

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

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

Absent: John Caplis, Mike Ableidinger, Heidi Haaxma and Kristen Sharpe

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

Minutes: Gregg Resnick moved to accept the March 2020 meeting minutes. Sue Stender supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Miller put together a treasurer's report, which showed expenditures down \$16,868 from 2019 and net revenue of \$38,882 through March 2020. ED Chris Witulski shared that projected losses over a 6-month period could be \$61,810. Gregg Resnick moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and Financials. Sue Stender supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

New Business:

1. **R.S. Scott Space Study Report:** Susan Edwards presented a comprehensive overview of her space study report that addresses multiple exterior and interior issues with the museum building. Edwards recommended moving forward with two separate contracts, one for a contractor to do the work and one with R.S. Scott to oversee the whole project. Estimated cost for the recommended improvements is \$950,000 to \$1.3 million for the contracted work and \$95,000 to \$135,000 for the services of R.S. Scott. Gregg Resnick and President Jim Conboy complimented Edwards on the thoroughness of her presentation. While ED Chris Witulski said the project is daunting, she also said it is necessary to begin looking at funding strategies.
2. **Besser Foundation grant for modular walls:** ED Chris Witulski said Besser Foundation approved usage of its \$25,000 anniversary gift to the museum for purchasing modular walls that will extend gallery exhibit space. Witulski indicated that to date one bid of \$10,000 had been received. She is seeking additional bids and said the money left from the \$25,000 gift after purchase of the modular walls could be used for framing more art and promoting art.
3. **Alpena County Youth & Recreation Grant:** ED Chris Witulski shared that the deadline for applying for these grants was extended to June 1 and that she hopes to apply for one to preserve and repair the McKay Log Cabin. The grant would be combined with an estimated \$15,000 received through Giving Tuesday. She has been talking with a

contractor about the best way to proceed with preservation efforts. Michelle Miller moved to approve pursuit of an Alpena County Youth & Recreation Grant to preserve the McKay Log Cabin. Gregg Resnick supported. All ayes. Motion carried.

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 expanded on several points at the meeting, including that the museum was approved for the Paycheck Protection Program through mBank in the amount of \$42,766. The loan can be used to cover payroll and utilities for an 8-week period. She said hopefully the loan will be forgiven. She also said she is waiting to see whether the COVID-19 will force cancellation of Log Cabin Day and 4th of July activities.

Ad Hoc Committees:

- 1. Governance Report:** Gregg Resnick reported that the committee met with ED Chris Witulski and came up with several names for possible new board members, including Marie Fielder and Jean Thomas. President Jim Conboy also indicated he has two names in mind. Gregg has one additional name. Gregg also said Judy Suszek has agreed to take over chairing the Governance Committee when his term ends.

- 2. Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit:**

- a. Chinook Project:** Jim Johnson reported that this project has been stymied by the pandemic. There is no clear indication when cradles will be built so that the Chinook can be moved into place. In the meantime, he said he's working on boardwalk designs to connect the Chinook with the Katherine V as well as documents for accession purposes.
 - b. Katherine V:** ED Chris Witulski reported on a reunion the Vogelheims had planned this summer at the museum. The reunion has since been cancelled because of the pandemic but the Vogelheims will revisit it the following year.
- 3. Native American Exhibit:** The first report on the contractual work being done on the exhibit is expected by April 30.
 - 4. Fine Art Committee:** Nothing to report.

Old Business:

- 1. Collections Committee:** ED Chris Witulski reported that the committee was working diligently prior to the pandemic and accomplishing much, including helping to make decisions on 90 temporary custody receipts. Since the museum closed for the pandemic, committee members still are working but from home, doing data entry of accession logs.
- 2. Employee Handbook:** Attorney Dan Florip will present suggested changes to the handbook at the May 19 meeting.
- 3. Strategic Plan and Goals:** This has been rescheduled to a future time when the board can meet in person.

President Jim Conboy complimented both Chris and Matt for how well they are doing steering the museum through this difficult time of closure. Chris said that Amanda, Jonathan and Katrina all are working from home and doing a good job on the museum's Facebook page. She asked board members to give them positive feedback via Facebook. The meeting was then adjourned at 5:58 p.m. with the next Board Meeting to be held May 19, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Speer
Board Secretary