

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 19, 2020**

Present: Claudia Chapman, Jim Conboy, Clarence Cross, Jim Johnson, Michelle Miller, Gregg Resnick, Diane Speer, Judy Suszek, Sue Stender, Ann Diamond, Janet Young, Kristin Sharpe and Executive Director Chris Witulski

Absent: Anne Belanger (excused), Mike Ableidinger (excused), John Caplis, and Heidi Haaxma

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 March 2020 meeting minutes with a correction to the treasurer's report. Gregg Resnick supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michelle Miller shared her report, noting that the museum has been closed since March 13, 2020 due to state orders regarding COVID-19. She said this closure greatly impacts both revenue and expenditures, and that the long-term effect of this unprecedented circumstance is yet to be determined but will surely have a substantial impact on the rest of this fiscal year as well as the next fiscal year. She also noted that a \$5,000 grant from the Michigan Humanities Council and a \$5,000 private donation were received in May. Judy Suszek moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Financials. Sue Stender supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

New Business:

1. **Log Cabin:** ED Chris Witulski shared that Architect Rick Neumann recently inspected the Log Cabin and will provide recommendations for much needed restoration that could include encasing the structure and two other smaller structures in a pavilion as well as replacing damaged logs. His services of \$3,500 are being covered by last year's Giving Tuesday revenue.
2. **Reopening plan:** ED Chris Witulski presented a comprehensive plan for reopening the museum. She said the plan is aimed at providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all visitors, staff and volunteers. The 4-stage plan follows national, state and local public health guidelines. She also said that the museum is looking at bringing staff back for training the first week of June, provided the government okays opening back up. The board discussed offering masks to all visitors once the museum is open again and charging \$1 each for them. The planetarium would open further the down the road. The board also discussed initially opening fewer than 7 days a week, partially due to added cleaning responsibilities of the staff in ensuring the facility is properly cleaned and disinfected. ED Chris Witulski said clearly communicating with the public about the reopening efforts will be

extremely important. Gregg Resnick and Jim Conboy both complimented her on the thoroughness of the reopening plan.

Reports to the Board:

1. **Director's Report:** ED Chris Witulski submitted a written Director's Report to the board accessible at the museum website. She discussed with the board a recent conversation she had with Gary Dawley of the Besser Foundation concerning possible support in any museum fundraising efforts for the proposed facility upgrades. She said that Dawley indicated the Besser Foundation is committed to several other projects over the next two years but that those projects are in a holding pattern. Normally, the foundation could provide 20 percent of the needed funds, but with the current economy adversely impacted by COVID-19, there are unknowns right now concerning funding from the foundation. ED Chris Witulski also shared that the museum could have \$339,489 in funds to contribute toward the facility upgrades and to use for any matching grants.

Ad Hoc Committees:

1. **Governance Report:** Gregg Resnick put forth three names as potential new board members. They included Gary Goren, Marie Fielder and Jean Thomas. Bios of all three are available at the museum website. The three would be voted on at the museum's annual meeting in June.
2. **Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:**
 - a. **Chinook Project:** Jim Johnson reported that he continues to work on research related to accession. There is still no clear indication when cradles will be built so that the Chinook can be moved into place.
 - b. **Katherine V:** No report given at this time.
3. **Native American Exhibit:** ED Chris Witulski said she met with the two consultants on the exhibit and received the first required report. She shared that it was a good meeting and that the consultants are heading in a good direction as far as telling the narrative in a Native American voice.
4. **Fine Art Committee:** ED Chris Witulski said she has been in contact with Panel Processing regarding the modular walls for art exhibits.
5. **Collections Committee:** Claudia Chapman reported that several volunteers are continuing to work on inputting accession logs of the collections from home and that volunteer Judy Dawley has developed an interesting series on unique artifacts from the collections that is running in The Alpena News.

Other Business:

1. **Strategic Plan and Goals:** This has been rescheduled to a future time when the board can meet in person.
2. **Annual meeting:** The annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 16 at 6 p.m. Members will be encouraged to vote by proxy but if COVID-19 restrictions are lifted by then, the meeting will be scheduled at the museum.

3. **Log Cabin Day:** The board recommended canceling this year's Log Cabin Day due to COVID-19.

Jim Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Gregg Resnick. All ayes. The meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m. with the next Board Meeting to be held June 16, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary