

## **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

### **Call to Order**

A meeting of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees was held in the Abbott Conference Room at the Hastings Museum, Hastings, Nebraska on Friday, April 26, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 9:00am.

#### Attendees:

Bob Barte, Cherrie Beam-Callaway, Lance Bristol, Ann Bruntz, Kim Elder, Katherine Endacott, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, John Nelson, Vickie Schaepler, Charles Schroeder, Connie Spellman, Eileen Wirth, and Bryan Zimmer

History Nebraska Staff in Attendance: Trevor Jones, Lynne Ireland, Michelle Furby, Lana Hatcher

Guests: Leslie Fattig, Lori Heaton, and Tony Dworak, staff of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, and Trixie Schmidt and Gail Potter, President and Treasurer of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Board.

President Bryan Zimmer welcomed Robert Barte, who was newly appointed to the HN board by the Governor. Zimmer also introduced Charles Schroeder as a newly elected member of the board.

### **Approval of the January 18, 2019 Minutes**

**Motion to approve the minutes was made by Bruntz, Second by Levy.**

**Roll call yes: Barte, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Levy, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**

**No: None**

**Motion passed.**

### **Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Report**

Leslie Fattig, Executive Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, reported that the total grants disbursed to History Nebraska amounted to \$582,802.50. Transfers from Discretionary Division Funds from July 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019 totaled \$39,641.17. Contributions for the fiscal year 2018-2019 as of 4/23/2019 totaled \$1,112,539.94. Grants for the Chimney Rock addition totaling \$1,488,944.21 have been received from several foundations. The note on the 360 acres of land between the Visitor Center and Chimney Rock was paid in full on April 16, 2019. Fattig thanked Jones for his work on the Environmental Trust grant, which paid off the note. Travis Heiner of the Oregon Trail Community Foundation and Hod Kosman have indicated that they will help raise the remaining \$300,000 needed to meet the Chimney Rock project's fundraising goal.

Fattig is submitting an application for a \$50,000 grant from the Scottsbluff Tourism Bureau. Brenda Liese from the Bureau indicated that they would like an article on Chimney Rock from History Nebraska. They also asked for brochures on Chimney Rock. They hand out over 14,000 brochures each year. Producing brochures will need to be a priority. The Foundation can provide funds for printing if needed.

On May 13<sup>th</sup> Fattig and Dworak will be guests at the 22 County Tourism Consortium in North Platte. The Cattleman's Ball will be held in Wauneta on Friday and Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

Fattig also reported that Jim Hewitt will become President of the NSHS Foundation. Liz Bavitz stepped down due to a conflict of interest. Bob Shively is replacing Allison Peterson who is retiring. Alan Dayton was nominated as one of the directors. Fattig pointed out that several members of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees are also NSHSF trustees.

Fattig passed around some artifacts that were excavated from the Foundation's land near Chimney Rock land by History Nebraska archeologists. Fattig closed her report by thanking History Nebraska for the publication of the Engineer Cantonment book, and announced that Matthew Hansen and Sara Baker Hansen will be the speakers at the Foundation event on Saturday.

Trixie Schmidt thanked the board for their help during her term as NSHS Foundation President.

Tony Dworak handed out copies of the 150 Fund Roster and reported that the 150 Fund commitments totals \$400,000. History Nebraska will be able to use these funds for physical assets, such as developing exhibits at existing buildings, and upkeep. Dworak thanked the board for their contributions and stated that he will get this information on their web page and possibly link with the History Nebraska webpage. The information will be regularly updated. The Foundation is also working on the 150 Fund display that will be installed at the Nebraska History Museum.

Dworak updated the board on a commitment of up to \$150,000 from a donor to be used specifically for an artistic statement in the form of statues at Chimney Rock. The statues will recognize those who stayed in Nebraska. The Foundation will work with History Nebraska on placement and ownership of the artwork. There will be an option of purchasing maquettes of the statues at certain donor levels for fundraising purposes, and the Foundation has reserved the right to create the maquettes. The artist has made desk size representation of Chimney Rock itself that he can produce, which can be given to major donors. The board commented on drawings of the statues that Dworak had provided.

Levy asked Fattig to explain the \$582,000 in total grants that she reported as being disbursed to History Nebraska. Fattig explained that these are grants requested and disbursed by History Nebraska from the Foundation and processed. The \$39,000 mentioned in the report are transfers from the Foundation into division funds. This is money that the Foundation holds on History Nebraska's behalf that can be accessed at any time to meet needs that are not necessarily in biennial budget.

Bruntz asked Fattig if there was a sheet in the report that shows the actual amount available in each of the funds. Fattig explained that the last column on her printed report shows the funds, and it changes annually, which is the spending policy that is available. She has the funds report that has the balances on a quarterly basis, she can provide it if requested. The spending policy is set at 3%, and the last column represents 3% of each fund used plus any amount carried over to next fiscal year so there is more money available.

Levy asked Fattig to explain the spending policy column, noting that some funds are marked "yes" and some "no." Fattig explained that it indicates that some funds are not subject to the spending policy due to the way the instrument was written initially, for example, for a long-term relationship.

## **Committee Reports biennium**

### Finance Committee – Ann Bruntz

#### *Item: Treasurer's Report*

Bruntz stated that our finances are looking good.

Bruntz asked Michelle Furby to give the Treasurer's Report. Furby reported that the General Fund appropriation for the 2018-19 fiscal year totaled \$4,959,376.72, General funds appropriated were \$4,959,376.72, the amount of general funds expended/encumbered through 3/31/19 were \$3,0321.467.66, and funds remaining are \$1,927,909.06. Furby explained that we are at the end of the biennium and funds will not be carried over to the next Fiscal Year. Cash authority appropriated was \$4,232,919.37, cash authority remaining as of 3/31/19 is \$2,974,770.66. Federal authority appropriated was \$1,137,889.99 and the amount of Federal authority remaining as of 3/31/19 is \$662,467.46.

Bruntz asked the board to look over the budget revenue projections sheet and noted that money continues to come in from the Sesquicentennial licenses plate fee at a higher level than anticipated. These funds are transferred to our cash fund on a quarterly basis. Zimmer asked if there was a way to check to see how many people have already purchased the license plates. Furby stated that she could check to find out but that this was not part of the reports we receive.

### Governance Committee – Bryan Zimmer

Zimmer reported that on April 10, 2019 the History Nebraska Executive Committee met with the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation board in Lincoln at Sinclair-Hille's offices. Zimmer stated that the meeting went well and was a good chance for the two groups to work together on common ground, and to work together to streamline processes. They also discussed the Operating Agreement that the Foundation is working on. The Operating Agreement is currently at the Foundation's attorney's office and they will present a draft to History Nebraska soon. He felt that the meeting was productive and would like to continue meeting on a yearly basis. Trixie Schmidt agreed that the meeting went well.

### Personnel Committee – Lance Bristol, Cherrie Beam-Callaway and Marilyn Moore

#### *Item: Commitment to Heritage Awards*

Beam-Callaway explained that the purpose of the Commitment to Heritage Awards program, renamed the "Heritage

Hero” award, is to acknowledge volunteers from historical organizations across the state who would otherwise not be recognized, and at the same time get the History Nebraska name out to the smaller historical organizations. Beam-Callaway asked the board for approval to proceed with this program. Beam-Callaway showed the board a design for an award pin that the Personnel Committee had selected.

Bristol explained that he had had discussed the proposal with Lynne Ireland during the morning committee meeting. The project was not intended to burden the History Nebraska staff with more work, but there is no way not to involve the staff due to printing the letters, purchasing the pins, and other needs. Since the board needs to be involved, the Personnel Committee has decided to begin the project this fall. They moved the project to the fall so it would not conflict with the annual History Nebraska awards presented in the spring. Also, a summer mailing would reach the smaller organizations who are not open in the winter.

Bristol stated that they would like to have a “stuff it” meeting in July where the board will get together to prepare the mailing that will go out to the local historical organizations. The stuffed envelopes will go back to History Nebraska to be mailed out in Late July. The organizations will be requested to select their winner, and return the forms to Bristol by September 6, 2019. Bristol will prepare packets according to congressional districts and have them ready by the October board meeting for board approval. The packets will contain the original submission letter, an award certificate, and the award pins and a membership brochure. A prepared speech written by Eileen Wirth will also be given to the board members to read when they make the presentation to the winners. The speech will encourage membership in History Nebraska. The board members will pay their own travel expenses, make arrangements with local entities to make the presentation. A list of Emeritus Trustee members who may want to be involved with the project will be available well. Press releases will go out to the local media Bristol stated that they are not anticipating that this would be huge time commitment for board members.

Wirth read the draft of the letter that will be mailed out. She emphasized that the letter states “Your winner”, and not “Your nominee.”

**A motion to adopt the Heritage Hero Awards was made by Endacott, second by Elder.**

**Roll call yes: Barteo, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Levy, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**

**No: None**

**Motion passed.**

**Item: Director and CEO Evaluation and Board Self-Evaluation**

Moore reported that the board will receive an email survey regarding the Director and CEO evaluation. Board members are to complete the survey and return it back to her by June 10, 2019. Moore also stated that the board self-evaluations will take place in the fall. Moore will email the survey to the board members. If a printed copy is needed, let her know and she will mail one to you.

Jones is to send his self-evaluation on July 1, 2019.

***Director's Report - Trevor Jones***

Jones gave the board new History Nebraska swag, and the book *What the Heck is EOS?* as it provides more detailed information on the new management and accountability system at History Nebraska. Jones also passed around a proof copy of Women’s Suffrage edition of the Nebraska History magazine, adding that this magazine is not part of the quarterly publication, but will be sold separately starting this summer. Jones encouraged board to drive through downtown Hastings to see the redevelopment that History Nebraska has had a hand in due to the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit.

**Project updates for the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter**

Jones gave a slide presentation showing History Nebraska projects that are tied to the five goals of the strategic plan. Jones reminded the board that it has been one year since we changed our name and brand from the Nebraska State Historical Society to History Nebraska. He noted that this change was designed for the long-term growth of new audiences, but that we have compiled marketing results for the first year:

- Facebook growth is up by 24%,
- Our posts reach 93% more people,
- Website views are up 165%
- We have reached 155% more of our target demo (35-54)

All of these results have exceeded our expectations.

Jones explained History Nebraska's VTO - Vision Traction Organizer, and Rock Goals to the board. He provided a breakdown of the goals for this quarter.

#### Legislative session update

The Appropriations Committee will present their budget on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. At this point all indicators are positive.

LB375- Exempting gifts with conditions from open records law, passed the floor and is now on Select.

LB385 - Electronic voting will be placed on Consent Calendar

LB447- Exempts conservators from State Personnel System will be placed on Consent Calendar.

LB310- Time limits on the historic credits is on General File

LB564 - Expanding the civic and community center financing act is on General File.

Levy extended kudos to Trevor and his staff for working with the University year after year, to get an economic impact analysis of the tax credit program, which has allowed us to go to the revenue committee to show them the tremendous number of jobs and investments that that program is generating.

#### Chimney Rock Renovation project.

Script development and artifact selection are in process. Deadline for fundraising is September 19<sup>th</sup>. Construction bids will be in September or October. Interior work and exhibits will start in January 2020, and plans are to reopen May 2020.

#### Organizational Goals

We have met four of our seven goals for the fiscal year with one quarter remaining, Jones remains confident that we will reach six of these seven goals. We had projected a 4% growth in overall attendance, but unusually poor attendance over the winter has put us behind

Schmidt asked about Neligh Mill. Jones stated that we have started some long-term planning for the site. We would like to explore expanding the interpretation to include alternative energy, add an event area, and look at visitor amenities. This is not a short-term goal, but we are likely looking at a \$10 million project, so we are beginning to plan.

#### Curiosity Moment

One of our four core values is that We Are Curious. We never stop learning and we encourage curiosity in others. We are in year two of our curiosity project. We have applied for a grant for year three. We have hired curiosity consultants who are in the process of training 27 more staff members this year. We are developing an archeology exhibition, a hands-on history lab, and our volunteers have gone through curiosity guide training. We have formed an employee growth committee that is exploring how we can use curiosity in everything that we do.

Jones gave kudos to Sharon Kennedy and the education team for her part in developing more projects that reach out to diverse audiences.

#### What is next?

We are developing new approaches to historic preservation. Kate Hewlings, in our Historic Preservation office has created surveys tailored to each county and its own buildings. Included will be historic photo collections and displays, and feedback (memories of buildings, best places to eat, etc.) Printed brochures/booklets containing this information will be distributed to public areas. Outside consultants will be hired to do work. This project is designed to conduct federally mandated surveys in new ways with an emphasis on community engagement.

Book written by Trevor Jones: *Major: A Soldier Dog* is a book about dogs trained at Fort Robinson during WWII. The book is for second and third grade students and is told from perspective of dog. We have retained all rights to the characters, and images for use within Nebraska. We will receive approximately 40% after all costs are met. The book is available for pre order on Amazon, however, the books will be sold at the History Nebraska Gift Shops. The board suggested that Jones bring copies of the book to the July meeting so they can purchase them at that time. Fattig added that the Woods Publication Fund underwrote the first phase of the project.

#### New Technologies:

The major area that the organization is deficient is in technology. We are an information organization. We are looking at over a quarter of a million dollars in hard cost expenses over the next two years, plus hiring several more IT staff. Our plan is to increase IT staffing will from 1.5 to 6 FTE by June 2022. We need to have someone lead the IT at the strategic

level and plan to have someone hired by the end of this fiscal year to lead us to the next phase. We do not currently have funding available for all of the required positions.

Suffrage projects: A Women's Suffrage exhibit will open this later this year. We are working on a full scope on what we will do for women's suffrage and find out what resources we will need. We are ahead of the game and other organizations have asked to partner with us. We are in a position to lead statewide on suffrage celebrations next year.

Think bigger: Jones explained that he is a reviewer for the American Alliance of Museums. Museums have to be re-accredited every 10 years. (The Nebraska History Museum accreditation is scheduled to begin in 2020). Jones recently reviewed the new Tennessee State Historical Museum. Jones stated that is an amazing building and it took them 20 years to get to this point. Jones suggested that, the board should plan for long term for the organization, and think about what will we need to do 20 years down the road.

Bartee stated that we need to dream big and work fast and approach major donors much faster -- within the next six months. In 2020 the five major foundations in Omaha will be required by the IRS to give away a half-million dollars every year. Foundation leaders or individuals should be approached within the next six to ten months. History Nebraska must think outside the box and approach some donors to get in the cycle for their consideration. People looking for legacy types of projects would support a new building program.

Gail Potter gave the board some history of the Historical Society buildings. Potter stated that in her opinion, a new building is long overdue.

Levy asked if it would make sense to have board members meet to discuss possibilities and next steps. Jones agreed and added that it would be a good thing for the board to go and visit a least one new museum. Zimmer asked the board members to email him separately if they were interested in forming a sub-committee and setting up a meeting.

#### **Administrative issues**

*Item:* Joint operating Agreement Update - Ann Bruntz

Bruntz stated that she did not have a report at this time, however, the Foundation has a given a 54-page document to their attorney for review. Schmidt added that documents given to them by the board are included in the 54-page document.

*Item:* Deaccessions

**Motion to approve deaccessions was made by Schaepler, Second by Levy.**

**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Levy, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**

**No: None**

**Motion to approve deaccessions passed.**

*Item:* Discussion of Annual Meeting – Set date and location, Decide on date and location for October board meeting.

**The board unanimously agreed to set the date for the October Board of Trustees meeting for Friday, October 18, 2019, with an annual member's meeting to be held on Thursday, October 17, 2019.**

Zimmer stated that he would like to hold an event to coincide with the annual member's meeting.

Bartee suggested that the University of Nebraska Medical Center might be able to host both the board meeting and the annual meeting. He would need to check for availability. Jones suggested that the annual meeting and/or the board meeting could also be held at the Gerald Ford Conservation Center if necessary.

**Motion to set Thursday, October 17, 2019 as the date of the annual meeting was made by Schaepler Second by Schroeder**

**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Levy, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**

**No: None**

President Zimmer called for an Executive Session at 11:55 am to discuss matters for real estate and personnel.

**Motion to go into Executive Session made by Levy, Second by Nelson.**

**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Levy, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**  
**No: None**  
**Motion passed**

Levy left the meeting at 12:33pm

**At 12:53 a motion to go out of Executive Session was made by Bruntz, Second by Moore.**  
**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**  
**No: None**  
**Not Present: Levy**  
**Motion passed**

Elder made the motion: The President of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees, Bryan Zimmer, shall obtain an opinion from the Nebraska Attorney General Office to state the correct process for payment of vendors for the Chimney Rock project. Second by Moore.

Nelson asked for a Friendly Amendment to the wording of the motion to state "to obtain a statement of the correct process." Elder amended the motion to read: **"the President of History Nebraska Board of Trustees, Bryan Zimmer, shall obtain a statement of the correct process of the payment of vendors for the Chimney Rock project from the Nebraska Attorney General's Office"**. Moore seconded the amended motion.

**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**  
**No: None**  
**Not Present: Levy**  
**Amended Motion passed**

President Zimmer called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion to adjourn made by Bartee, Second by Schroeder**  
**Roll call yes: Bartee, Beam-Callaway, Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Endacott, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer**  
**No: None**  
**Not Present: Levy**  
**Motion passed**

**Meeting adjourned at 12:58pm**

Next meeting dates:  
Friday, July 19, 2019 Alliance Knight Museum  
Friday, October 18, Omaha TBD

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