

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting  
September/October 2023

**The following is a detailed update on Phase 1 of the  
NEW DISCOVER NORTHEAST MICHIGAN HISTORY EXHIBIT.**

**The Budget set for Phase 1: \$355,000**  
**Split Rock Studios SD1 and SD2: \$200,000**  
**Construction Estimate: \$155,000**

**Phase 1 Funding**

Besser Foundation	\$ 80,250.00
MACC	\$ 51,150.00
Youth Rec	\$ 75,000.00
Older Person	\$ 12,500.00
First Federal	\$ 25,000.00
Park	\$ 20,000.00
Granum	\$ 38,000.00
PRIVATE Donations	\$ 68,600.00
CFNEM	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 372,500.00</b>

On April 20, 2022, Besser Museum received a quote of \$155,000 from Meridian for the interior renovation of 3000 square feet of exhibit gallery space. (Please see attached bid.) This amount was used for the FY2023 MACC Capital Improvement Program grant budget. (Please see attached MACC Proof of Cost.)

Besser Museum was awarded \$51,150 from MACC. This grant is a 1:1 match. Meaning that the Besser Museum must spend \$102,300 on renovation during Phase 1 by September 30.

Due to circumstances beyond our control, Meridian’s subcontractors completed the first phase of the multiphase project on September 24. This portion included the removal of the ceiling tiles, installation, lighting, and old paneling, boxing in the existing windows in this gallery, installing steel furring, installation, and drywall. They removed the wall between the Avenue of Shops and new gallery and built a wall to block off the Gebhart Morrow Exhibit. They also added drywalled panels to the center gallery walls. The total for this portion of Phase 1 renovation was \$46,336.

On October 3, I emailed our MACC grant advisor requesting an extension on our grant due date. They approved the request and extended our September 30 due date to December 15. I explained

that the fire suppression, the ceiling, and the lighting were not completed due to circumstances beyond our control.

I directed Matt to seek bids for painting the ceiling with a completion date in November. Matt secured **Ideal Painting for a bid of \$6,775**. They will start the week of October 16 and can complete the work by November 7. Matt reached out to Total Fire to request the fire suppression be rescheduled for November. The bid for the **fire suppression is \$14,000**. Omega Electric (Ryan Fairchild) said they could have our lights installed by the December grant deadline. We are waiting for the estimate for Phase 1 lighting.

I reached out to contractors to renovate the Millinery Shop and Toy Shop. Glenn Kanarr and Ken Amlotte (recommended by Michelle Miller) submitted a bid to complete the renovation of these two store front exhibits for \$12,500. They started work October 13. While deconstructing the store front exhibits, the contractors came across an electrical issue requiring Omega Electric. Omega was contacted and will take care of the issue asap.

On October 5, I emailed MACC to inquire about the roof repairs over the new exhibit area being included in the grant funded project. They approved this expense as part of the MACC Capital Improvement Program grant. The \$14,000 can be counted towards the match. TRC Roofing started the project on October 4. The roof is being covered by the \$17,399 Infinex fund.

To date, total expense for Phase 1 of the DNEMH construction:

Meridian:	\$46,336
Ideal Painting:	\$ 6,775
Total Fire:	\$14,000
TRC Roofing:	\$14,000
Avenue of Shops:	\$12,500
Omega Electric	\$(we will have a bid the week of 10/16)

### **Museum Staff : \$12,561**

From January 2023 through April 2023, Besser Museum staff worked on dismantling the old exhibit gallery. The staff removed all the indigenous artifact then removed and disposed of all the old display cases. The total contribution Besser Museum has paid in staff time is \$12,561.

**Split Rock Studios:** To date, Besser Museum has paid Split Rock Studios \$75,000 for SD1. Below is the breakdown of payments according to the contract (March 2023).

Besser Museum Gallery Renovation

**1. Schematic Design and Kick-off \$75,000.00**

2. Design Development \$125,000.00

3. Pre-Production, Production & Installation \$800,000.00

4. Project Total \$1,000,000.00

On October 5, 2023, I submitted the Split Rock Studios paid invoices totaling \$75,000 to the Alpena County Youth and Recreation Grant requesting payment from our \$75,000 grant.

**Kanarr Construction/Ken Amlotte: Avenue of Shops** project. This \$12,500 project will be covered by the Alpena County Older Persons Grant and must be completed before December 31.

**Split Rock Studios:**

**Schematic Design Phase:**

Besser Museum has gone through SD1 and SD2.

The SD2 meeting on September 11 resulted in follow up workshops being scheduled to work with a content expert for the sections as needed.

Tim Kent will be providing SRS (Amanda and John) the exhibit design sketches he has been working on for the Paleo section and Fur Trading section. Included will be the inventory list, and exhibit content Tim has drafted. Split Rock Studios will have an opportunity to work with these sketches before having a virtual meeting with Tim, Sarah, and myself. After the virtual meeting, an in-person meeting workshop will be scheduled.

SRS will schedule a virtual meeting with Janet Young to discuss the Anishinaabe stories she has been researching and developing.

SRS will also schedule a virtual meeting with core content developers for other sections as needed.

Sarah Honeycutt has been working with her collections assistants and has compiled the artifact list for the lumbering exhibit, farming exhibit, and rocks/fossils/minerals exhibit. Sarah is working on compiling photos of the Industrial Revolution area. Besser Museum also just received a private donation of artifacts for the Train Depot exhibit.

I will be meeting with Mike Otis (SRS) to discuss which parts of the project the Besser Museum wants to manage and which we want SRS to manage, such as painting the Anishinaabe mural, creating the Anishinaabe shelter, printing the murals, ordering, and installing the trees, etc.

**DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PHASE November 27, 2023 – Jan. 22, 2024**

The schedule for Design Development is as follows:

Design Development I Presentation Week of November 27, 2023

Client provides consolidated written comments Two weeks after presentation.

Design Development II Presentation Week of January 22, 2024

To achieve everything that we envisioned for the new exhibit, the project budget for SRS was increased to \$1.3 million. However, after our last conversation with SRS about Besser Museum taking on some of the design development/installation work, we are waiting to see how that might impact the budget. We are also waiting to see what impact to the budget adding extra drawers and an extra case in the Paleo sections will have. Tim Kent said he would cover the extra cost for more drawers.

Once Besser Museum approves the exhibit design plan, SRS will contact Cornerstone Architects for Phase 2 of the construction project. Besser Museum will also need to secure contractors for Phase 2 of the construction. Glenn Kanarr and Ken Amlotte have expressed interest in this phase of the project.

## **FUNDING STRATEGY:**

**Request for Proposal for Line of Credit** has been sent to Nicolet Bank and Wolverine Credit Union. Nicolet Bank is comfortable with offering a \$250,000 line of credit; we have budgeted for a \$262,351 loan if needed. Interest rate has not been discussed as of yet. Wolverine Credit Union has not responded yet.

### **Grant Opportunities being pursued:**

1. **MACC FY 2024 Capital Improvement grant:** FY 2024 grant - \$100,000 was submitted. The MACC website states the Besser Museum was awarded \$50,000.
2. **Brian Bartosh** has a lead on a grant available through his insurance company that we will pursue.
3. **Giving Tuesday** campaign is set for November 28. We hope to have a new design to use for this fundraiser.
4. **Season of Light Gala:** Judy Dawley offered to help set up a fundraising event for the Gala and during the Season of Light exhibit. The fundraising campaign would ask individuals to purchase the extras for the exhibit, such as trees, shrubs, barn animals, etc. This idea is still being worked on, as we still don't know exactly what we will need. SRS is helping vendors to ensure we purchase quality display pieces.
5. Once the museum receives the final design for the new exhibit, a fundraising event will be planned at the Besser Museum. This should be around January 2024.
  - a. There are several businesses, credit unions, museum members, etc..., that have not yet donated to the new exhibit. A flyer with the final design will also be developed and mailed.
  - b. We also need to look at our CFNEM endowments and see what funds are available.

## **GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:**

**Chinook: \$386,500** DNR Invasive Species Grant.

Meridian's bid of \$174,000 for the Chinook structure was approved.

The Meridian Construction crew started work on structure on September 25.

Tuffy Cross stops by almost everyday to take photos of the progress.

Besser Museum received an advancement of \$174,246 from the DNR grant on 8/24/2023.

The team will start discussing the exhibit content and design. We will most likely reach out to Good Design who provided the schematic designs back in 2018. These designs are on our website.

## **MISCELLANEOUS:**

Fall Harvest Fossil Fest on Saturday, October 7 was a big success.

Plans are underway for the Season of Light exhibit and members only reception on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

The museum will be closed November 1 through November 19<sup>th</sup> for decorating.

Besser Museum will be hosting two field trips in October. The Season of Light field trip experience will be developed, and a letter will be sent out to teachers. Field trips will be booked starting December 1 and up until winter break for elementary schools.

The Museum staff is constantly working on cleaning and organizing storage areas.

A list of all the abandoned property in the museum's collections will soon appear in the Alpena News. We must pay for space in the classified section of the newspaper to post this announcement for up to six months. This is a long and necessary legal process so we can start removing unwanted artifacts from our storage areas.