

Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission Meeting

Friday, January 28, 2022

History Nebraska
1500 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dr. Don R. Gerlach Capitol View Room and Zoom

2:15 – 3:15 p.m. CST

Minutes

Chairman Hull began the meeting at 2:16 p.m. by stating that a notice to the press had been given and that compliance with the Open Meetings Act has been satisfied.

Chairman Hull then asked for a Roll Call.

Roll Call

Present: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Assistant to Commission: Anne Dorsheimer

Chairman Hull proceeded to the first item on the Agenda.

Organization and Hall of Fame Logistics for 2022: Discussion items

- 1) Commission review the nominees for eligibility and establish the official list of nominations.

Calvin Chapman

Motion by Sara Crook for Calvin Chapman to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted.

David Kaufmann

Motion by Sara Crook for David Kaufmann to remain on the list for consideration.

Discussion ensued regarding the discrepancy that the narrative questions 1-5 were not answered in the application, but that an article is attached with a note of attachment thereto, and whether this should be considered a complete application. Tim Heller and Aaron Wyatt agreed that there is no completed nomination form. Tim and Aaron asked Anne for clarification and she agreed that this is the case.

There was no second to Sara Crook's motion.

Motion by Tim Heller to table approval of David Kaufmann's nomination until further clarification from Trevor Jones.

Second by Rod Bates

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Elzada Urseba Clover

Motion by Tim Heller for Elzada Urseba Clover to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Aaron Wyatt

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Emma Louise Pound

Motion by Sara Crook for Emma Louise Pound to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Rod Bates

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Grover Cleveland Alexander

Tim Heller noted that there are two nominations for Grover Cleveland Alexander, the first of which is a resolution.

Motion by Tim Heller to disregard the first nomination and accept the second nomination.

Second by Sara Crook

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Howard Hansen

Motion by Sara Crook to for Howard Hansen to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Johnny Carson

Motion by Sara Crook to deny consideration for the nomination for the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Discussion ensued that the date of death does not meet the 35-year eligibility requirement, and that the legislative statute changed from 25 years to 35 years, and the Commission has no jurisdiction to alter that requirement.

Second by Aaron Wyatt

Tim Heller called the question. Sara Crook clarified that to vote yes is to deny the nomination.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Malcolm Little

Motion by Sara Crook for Malcolm Little to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Aaron Wyatt

Discussion ensued that there are two identical nominations for Malcolm Little and that the Commission only accept one. Sara Crook offered an amendment to accept the first nomination for Malcolm Little.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Ernst Heminghaus

Motion by Sara Crook for Ernst Heminghaus to remain on the list for consideration.

Second by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

Reverend Hiram Hisanori Kano

Motion by Sara Crook to deny consideration of the nomination for Nebraska Hall of Fame.

Sara Crook noted that his date of death does not meet the eligibility requirement at the time of selection, which is 35 years according to legislative statute.

Second by Tim Heller

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted

It is clarified that seven nominations were accepted, two were denied, which are Johnny Carson and Reverend Hiram Hisanori Kano, and the nomination for David Kaufmann is being tabled pending discussion.

Chairman Hull moved to the next item on the Agenda.

- 2) Set March date to invite 10 minute testimonials from the sponsors of each of the nominees in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Chairman Hull clarified that we have always conducted this meeting in the past. Aaron Wyatt inquired if this will be an in-person setting considering the COVID environment, or a remote virtual meeting?

Chairman Hull noted that it is not required, but inquired whether we would send the Zoom address out to everyone. Aaron further inquired whether we would maintain an in-person meeting or not. Tim Heller commented it is better to have it in person, than provide a Zoom link for everyone, in order to maintain security. Sara Crook noted to follow the Open Meetings Act and that if anyone contacts History Nebraska, that we provide the Zoom link as requested, aside from the nominators who will receive the Zoom link for those nominations that were accepted. She also noted that since the nomination for David Kaufmann is tabled, that the nominator be sent the Zoom link. Discussion concluded with the statement that a Zoom link be provided upon request in the legal notice.

Motion by Sara Crook that the Zoom link be sent to the nominators of those who have been accepted, as well as the nominator for David Kaufmann, pending his tabled nomination application, and that any person who contacts History Nebraska through the Open Meetings Act notice, would also be allowed the Zoom link.

Second by Tim Heller

Tim Heller amended the motion that the notice of meeting include that a Zoom link is available upon request by contacting History Nebraska. Rod Bates agreed with this amendment.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Not Present: Trevor Jones

Motion Adopted.

Chairman Hull requested that Anne find two to three available dates and to send these to the Hall of Fame Commission. Aaron Wyatt requested that we do not consider the week of March 14 – 18 due to prior commitments. Sara Crook noted she has a conflict from March 7 – 9.

Chairman Hull moved to the next item on the Agenda.

3) In terms of organization and publicity, would the Commission want to “build” the voting process: Trevor Jones

Trevor Jones was not present for comment. Chairman Hull asked Anne Dorsheimer to comment on this process. Anne Dorsheimer stated that she thought Trevor’s point was to capitalize on the press and publicity and if the Commission narrowed it down each time a decision is made, we can have a press release, which will give it more acknowledgment and exposure and publicity; and for the nominees as well. She noted that if he is able to attend in the next 15-20 minutes, then he can expand on it.

Sara Crook commented that she liked the concept of ‘building on the press’, but that we wouldn’t narrow the list before going to each district first. The point of each district is to give the opportunity for those people who do not live in Lincoln to have access to come and give their support to the nominee. If the Commission narrowed the list from district to district, then a person who showed up in District three, their candidate may have had already been eliminated. She believes this is defeating the purpose of having three congressional district hearings and allowing the opportunity to host a hearing.

Aaron inquired into the traditional time line once all three district hearings have been completed, and if there is a vote in Lincoln. Chairman Hull affirmed that yes, it is in the Capitol building in Lincoln in one of the hearing rooms. He stated that the Commission will review considerations and vote publicly. He also noted 25-30 people attended the meeting.

Tim Heller suggested for Trevor to do a press release now regarding Johnny Carson and Reverend Hiram Hisanori Kano who were eliminated due to their ineligibility and acknowledge those who have been successfully nominated, and that we have one under review and that this is a way to build that excitement.

Aaron inquired with Anne whether Trevor's idea was 'post' the three district meetings or if he was attempting to narrow that down prior to the three meetings being completed.

Anne noted that she wanted to be careful speaking for Trevor and that she would rather have him be present, but she brought up that one other idea that he raised with Chairman Hull possibly and in discussion with her, was the mention that to be fair and equitable, every nominee be presented once in the district, and then this gets away from the issue that everyone be able to drive to all three district meetings and have that exposure when perhaps someone else can only come to one. She noted that was a part of the discussion, and that he certainly is not trying to limit, filter, or discriminate in any way. She continued that she thought his intention was related to efficiency, to streamline the process, and to capitalize on press acknowledgement.

Tim Heller acknowledged the concern for efficiency, but also noted a concern in limiting access to a public meeting. Chairman Hull commented that it was important to bring it to the Commission. Anne affirmed that Trevor preferred it to be collectively discussed. Aaron Wyatt noted that Trevor Jones can clarify when he is able to attend the meeting further on. Tim Heller noted that the discussion is tabled and that the Commission should take a step back to the preceding item on the Agenda.

Anne clarified that the meeting for the selection of nominees is in August at the State Capitol. Sara Crook asked if a date has been set and Anne confirmed that it has not, but that we should do that. Tim Heller suggested for the Commission to set a date for the August meeting and the Congressional District meetings today. Sara Crook raised the issue that the Willa Cather statue event in Washington D.C. has the potential to occur in July, which may pose an issue in terms of schedule.

4) Schedule hearings in each of the three Congressional Districts during July, 2022:

District 1: David City at the Thorpe Opera House

District 2: Omaha at the Mormon Trail Center Historic Winter Quarters

District 3: Holdrege at the Phelps County Historical Society

Tim Heller motioned to schedule three consecutive Fridays on July 8th, 15th and 22nd for Congressional District Hearings 1, 2, and 3. Rod inquired to modify that motion to 'unless there is a conflict'. Chairman Hull noted that if the Speaker's office in Washington D.C. requires the members of the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee to be present, then there may be a need to reschedule. Sara Crook remarked that we conduct evening meetings so those with a job from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. are able to attend and that we start from 5:30 p.m.

or 6:00 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. or 8:00 p.m. Sara also noted that we can have these hearings on a Thursday so we are not running up against a weekend.

Aaron asked if we have decided the dates, and if the next step is to establish locations, then we may not be able to, due to checking to see if the facility has the capacity to hold a Zoom meeting. Sara Crook verified that the three locations listed on the Agenda are those we have used in the past and in all those occasions, each facility has been sufficiently large pre-COVID, so she defers to the staff of History Nebraska to determine if these facilities do not meet our needs. She concluded that if the Commission establishes the dates and times, then we can leave the location to the staff of History Nebraska.

Rod Bates agreed with this. Sara Crook believes each facility has the capacity for Zoom and that we can certainly make that happen by July. Sara asked if there is an issue with having these on Thursday nights? Tim Heller mentioned that Thursday nights are difficult, because he works late. Sara asked if Wednesday night would work, and Tim responded that Wednesday will be fine. These dates would be July 6th, 13th, and 20th and the time frame would be 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Sara Crook noted that the Congressional District Three Hearing is in Holdrege and not Norfolk, Nebraska.

Chairman Hull commented that he has a conflict and will be gone from July 6 – 16. The Commission rescheduled the dates to Monday, July 18, Wednesday, July 20, and Monday, July 25. The Commission agreed to the change in dates for the three congressional district meetings.

Tim Heller suggested that the August meeting will be the 12th or 19th in Lincoln at the State Capitol. Anne clarified that in the process document it states that hearing room 1507 be reserved and that the meeting concludes between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Sara Crook suggested it start at 2:00 p.m. Chairman Hull noted that in the past, History Nebraska has provided a van, and that in the past the Director has driven the van when travelling to congressional district meetings. Chairman Hull mentioned this is up to History Nebraska and how they want to handle that. Anne noted she would look into it.

The Commission agreed on the 12th of August at 2:00 p.m. Tim Heller also noted to consider University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO) for the 2nd Congressional District for better turnout. Rod Bates and Chairman Hull agreed with this. Chairman Hull asked if Anne can check with UNO to see if some place is available. Anne agreed to check on Monday.

The Commission decided to wait to second or confirm until the next meeting in order to look at locations and consider the van. Sara Crook mentioned we can check our schedules and confirm and also check on the Willa Cather statue status. Tim Heller affirmed these were just suggestions at this time.

Trevor Jones arrived at 3:15 p.m. Tim Heller and Chairman Hull commented to allow Trevor to address the 'Voting Process Build Theory' in terms of public interest and suspense.

Trevor commented that in the past, the Commission has the three meetings and then we bring it to a vote, but there is nothing in the statute that states we couldn't narrow the field along the way, where after we do the hearings, the Commission can take it down to three

finalists and narrow it down in a press release and state these are the finalists, and then we vote on the final three, and then the Commission can garner more attention for the process.

Trevor remarked that it could be at the final meeting to narrow it down to three or to possibly have additional meetings. Chairman Hull noted it would have to be additional meetings. Trevor stated it is anti-climactic and we do not have a lot of media coverage.

Sara Crook verified that she had a concern to not do this during the three district meetings and to ensure that we complete those before we narrow down the decisions; or after the third congressional district meeting. Trevor noted that doing this afterward would be best to honor the spirit of the intent.

Chairman Hull felt that all the candidates were strong and he doesn't not want to eliminate or narrow down to three questions and whether the public would be interested in that. It would be dramatic with the final meeting and everyone would listen to everything and just vote – it generates a news story, but not a whole lot more.

Sara Crook stated that at the last meeting at the State Capitol, it is just the Commissioners making the comments and taking a final vote. She suggested that if we narrow it down to 3-4, that this will allow those who are no longer in the running to be obligated to come to the State Capitol if not chosen. It is a gentle denial, but at the same token, there is less people at the State Capitol.

Chairman Hull felt it diminishes the last meeting.

Aaron Wyatt thought that if we are changing the procedure mid-way through, then this should have been communicated prior to the nomination process. Rod Bates stated that there are nominators that come back again and again, because the nominators believe strongly in their nominee.

Trevor also wants to have people come to their own congressional hearing, because otherwise they feel they have to come to each hearing and there is the appearance of favor in the selection process, which is not true. The Legislature set up hearings in each district so that would not have to happen. People traveled a long time to the hearing to have their voice heard, because they felt that was their obligation. He noted that we should instead say to come to your district hearing, but there is no advantage for coming to other hearings in the other districts.

Tim Heller noted to encourage people to come to their district hearing, but that under the Open Meetings act, we cannot discourage or tell them not to. Trevor stated that we would not discourage, but rather that we take the people in that district first for testimony.

Testimony is ten minutes, as confirmed by Tim Heller. Sara Crook noted that if we have nominators that are not from Nebraska, then geographically we choose the closest meeting for those individuals. Tim Heller confirmed there are two.

Aaron Wyatt asked if the intent is to allow everyone to present in their district, and if we can control the Agenda and not let them testify? Chairman Hull stated that he would rather have an open process and whoever shows up, does so, and we listen; and it generates interest.

Trevor stated that he still felt we should try to correct that impression and reinforce that coming to all hearings does not create favor.

Sara Crook commented that four nominees are in the first district, two identified as third, a third tabled and one identified for the second district. Sara raised the point that we could allow more time for those who are speaking on behalf of their nominee to speak to it.

Aaron Wyatt inquired once more regarding whether we can control the Agenda. Trevor noted that we can set the Agenda and allow public commentary, but it has to relate to the Agenda. Tim Heller mentioned to have 'Other items' on the Agenda if someone wishes to speak to a nominee, after each district nominee presentation. Trevor also noted that if a nominator cannot attend one hearing, then they can request to be placed on another Agenda in another hearing.

The meeting in Lincoln is done by tradition and not required by statute. Chairman Hull noted that we have always had these meetings initially in Lincoln. Sara clarified we need to meet in March, regardless, to make those decisions on congressional district hearings.

Tim Heller called a point of order and motioned to bring the discussion on David Kaufmann's application with regard to completion back to the table. Second by Sara Crook.

Discussion ensued on how technical we want to be in order to accept the application and that we should ask Trevor Jones as Executive Director of History Nebraska. Trevor noted that he doesn't have any more insight than the rest of the Commission does and that it is up to the Commission to make that decision.

Tim Heller remarked that he believes it is incomplete and that the nominator is out of state. Sara Crook noted that the Commission has received out of state nominators before and Tim agreed with this. Sara asserted that she wants to err on the side of inclusiveness, especially since the top part of the application is filled out.

Tim Heller stated this is open for a new motion, as the former motion was in danger of dying for lack of a second, which is why the Commission tabled it.

Aaron Wyatt suggested that due to time, he is favorable to Sara Crook bringing that motion back and that we table the discussion around the congressional district hearings for our meeting in March in order to give each some additional time to consider it and process and add to the Agenda in March. Tim Heller commented that it is already set for discussion in March.

Sara Crook motioned to accept the nomination of David Kaufmann.
There is no second to the motion.

Rod Bates motioned to table the discussion regarding David Kaufmann's application until March.

Second by Sara Crook

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones

No: None

Not Present: Aaron Wyatt

Motion by Tim Heller to adjourn

Seconded by Rod Bates

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Trevor Jones

No: None

Not Present: Aaron Wyatt

Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission adjourned at 3:30 p.m. CST