is searching for a company to do repairs on the pendulum.
6. Chris told the board this year's Giving Tuesday revenue will be targeted toward digital equipment needed in Collections. Digitizing the collections will make them more accessible to the public.

Ad Hoc Committees:

1. **Governance:** No new business.
2. **Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:** Jim Johnson reported that the DNR Invasive Species Grant has been submitted. The amount sought is \$386,500 over a three-year period. The museum expects to hear back on the grant in February or March 2022. Chris added that local support for the grant was phenomenal. Tuffy Cross reported that it took 385 volunteer

- hours over 20 days at a total cost of \$7,720 to install the dock. He also said the Kat V has been closed up for the winter.
3. **Anishinaabe Exhibit:** Chris shared that Janet Young has begun writing narratives of Native Americans who lived in the region, with some of those narratives based on interviews. She said the committee hopes to meet in December.
 4. **Fine Art Committee:** No new business. A new exhibit in the gallery will be installed in June 2022.
 5. **Collections Committee:** Claudia Chapman, representing the committee, recommended accession of 3 items into the museum's permanent collection. Janet Young made a motion to accept the items as presented into the collections, supported by Tuffy Cross. All in favor. Motion carried. The 3 items are as follows:
 - a. Eight photos of the Alpena Holiday Inn, circa 1970s
 - b. Framed painting of the Alpena Holiday Inn opening following its grand opening
 - c. Two framed aerial photos of the Alpena Boat Harbor, circa 2006, taken by local photographer Tim Moggie.

Old Business:

Planet/History Walk: Gary Goren gave a report on progress he's made on this project, including putting together a Department of Agriculture grant for \$25,000 that is almost ready for submission. The tentative route for the walk is down Johnson Street to Sytek Park, along the bike path. Gary said the project has been approved by Alpena City Council. A number of letters of support for the project also have been obtained. Chris said Gary did an outstanding job making his presentation to City Council. The project could be done by next summer.

"The Town That Wouldn't Die": Although the museum hoped to have reprinting of the book by Thanksgiving it looks like it will not be ready until January 2022.

New Business:

Thunder Bay Arts Council Event: President Michelle Miller told the board that the museum staff was extremely professional and helpful during the hosting of a recent TBAC event at the museum.

Season of Light Volunteers: Michelle discussed board members volunteering for the Nov. 20 event and duties each would perform.

Thunder Bay River Flooding: Jim Johnson brought up the possibility of the museum doing some kind of recognition of significant flooding that took place on Thunder Bay River many years ago.

Next Board Meeting: The next board meeting is Jan. 18, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary