

History Nebraska Board of Trustees**July 16, 2021****Prairie Arts Center, 416 N Jeffers St.
North Platte, Nebraska 69101****9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. CST****Minutes**

Marilyn Moore, President of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She referenced the legal notice published on July 11, 2021 and that the meeting is publicized as required by state statute, and that the meeting is in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Marilyn welcomed everyone and thanked former Board of Trustee, Kim Elder, for his hospitality and the arrangements.

Guests: Gail DeBuse Potter, President of the Nebraska State Historical Society, Leslie Fattig, Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, and Lori Heaton, Business Manager for the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation. Tyler Vacha, Executive Director, History Nebraska Foundation. Trevor Jones, CEO/Director of History Nebraska, Anne Dorsheimer, Executive Assistant to CEO/Director, Chris Goforth, Marketing and Sales Director, and Jill Dolberg, Deputy State Historical Preservation Officer.

Marilyn reminded the Board that the mission of History Nebraska is to “open to all the histories we share”, with special attention to ALL of Nebraska’s story.

Roll Call:

Present: Bob Bartee, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, William (Bob) Wickersham, Eileen Wirth

Not Present: Ann Bruntz, David Levy, Chuck Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman

Opportunity for Public Questions and Comments (regarding agenda items only)

Marilyn inquired if there were public questions or comments, and if there were any members of the public that wished to address the board at this meeting.

Approval of the Minutes from April 16, 2021.

Motion by Mark Goodman, Second by Jamesena Moore

Gail DeBuse Potter referenced a portion in the minutes that referred to the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act and stated that it started in Nebraska in 1989. Marilyn stated the date in record reflected the board’s discussion.

Yes: Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, William (Bob) Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee

No: None

Motion adopted.

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Report by Leslie Fattig, Executive Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

Leslie presented board members with copies of *Cut in Stone, Cast in Bronze, Nebraska's Historical Markers and Monuments (1854-1967)*, authored by Jeff Barnes.

Leslie noted that the Foundation holds 34 endowment funds for the benefit of History Nebraska and continues to uphold donors' wishes and intent.

As of June 30, 2021, the Foundation's current invested assets total \$16,012,996. Total current assets for Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 are \$18,235,000. For comparison, total current assets for Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 were \$16,421,000.

The Foundation granted History Nebraska over \$400,000 in the last fiscal year. The Foundation supported the 2021 Cattlemen's Ball in Columbus, Restoration Exchange Omaha, the Nebraska Museums Association, and WyoBraska Gives.

History Nebraska Foundation Report by Tyler Vacha, Executive Director of the History Nebraska Foundation

Tyler noted this was his seventh week on the job, and has begun to organize and assess marketing materials, as well as the Mission and Purpose statement. Over the next three months, he will work diligently on developing policies.

Marilyn clarified that the History Nebraska Foundation is separate from the Board of Trustees, and that Tyler reports to History Nebraska Foundation Board of Directors. Pam Snow, Galen Hadley, David Levy, and Ann Bruntz serve on the History Nebraska Foundation board, along with three members of the Nebraska community. The HN Foundation board is seeking a fourth member from the community.

Committee Report – Finance (Vickie Schaepler – Treasurer)

Vickie noted that \$382,118.09 carried over due to the end of the biennium. This is money that is spent or obligated.

History Nebraska did well in meeting and exceeding their goals, especially with regard to sale of services. The goal for store sales was \$100,000, but earnings for FY20-21 were \$171,636.24.

Marilyn asked Trevor Jones if he had anything to add to the report summary.

Trevor stated that it was a fantastic year. He noted that History Nebraska was closed for much of the year due to the pandemic of the year, but that the agency still ended up earning 145% its earned income goal.

Committee Report – Governance (Marilyn Moore)

The Governance Committee met in April and spent a significant amount of time discussing diversity, equality, accessibility and inclusion (DEAI) and asked the board to approve a statement endorsing the goals and priorities of the DEAI committee for the coming year

The DEAI Resolution, which includes goals and priorities, is included in appendix A.

Marilyn requested a Motion to approve the following: On behalf of the Governance Committee, I move that the History Nebraska board approve the Diversity/Equity/Access/Inclusion goals and priorities established by the HN staff for the 2021-22 year. The board's commitment to DEAI will be embedded in the work of the Nominating Committee and in the board self-evaluation. We delegate responsibility for the implementation and execution of the plan to the CEO and his leadership team, and we look forward to regular reports on the progress of this work.

Motion by Bob Bartee, Second by Eileen Wirth

Yes: Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee

No: None

Motion adopted.

AAM Accreditation

The application for reaccreditation requires board work, and the Board will review pertinent documents over the course of the year. First are the bylaws. Following last meeting, it was determined that Jamesena Moore and Bob Wickersham will work on bylaws for the late summer and fall. Bob Wickersham will Chair this work. Second is the Governance Document, which will follow the bylaw revisions; this work will be led by the Governance Committee. Marilyn stated she will send these to all board members for their review, and any board member who is interested in serving on either group is welcome to join. The Bylaws revisions will be presented for board approval at the October meeting and the Governance Document revisions will be presented for board approval at the January 2022 meeting.

Bob Wickersham mentioned that a review of state statutes is underway, but that the Board and History Nebraska do not dictate the statutes. Bob Bartee, Galen Hadley, Bob Wickersham, and Jamesena Moore volunteered to work on recommending changes to the statutes and Bob Bartee will serve as chair.

In conclusion, there is work regarding the Bylaws, Governance document, and a review of state statutes.

Presentation of Board Slate for October Election

Connie Spellman serves as chair of the Nominating Committee, but could not attend. Marilyn acknowledged two open seats this year, with Charles Schroeder finishing his 1st term in District 1 and not planning to seek re-election. Vickie Schaepler is completing her 2nd term in District 3 and is not eligible for re-election. David Levy is completing his first term in District 2 and is seeking re-election.

The Nominating Committee has recommended the following slate:

1st District -- Vann Price. A former principal at Lincoln North Star with Lincoln Public Schools, the Supervisor of Secondary personnel, and the District Executive Director of diversity and inclusion.

2nd District – David Levy will seek re-election.

3rd District - Chandra Diaz. A faculty member of the University of Nebraska, Kearney in the education department and a former teacher and leader in Lincoln Public Schools.

Bob Bartee is seeking his 2nd term appointment by the Governor, and is willing to serve again.

If these persons are elected, the demographics of the board will consist of 12 persons who are Caucasian, two African-Americans, one Latina, eight women, and seven men. The Nominating Committee has worked to show its commitment to diversity.

Motion by Mark Goodman, Second by Richard Herink

Yes: Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Mark Goodman

Present and Not Voting: Bob Bartee

No: None

Plans for October Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on October 14th at the Hot Shops in Omaha. David Bristow will present on his new book *Nebraska History Moments*. The Board will have a dinner at the Kimpton Cottonwood Hotel, which has recently received a historic preservation award from History Nebraska.

The board meeting on October 15th will be held at the Great Plains Nebraska Black History Museum, one of the most historic buildings in North Omaha.

Marilyn reminded Board members that there is a statutory requirement to have an Annual Meeting.

Committee Report – Personnel (David Levy)

Marilyn stated that since David Levy was not able to attend, she would present for the Personnel Committee. This year, the evaluation process for the CEO will be revised. The Board will hear from the Personnel Committee in the next few weeks on the survey process and the evaluation will be on the Agenda at the October meeting.

Vickie Schaepler led the board in a discussion of the Heritage Heroes program, and its successes across the state. The board shared examples of presentations they have made across Nebraska and expressed support for the engagement and discussion that has resulted.

Break 10:25 a.m.

Start 10:40 a.m.

Director’s Report (Trevor Jones, Director & CEO)

Trevor Jones noted that despite the pandemic, History Nebraska has had a great year and has prospered while many other museums were forced to lay off staff.

Trevor noted organizational goal results for FY 202-21:

1. Update Accountability Chart (RPRS), create and implement leadership training program and schedule for FBA (Complete)

2. Identify options, best practices and possible partners/joint ventures to document and begin to implement digitization plan to achieve one million digital records (Complete)
 - Trevor noted that the board had made this the organization's primary goal and that the organization had invested heavily in digitization. He also commended thanked Jill Dolberg for her efforts in this area
3. Define best practices, document, and implement comprehensive revenue generating plan including membership, monetization of digital data, retail, and admission (Complete)
4. Onboard new foundation with clear messaging, metrics, and goals (Complete)
 - Tyler Vacha has been hired as the new Executive Director for the History Nebraska Foundation
5. Document, plan and implement a strategy for including Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion in hiring, content development, program presentation, and board growth (Not yet complete)
 - Trevor stated that although the organization had made substantial progress in this area, not all the objectives had been achieved by the end of the fiscal year.

Trevor noted Key Highlights of the Year.

- Opened the new Chimney Rock Visitor Center in July 2020
- Created 9,059,880 million digital objects (806% above the 1 million goal)
- Played a key role in publishing *Audiences and Inclusion: A Primer for Cultivating More Inclusive Attitudes among the Public*
- Completed our first staff DEAI survey and launched a DEAI Committee
- Earned \$1,884,392 (145% of goal) despite 27% of normal attendance
- Built substantial digital infrastructure to support us for the next decade
- Collected items from the pandemic and social justice movements, leading to a new active collections plan
- Repatriated the last unaffiliated human remains in our collections with assistance with the Pawnee Nation
- Made plans to transform the Kennard House into a center for civic engagement

Trevor reminded the Board that History Nebraska intends to be the nation's most engaging and relevant state historical society by September 25, 2028 and that in order to reach these goals we will have to continue to innovate in key areas.

Galen Hadley inquired about membership and subscription models. Trevor responded that Americans (especially in younger demographics) are not becoming members of any organizations. However, they are willing to subscribe to services they want. History Nebraska is exploring a hybrid model where we still have members, but offer more paid opportunities for subscription digital content.

Bob Bartee remarked that corporations are having a hard time competing for high class employees. He asked how History Nebraska can compete, especially for employees with digital skills? The board discussed 21st century skills History Nebraska will require, and the training and thought process required to shift to a digital first mindset.

Trevor noted the Financial Goals for FY 2021-22:

\$2,000,000 earned revenue – Trevor noted this is a fairly modest goal

\$1,900,000 foundation support – Trevor noted we are expecting the majority of this will be a transfer from NSHSF from the Weese Fund for the hands-on agricultural exhibit

\$1,200,000 federal grants and contracts – Trevor noted this is the same goal as last year.

\$5,918,936 general funds – Trevor noted this is a set number and that it is substantially above previous state appropriations

\$800,000 in 309 funds - Trevor noted that there will be a major repair project at the Ford Center this fiscal year.

Total Budget Goal: \$11,818,936

Bob Bartee inquired if History Nebraska has opportunity for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARA) funds? Bob stated that it is one-time money that has to be spent within three years. There are at least 500 million dollars in the ARA fund. Trevor stated we have applied for several federal grants using recovery funds, but he'd like to talk to Bob about additional opportunities.

Organizational Goals for FY 2021-22:

1. Finalize and implement the Board approved DEAI plan. Identify integrated strategy including staff training, hiring, and public messaging. Launch plan to improve equity and representation in historical markers.
2. Assess audience needs for production digitization, and explore outsourcing opportunities and partnerships.
 1. Test and implement 8 punk rock strategies for audience engagement.
 2. Capitalize on AAM accreditation. Note deficiencies, and develop plans to address them.
 3. Review, improve, and document all processes across the organization.
 4. All teams develop prioritized audiences for cross-coordinated educational programming and proven methods for delivery.
 5. Staff, support, and launch a best in class volunteer program.

Trevor noted Leadership Goals for Q1 (July – September 2021)

1. Research and develop plan to document processes across History Nebraska.
2. Define integrated strategy for prioritization of digitization.
3. Identify organizational and user needs, select vendor, and timeline creation of a new History Nebraska website.
4. Develop two strategies for integrating programming between sites, exhibits, education, and digital programs.
5. Hire and onboard new grant manager position.
6. Post, hire, and onboard new volunteer coordinator position.

Marketing Strategy at History Nebraska (Chris Goforth, Marketing and Sales Manager)

Chris Goforth discussed the marketing strategy at History Nebraska and how the organization approaches marketing opportunities.

Chris stated that History Nebraska is:

1. The primary resource for connecting Nebraska's present with the past.
2. The most comprehensive collection of Nebraska history in the world.
3. The most valuable resource for connecting history organizations across Nebraska.

Our methodology involves an inbound marketing funnel. At the top are strangers. We develop tools to bring people into the funnel at the top with tools such as presentations, social media, radio, google, yahoo, and Heritage Heroes. We will never retain 100 of those people, but the wider you make the funnel and more tools you use, then better conversion into the funnel.

He shared numbers from the last year that showed the organization's performance:

1. Facebook
 - Likes (followers) up 27.4%
 - Reach (# of people who have seen our content) up 17.7%
2. Twitter
 - Followers up 38%
 - Profile Clicks up 9.0%
 - URL clicks up 121%
3. Website Usage
 - Web Sessions up 13.2%
 - Users up 15.4%
 - Organic Traffic up 22.3%

How are we doing compared to our peers?

1. Key comparison metric we are tracking is Facebook engagement.
2. Currently tracking historical societies of Minnesota, Kansas and Iowa, as well as Nebraska Game and Parks, Durham Museum, and other museums and Nebraska entities.
 - January 2021: 21% engagement rate, 2nd amongst peers
 - February 2021: 13% engagement rate, 3rd amongst peers
 - March 2021: 23% engagement rate, 1st amongst peers
 - April 2021: 37% engagement rate, 1st amongst peers
 - May 2021: 38% engagement rate, 1st amongst peers
 - June 2021: 39% engagement rate, 1st amongst peers

Administrative Issues

Marilyn asked for a motion to approve the Deaccession List.

Motion by Mark Goodman, Second by Jamesena Moore

Yes: Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley

No: None

Motion adopted.

The board reviewed the list of Official Events for the year to be approved by the Board.

Marilyn asked for a motion to approve the Official Events for History Nebraska list.

Motion by Bob Bartee, Second by Mark Goodman

Yes: Tom Kraus, Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink

No: None

Motion adopted.

The Board considered changes to the Collections Use Policy. The substantial change recommended is making the acquisition of books or scholarship produced from the use of History Nebraska collections optional. This will give the organization the right to decline items it does not need and will streamline operations.

Marilyn asked for a motion to approve the Use Policy at History Nebraska.

Motion by Mark Goodman, Second by Galen Hadley

Yes: Jamesena Moore, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus

No: None

Motion adopted.

Other Business & Trustees Roundtable (Marilyn Moore)

Jamesena thanked everyone for the flowers and cards and comments. Marilyn thanked Jamesena for remaining engaged with History Nebraska through a very challenging time in her personal life.

Mark Goodman cited collaboration opportunities with Nebraska's state medical society to raise money to restore Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Memorial Hospital and that board members can contact him if they were interested.

Mark also mentioned that he had an idea for the creation of a "master historian," similar to the master gardener program that requires training and volunteer opportunities.

There being no further business, the History Nebraska Board of Trustees adjourned at 12:00 p.m. CST.

Appendix A

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Goals at History Nebraska July 16, 2021

History Nebraska is committed to the concepts of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion, both internally (amongst our employees) and externally (the public). History Nebraska has adopted the American Alliance of Museums' definitions of each:

Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.

Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.

History Nebraska's DEAI Committee has set the following goals and priorities for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Goal #1 – Internal Communication

Priorities:

- Unconscious bias training for History Nebraska staff
- Book Club for History Nebraska Staff
- Train staff on Susie Wilkening's 10-step process for inclusion and create internal tools to be followed by all

Goal #2 – External Communication

Priorities:

- Create land acknowledgements for each History Nebraska site
- Create and install welcoming statement at each History Nebraska site, including website
- Develop policy on statements when injustices occur
- Communicate impact of social media and blogs and set goals for inclusive posting

Goal #3 - Hiring Practices

Priorities:

- Develop and begin using welcoming statement to be added to job postings
- Target recruiting to attract more diverse candidate pools
- Train hiring managers and interview panelists on selection best practices to avoid bias
- Develop paid internship pilot program to attract more diverse interns

Goal #4 – Relationships

Priorities:

- Establish best practices to create meaningful partnerships with communities for special events, exhibits, publications, web content, historic markers, and long term plan development
- Become a hub for community interaction: gathering, celebrations, commemorations, topical salons for exchanging ideas, and volunteer events

Goal #5 – Accessibility

Priorities:

- Conduct accessibility audit for all sites and establish timeline for new initiatives to better accommodate all audiences
- Ensure multiple language signage or resources are available for sites and programs
- Make improvements to website accessibility including the use of reading assistance technology, and the creation of employee standards when creating digital content