

History Nebraska Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

A meeting of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees was held at the History Nebraska Headquarters building in Lincoln, Nebraska on October 26, 2018.

Attendees

Lance Bristol, Ann Bruntz, Kim Elder, Katherine Endacott, Heather Fryer, Tom Kraus, John Nelson, Vickie Schaepler, Connie Spellman, Marilyn Moore and Eileen Wirth

Members not in attendance

Jeff Barnes, Cherrie Beam Callaway, Spencer Davis, and Bryan Zimmer

History Nebraska Staff in attendance

Trevor Jones, Lynne Ireland, Michelle Furby and Lana Hatcher

Guests in attendance from the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation

Trixie Schmidt, Leslie Fattig, Tony Dworak, Liz Bavitz

Approval of the July 20, 2018 minutes

Motion to approve minutes made by John Nelson, Seconded by Katherine Endacott

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Moore, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

Committee Reports

Finance Committee - Lance Bristol

Treasurer's Report:

Total General Fund Appropriation for the 2018-19 Fiscal year is \$4,959,376.72

Amount expended/encumbered during the first quarter (July – September) is \$1,241,008.81

General Funds remaining are \$3,718,367.91

The amount of Federal Funds received through 9-30-18 was \$167,547.91 and the amount of Federal Funds spent during that period was \$248,941.21. Treasurer Bristol noted that the Federal Government is normally behind in sending funds so we have to spend money before we receive it. The amount of Federal authority remaining is \$843,632.20.

Revenue budget projections:

July, August and September are our biggest revenue producing months.

An increase of 3,053.57% in General Business Fees was due to a contractual payment for the War Dogs book.

Operating Transfers reflected a variance of \$42,418.50 due to the Sesquicentennial funds for vehicle license plates. We will continue to receive funding from that source.

Biennial budget, FY 2020-2021 projections

- Enterprise issues: Includes salary increases, and health insurance. The state projects what these increases will be and the agencies had to ask for these increases in their budgets.
- CRM. Allows different customer service systems at History Nebraska to each other and come together in a way to interpret the information. We have asked for \$50,000 for each year.
- Preservica: Digital preservation software that allows us to preserve our digital assets, the cost is \$25,000 per year.
- Insurance: The Nebraska History Museum is currently covered at \$11million, but is appraised at \$26 million. This is just for the building, not collections inside. A request has been made to increase the insurance coverage on both the museum and the headquarters building.

The state requested that we include the impact of a 5% cut to the overall budget. Reductions over the course of two years would be cuts in personnel as it is the largest part of our costs. For us a 5% cut would be at least 6 full time

employees, 5% reduction in payments to Neihardt Foundation, reduction in sites staff, and elimination of all temporary summer help.

Treasurer Bristol noted that the budget has been submitted and Director Jones will testify in front of the Appropriations Committee in 2019. It is the board's responsibility to talk to their senators and ask that appropriations for History Nebraska not be cut.

Endicott asked if the state was self-insured. It is not self-insured. We pay insurance premiums to the Department of Administrative Services Risk Management Division. They contract for insurance that covers both vehicles and facilities, with a \$5,000 deductible. Risk management will not cover any loss if we do not pay premiums. Kraus asked who did the assessment of the museum building. The State Building Division did assessment of the building.

Fryer stated that when approaching Senators about funding, we could say we are looking at a loss of six positions in our archives at a time when we are trying to roll out a new membership model that promises as enhanced research services as a benefit to members. Bristol added that everything that we are trying to place online would be reduced if cuts occur. If we were to cut all of these people, we would not be able to meet the part of the mission of History Nebraska to be more accessible to the public, and cuts would also damage our ability to generate revenue.

Jones stated that the message he has been giving all summer when meeting with senators is that we are not asking for more money, we are asking that our budget not be cut. The two enterprise issues (CRM and Preservica) are the two major things that we are already doing to serve the people of Nebraska.

Governance Committee - Kim Elder

Item: History Nebraska membership plan

A new History Nebraska membership plan outlining membership category changes was submitted for board approval. This new model focuses on generating more revenue from memberships while streamlining and improving the offerings. The goal is for revenue from memberships to eventually pay for a full time membership coordinator and maintenance of the CRM. Implementing a CRM will be a way for the organization to bring together ticket sales, and track use, enabling us to cross sell our product. A roll out of the new plan is expected to take place in another six months.

Membership categories are spelled out in the by-laws. An item that was discussed in committee was the free monthly microfilm copies at the library. There may be people who might abuse those privileges. More ongoing discussion on possibly placing a limit on the amount of copies will need to take place.

Motion to approve the new membership program with the addition of a limit to free microfilm copies discussion was made by Spellman, Seconded by Fryer.

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

The agenda for the January meeting will include a vote to change the membership plan in the bylaws.

Item: Cather acquisitions: Transfer agreements.

Jones passed around copies of the Cather transfer agreement document.

We have been in negotiations with the Willa Cather Foundation regarding the transfer of the Cather properties. On July 16, 2018, the Vacant Building and Access Land Committee granted permission for the transfer of the actual structures. On October 12, 2018 The Willa Cather Foundation passed a resolution to agree to take possession of the properties and collections. The agreement document is regarding the fine points of what is to be transferred.

Jones asked the board to focus their attention on negotiating points found on page 2. Elder pointed out that item #4, which states that there is \$2,425 worth of conservation services that still need to be provided before January, 2019. Those services have already been provided. We will continue to provide services until January of 2020 with a limit of \$7,500.

Endacott noted that this accomplishes the goals of both organizations, and is what the Cather group has wanted all along, allowing us to make sure that things are well preserved.

The digital images listed in the document are photos of Willa Cather and her family that are the core of the photo collection. We have had the collection since 1978. We have negotiated that since we have cataloged, digitized, made the collection accessible, we should be able to use the photos for our publications without a use fee. The Willa Cather Foundation will have credit, since the collection will be theirs, but we will never be charged a use fee.

Nelson also asked about the additional 8,000 items mentioned. The vast majority of these items are in Red Cloud. Our collections staff have determined that they have no other significance for us and can be transferred back to them. These were the items listed for deaccession at the last meeting and approved by board. We have agreed that we will provide transportation of remaining items to Red Cloud.

Nelson asked about the Historic Preservation covenant on the Cather house, agreed to by the Cather Foundation. Every Cather property that is being transferred is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Cather childhood home is listed as a National Historic Landmark. The covenant states that any changes that would be made to the property would have to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. No matter who ends up owning the property, it is covered by the covenant. As a National Historic Landmark, it is our responsibility to insure that significant property is taken care of for all time.

Trixie Schmidt, NSHS Foundation President, noted that item # 5 on page two, states that a transfer of \$200,000 from History Nebraska will be given via the NSHS Foundation. Schmidt stated that the Foundation does not have \$200,000 specifically designated for this transfer. The money will have to be taken out of division funds and then paid back. Schmidt does not actually want the Foundation credited due to the fact that their donors may not understand that the funds support Nebraska History even though they are going to the Willa Cather Foundation. Fattig added that the Foundation has been actively fundraising for the various divisions for at least five years and there is money in the division funds that people have given for the express purpose of use within those divisions.

Schaepler commented that the board intended to honor the fact that the NSHS Foundation supports our activities and their name should not be left off of the agreement. Schaepler added that she will let the leadership work that out, but she feels that the Foundation is important in supporting our mission.

Schmidt stated that she understands but wanted the board to see their point that that their donors want to support History Nebraska, not the Willa Cather Foundation and would not understand that this does support History Nebraska. The Foundation and their board understands that this is a good thing, but we must be careful in how donors might perceive it.

Spellman made the motion that History Nebraska transfer to Cather the properties and collections by December 1, 2018, and that the board powers the CEO and the current Executive committee to negotiate the final arrangements related to the transfer. Wirth Seconded the motion.

**Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth
No: 0**

Motion approved

Item: Wiese Farm Proceeds:

**Motion to go into Executive session to discuss legal and contractual business was made by Fryer at 9:57am,
Seconded by Bristol**

**Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth
No: 0**

Motion approved

The board returned from Executive session at 10:19am

Motion to return to regular session was made by Fryer and Seconded by Bristol.

**Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth
No: 0**

Motion approved

Motion was made by Wirth to move the History Nebraska Board of Trustees to authorize a committee to negotiate an agreement with the Foundation on the Weese Farm by the end of this year. Seconded by Bristol

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth
No: 0
Motion approved

Personnel Committee – Marilyn Moore in Bryan Zimmer’s absence

Item: Board self-evaluation

There were twelve responses from board members regarding the self-evaluation form that was sent out by the Personnel committee. Results have been compiled by Moore and Krause. Overall comments were positive; however, they defer issuing the full report until the full committee can be present to review the results.

This item will be placed on January agenda.

Item: Commitment to Heritage Awards

Beam Callaway and Bristol have been working on an awards program that would recognize people across the state for their work with area historical organizations. The program is still under development and not quite ready for announcement. Beam Callaway and Bristol plan to work with the HN Marketing team on how to maximize attention for this program and reach all 93 counties.

This item will be placed on the January agenda.

Nominating Committee - Katherine Endacott

The History Nebraska Board of Trustees 2018_Election results were given.

The winners from the three Congressional Districts are as follows:

Congressional District 1 – Charles (Chuck) Schroeder

Congressional District 2 – David Levy

Congressional District 3 – Vickie Schaepler (second term)

New History Nebraska Board of Trustee officers were selected:

President: Bryan Zimmer

1st Vice President: Lance Bristol

2nd Vice President: Marilyn Moore

Treasurer: Ann Bruntz

Motion to approve of selection of new officers was made by Wirth, and Seconded by Spellman

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Nelson, Moore, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

President Elder read a resolution of thanks to outgoing board members, Jeff Barnes, Spencer Davis and Heather Fryer. A plaque was also presented to Fryer at the meeting. Barnes and Davis were not in attendance and the resolutions and plaques will be mailed to them. A copy of the resolutions will be added to the minutes of this meeting.

Foundation Report - Tony Dworak and Leslie Fattig

Current fundraising financial report:

- Primary Fundraising project is for the Chimney Rock expansion goal \$1.7 million. They are at \$850,000. This does not count any 150 fund dollars that can be used if needed.
- The architect has recommended that an outdoor piece of public art be installed at the Chimney Rock Visitor Center. It has not yet been specified as to what type of art piece that this may be. The estimated cost would be \$50,000 to \$100,000. This art would be a donor recognition tool. A donor is already interested.
- The Foundation is working with an anonymous donor to receive an irrevocable gift in the form of a trust that would generate perpetual revenue for History Nebraska. The donor wished to share the gift with a local historical organization, but due to the willingness of the Foundation to work with his wishes to include the local

historical organizations, he has agreed to donate 100% of the revenue to the Foundation and will be taking a different approach to help the local historical organization.

- We are in the 30's in the terms of 150 fund memberships, which is \$15,000 in pledges. The Foundation is now ready to place a display at Nebraska History Museum that tells story of the building, and will also include the 150 fund effort.
- The Foundation is at \$450,000 in gifts, from 7/1 to 10/25, which is 60% of the funds that were brought in last year.
- Grants money to History Nebraska from the beginning of the year total \$113,373, transfers made from the beginning of the fiscal year to History Nebraska total \$16,400. They also have several grant apps out right now. Chimney Rock land purchase is in progress and the Foundation has engaged Phil Kelley of Scottsbluff to represent them regarding the purchase 360 acres of pasture land, which is the land that sits between the Visitor Center and Chimney Rock. Purchased for \$400,000 from the Gordon and Patty Howard estate. Closing is tentatively scheduled for mid-November. Hod Kosman will provide us with an interest only loan for 18 months for \$400,000, to be paid out 200,000 this year and 200,000 next year, at the Howard's request. The title insurance company will not escrow, therefore the balance will be held in the Foundation attorney's trust account until January 2nd, and will be released.
- Trevor Jones wrote grant to Nebraska Environmental Trust for \$278,000. The Foundation is actively seeking help from other foundations to help with balance needed to build walking paths, etc. on the land between Chimney Rock and the Visitors Center.
- The Foundation Board Executive committee passed a motion to accept the following policy: The minimum amount to establish an endowment fund now shall be \$25,000.

Fattig read the following message from the Foundation Directors and staff:

"In light of the recent cancellation/postponement of the 2018 gala scheduled for October 25, 2018 at the Omaha World Herald Freedom Center in Omaha, I respectfully ask that all use of the NSHSF name, address and logo by History Nebraska be approved by our office prior to the event.

In this time of robust fundraising, the cancellation is the kind of incident that can do significant damage to the credibility and reputation of any organization that relies upon the good will of the public, and the confidence of the philanthropic community. This is especially the case when it comes to charitable foundations like ours. Put simply, our reputation is our currency; and we must protect that which has taken many years of hard work to build.

It is also unfortunate that we received notice of the cancellation via an email for the return of Gala tickets purchased on Eventbrite site. Caught off-guard as no one had called to tell us, our staff was unprepared to answer constituent's calls and questions. The Foundation hopes professional courtesy will dictate that we be notified of any changes or cancellations of events which have our name attached before the general public is notified.

We are looking forward to moving past this unfortunate incident so we can work together toward the continued success and growth of our organizations."

- The Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Annual meeting will be held in Hastings on April 26-27. Fattig thanked the board for scheduling the History Nebraska board meeting to coincide with that date. On Friday evening, April 26th, the Foundation will host a welcome reception at the Jackson Dinsdale gallery.
- Fattig thanked the board for allowing the Foundation to have a complimentary brunch following the November 8th Brown Bag filming of "Serendipities and a Coat, Why Museums Matter". Beginning at 11:00am in the Oldfather Auditorium at NHM.
- The Legislative Reception has been moved to March 4, 2019.
- Former Foundation trustees Del Lienemann, and Tim Francis have passed away.
- One of the Grants that they have pending and should be hearing from soon is a \$200,000 grant from the Abbot Foundation.
- The Foundation's Annual Appeal will be going out on November 1st.
- At a recent Foundation Board meeting, board members were challenged to bring in at least three people who would be interested in the 150 Club. They have until next June. The Foundation will be giving special recognition to the person who brings in the most 150 members. Fattig extended the same challenge to the History Nebraska board.

Director's Report - Trevor Jones

Jones gave a power point presentation reviewing the strategic plan and organizational goals for the Fiscal Year 18-19

- First Quarter Results of Goals
 - 21% of earned revenue goal
 - 34% store sales
 - 22% grant revenue
 - 24.5% state appropriation expended
 - 37% onsite attendance goal for the year.

Neligh Mill Conditions Assessment report: A question was raised regarding the long term plan for Neligh Mill. We are not doing fundraising for Neligh Mill right now, but things are being put in place for a long-term plan.

- Chimney Rock Visitor Center renovation project
 - Ties to the strategic plan goal *Grow our Audiences*.
 - 360 acre pastureland acquisition in progress.
 - Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant for \$278,650. Results in April 2019.
 - Construction fundraising deadline September 2019.
 - Construction complete by May 2020.
 - State approval documents complete.
 - Program Statement, Construction Drawings, and RFPs next.
- History Nebraska Technology Strategy
 - Ties to the strategic plan goal *Increase Access to Collections*
 - History Nebraska is in the information business. Its products are information.
 - The key focus areas are:
 - digital archiving/preservation
 - constituent relationship management (CRM).
 - First, concrete steps into digital archiving and preservation.
 - Requires staff, equipment, professional services, online services, and training.
 - Requires major ongoing financial investment.
- Museums Empowered Curiosity Project
 - Ties to strategic plan goal: *Increase Teamwork & Accountability*
 - One year \$25,000 IMLS Grant
 - Invest in staff development
 - Consultants Rainey Tisdale & Susie Wilkening
 - Accomplished more than we could have imagined!
- Curious Lincoln Grant Application
 - Ties to strategic plan goals: *Expand Outreach & Engagement, Grow our Audiences, and Increase Teamwork & Accountability*
 - Three Year IMLS National Leadership Research Grant
 - Due December 2018
 - Would start October 2019
 - Partners from diverse cultural organizations in Lincoln
 - Focus on staff development
 - Prove if curiosity model is scalable
 - Cutting edge work that's never been done anywhere else
- Jones shared our recent Leadership in Innovation Award from the Mountain Plains Museum Association for our exhibit Looking Past Skin,

Administrative issues

Item: 2019 History Nebraska Board of Trustee meetings

The board approved the following dates and locations for the 2019 History Nebraska Board of Trustees meetings:

- January 18, 2019, Lincoln, Nebraska
- April 26, 2019, Hastings, Nebraska
- July 19, 2019, Alliance, Nebraska
- October 2019 – Omaha, Nebraska. Date will coincide with annual gala

Motion to approve 2019 meeting dates was made by: Moore, Seconded by Bristol

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

Item: Orientations for the new History Nebraska Board of Trustees members will be held before January, 2019.

Item: Deaccessions

Motion to approve the deaccessions made by Bristol, Seconded by Bruntz

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

Other Business & Trustees Roundtable (Kim Elder)

Endicott apologized to the Foundation regarding the postponement of the Gala stating that the invitations came out too late. They will try to reschedule the event before the end of the year.

The Gala committee has so far raised just under \$10,000, with another \$10,000 committed, with other potential major gifts in progress. The event will honor the newspaper industry in the small towns.

Wirth stated that the video team interviewed many newspaper people for the event. The video will be a nice piece for our website. A positive development, Todd Sears, formerly of Crete, NE is the new President and publisher of the Omaha. .

A question was raised regarding the artifacts from the now defunct Woods Telephone Museum. We have obtained pieces of their collection that fit our mission.

Ann Bruntz commented that during her tour of the Library/Archives room, she realized that our microfilming has a 10 year backlog.. She asked the board to explore ways to move the microfilming along, such as developing a good volunteer program and doing fundraising for this area.

Item omitted from the agenda needing approval:

Library/Archives Fee schedule change: Use fees will be waived for exhibits in or created by Nebraska museums, libraries, archives, and cultural institutions.

Motion to approve waiving use fees for exhibits created by Nebraska institutions made by Fryer, Seconded by Kraus

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Bruntz, Seconded by Schaepler

Roll call: yes – Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Fryer, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Spellman, Wirth

No: 0

Motion approved

Meeting adjourned at 11:57am

Next meeting dates

Friday, January 18, 2019 Lincoln Dr. Don R. Gerlach Capitol View Room
Monday, March 4, 2019 Legislative Reception
Friday, April 26, 2019 Hastings Hastings Museum
Friday, July 19, 2019 Alliance Knight Museum
Friday, October Omaha for Gala

history.nebraska.gov