

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
February 2023

NEW HISTORY EXHIBIT:

Exhibit Development: March 9, 2023: the Split Rock Studio exhibit design team visited the Besser Museum and meet with several of the Exhibit Committee and Board of Trustee members. Gary Goren recorded the 4:30 p.m. meeting. The link is available to anyone who would like to watch it.

Project Timeline: Project Schedule provided by Split Rock Design

Project Schedule

Subject to change

Schedule based on a signed contract by Feb 27th, 2023

Kick-off Meeting	March 8-9 th , 2023
SRS provides meeting notes (Project Brief)	Two weeks after presentation
SCHEMATIC DESIGN PHASE	March 8 – May 1, 2023
Schematic Design I Presentation	Week of May 8, 2023
Client provides consolidated written comments	Two weeks after presentation
Schematic Design II Presentation	Week of July 10, 2023
Client provides written comments, approval to proceed	Two weeks after presentation
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PHASE	Oct. 1, 2023 – Jan. 22, 2024
Design Development I Presentation	Week of October 9, 2023
Client provides consolidated written comments	Two weeks after presentation
Design Development II Presentation	Week of January 22, 2024
Client provides written comments, approval to proceed	Two weeks after presentation
PRODUCTION AND INSTALLATION PHASE	Jan. 22 – Nov. 22, 2024
Pre-Production	January 22 – April 12, 2024
Client approves all graphic files for production	April 19, 2024
Production	April 19 – November 8, 2024
Production Review Meeting/s at SRS	TBD
Installation	Nov. 11 – Nov. 22, 2024

*All deliverable dates are dependent on the timely return of client feedback and completion of prerequisite deliverables.

**Project Schedule is subject to change based on modifications to scope of work.

Next Steps: Cornerstone Architects will be submitting a proposal for Phase 2 of the exhibit project. Cornerstone’s proposal will include Exhibit Design Review (Design Development), Construction Documents, Bidding and Negotiations, Construction Administration and Post-Construction.

1. Cornerstone will coordinate with Split Rock to prepare the space.
2. Cornerstone will create the construction documents for removing the ceiling and old lighting, possibly mechanical equipment that is not needed in that space, dry wall, and future electrical needs.
3. Cornerstone will put the construction documents out for bid and will manage the construction work.
4. Asbestos testing will be schedule in the next few weeks.
5. Sarah continues to work with volunteers to catalogue and store the current exhibit.
6. Matt and Nate continue to dismantle the old display cases.

Exhibit Content Development:

1. Exhibit Team members are still working on researching and pulling together pertinent information for each section of the exhibit.
2. The Split Rock team John and Amanda will provide more direction on what information is still needed to tell the story we want in each section.
3. John and Amanda will also start working with the museum to determine what artifacts will go into the exhibit. Sarah and her collection committee will work on pulling together a list of artifacts and photos.

Fundraising Efforts to Date:

The total estimated cost for the new exhibit project is \$1.5 million.

Phase 1 is estimated at: \$370,500.

Phase 2 is estimated at \$1,129,500.

Current Funds:

Funds at Nicolet Bank	\$170,351
Funds at CFNEM	\$179,002
Pledges through CFNEM	\$ 55,750 (3-year installments thru 2024)
Granum Fund at CFNEM	\$ 38,672
Anonymous Donor CFNEM	\$ 50,000
Grants (2023)	\$ 97,172
Besser Foundation Grant	<u>\$400,000</u>
Total	\$990,947

Nicolet Bank said they are comfortable with giving a \$250,000 signature loan/line of credit based on one source of payment – the Granum Fund annual assets.

Funding Opportunities being pursued:

PIE&G \$10,000 grant request was not approved. We will resubmit next cycle.

Besser Company \$40,000 request. We are waiting for reply.

We are also working on a Michigan Humanities: Great Stories \$25,000 grant due May 5. If awarded, these funds will be used to develop the research Janet Young has been conducting for the Anishinaabe of Northeast Michigan story.

Consumers Energy and DTE Energy Foundations

BUILDING PROJECTS:

MUSEUM EXTERIOR:

These projects should resume in the spring. The caps still need to be put on the new flower boxes. Grass seed on the front lawn. Landscaping in the front approach. Doug Pratt will meet with us in the spring to give us some ideas for this area.

HVAC/Chiller Project:

Johnson and Woods and Control Solutions will return when the weather changes to finalize the chiller installation project.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

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

Huron Engineering plans were approved by the DNR.

The bid documents were posted and sent out on March 15th. The bidding closes April 14th.

The lowest bid will be submitted to the DNR for approval.

PLANETARIUM:

Planetarium Other:

1. **Beyond the Stars:** Johnathan has developed an educational outreach program for the planetarium that will teach visitors how to navigate the night sky at one of the three dark sky parks in our area. These classes have been going well.
2. **Radio Program:** Recently Johnathan did a radio interview with Deb Michaels from HitsFM. Deb expressed an interest in doing a daily “star talk” with Johnathan that would air twice a day and help promote the planetarium. Deb will start working with Johnathan in February.

EUDUCATION DEPARTMENT:

Recently, I proposed transitioning Planetarium Coordinator, Johnathan Winckowski into the role of Education Coordinator. Because both the Planetarium Coordinator and Education Coordinator positions tend to have seasons of low activity as attendance ebbs and flows with the calendar year, my thought was that Johnathan would have time to coordinate the seasonal field trips and other educational outreach activities. After a short trail run, I realized the demands of planning planetarium programming and dark sky outreach events and taking on the duties of the Education Outreach Coordinator was unrealistic. Johnathan has been scrambling to step up to this new challenge. However, with not having an education background with classroom experience, it was unfair to put the demands of both Planetarium Coordinator and Education Outreach Coordinator on him. I have decided to employ the services of two retired professional educators to step in and help run the Spring field trips while assessing the overall Education Department. Johnathan will be focusing his time, talents, and energy on the planetarium programs, which does include providing planetarium presentations as part of the field trip experiences.

Over the past several years, there have been several Education Coordinators come and go. Although each demonstrated a level of competency in certain areas of the position, each introduced some new ideas and implemented some changes without not leave a well-documented trail. All these changes have weakened the Education department. The education department is where our collection department was a few short years ago; on the verge of failing. There is so much potential to grow the museum’s education outreach programs. That growth starts with professional educators evaluating the programs and helping build back some structure through strategic planning and putting into place policies, procedures, and lesson plans. An education committee needs to be established. The education department, like the collections department, is too big a task for just one person to run. I am taking the same approach with the Education Department that I took with the Collections Department to get things back on track.