

History Nebraska Board of Trustees DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 17, 2020

President Lance Bristol called the meeting to order at 9:05am. Bristol welcomed the board members and guests, and reminded them of History Nebraska's mission. Bristol announced that a notice to the press had been given, and the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was posted and available in the room.

Bristol welcomed new board member Rich Herink and asked for a roll call.

Roll Call:

Present: Lance Bristol, Ann Bruntz, Kim Elder, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, Marilyn Moore, John Nelson, Vickie Schaepler, Chuck Schroeder, Connie Spellman, Eileen Wirth, and Bryan Zimmer

Absent: David Levy, and Pamela Snow

Attending via teleconference and non-voting: Bob Bartee

Others in attendance: Trevor Jones, HN Board Secretary, Michelle Furby, CFO, and Lana Hatcher, Executive Assistant
Guests in attendance: Cindy Drake, Tony Dworak, Scott Danigole, Budget Analyst

President Bristol called for approval of the October 18, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the October 18, 2019 minutes made by Schroeder, Second by: Moore

Roll call yes:

Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

Absent: Levy, Snow

Attending via teleconference and non-voting - Bartee

Motion Passed

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Report

The board members reviewed the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation Report that had been submitted by Leslie Fattig, Executive Director, Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation.

Tony Dworak, Development Director for NSHSF, handed out two documents for discussion. The first document was a copy of the recognition component of a \$100,000 gift to Foundation given by Gail Debuse Potter. Dworak explained that this gift is non-endowed, and allows for items listed in recognition component document, including the naming of the History Nebraska Reference Room in honor of Jim Potter, late husband of Gail Debuse Potter, a historian and long-time staff member of History Nebraska. Dworak stated that Debuse Potter wishes to have a recognition event of the renaming of the room held in the spring; the gift from Debuse Potter includes the funding for the recognition event, along with any sort of plaque designated to be placed in the room. Dworak stated that Debuse Potter would like the event to have heavy emphasis on long time employees of the History Nebraska both current, retired, and deceased. Dworak added that along with costs of recognition components, the \$100,000 also includes language that covers any money already spent on the rifle range historical marker in Bellevue. The remaining amount is designated to be used exclusively for the use of the society for the *Nebraska History* magazine. Dworak asked the board if they could work together with the Foundation to plan the recognition event.

Board member, Zimmer stated that he would like to thank Debuse Potter for the donation in Jim Potter's honor, adding that Jim was a great asset to History Nebraska and the state as a whole. Dworak expressed his thanks to Zimmer for his help in working out the details of the Debuse Potter gift.

The second document that Dworak presented to the board for discussion was regarding a donor wall display for Chimney Rock. Dworak noted that the board has been working with the Foundation to place a 150 Fund donor wall display at the Nebraska History Museum and would like the board to continue working with the Foundation to discuss

the design for the donor wall display at Chimney Rock. Dworak stated that an informal group of donors to the fund from western Nebraska have agreed to provide input and work with an artist for the design. Dworak asked for dialogue on the Chimney Rock concept take place between the History Nebraska board and the Foundation board. Dworak stated that the Foundation will prepare one more mailing to give the public one last opportunity to donate \$1,000 or more to have their names placed on the Chimney Rock donor wall. Dworak also stated that he wanted it to be on the record that he has made a request from History Nebraska for a deadline to be stated on the Foundation's final mailing for the public to respond by "X" date in order for their name to be placed on the display. Dworak would like to obtain a deadline date from Trevor within the next week or so.

Dworak also reported that an event was held at Rhonda Seacrest's house, honoring David Biehl, the artist commissioned to do a sculpture at Chimney Rock. Donors to the Chimney Rock project attended, along with Gail Debusse Potter. History Nebraska staff member, Cindy Drake attended, representing the History Nebraska staff. Dworak stated that the Foundation would like to host more events like this in future.

Dworak ended his report by thanking the board for all of the work that they do.

NSHSF President's Letter:

President Bristol read aloud a letter from NSHSF president, James Hewitt, dated November 19, 2019 regarding the HN board's request for a mutual operating agreement with the NSHS Foundation.

The letter read as follows:

Trevor Jones
History Nebraska
1500 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Trevor:

At the request of the Foundation's Executive Committee, I'm writing to clarify why it is not feasible for the Foundation to enter into any form of agreement with the Society concerning governance, or that would allow the Society or some other state agency or officer to review the donors to the Foundation or the amount of such donations, either by audit or some other form of legal proceeding.

The Foundation is a Nebraska corporation, formed under and subject to Nebraska law, and is designed for the growth and development of Nebraska history. It is an authorized charitable organization under section 501(c) 3 of the Federal Income Tax Code.

The Foundation receives gifts and grants from a broad spectrum of donors, many of whom do not wish to have the amount of their gift or any conditions attached thereto made public. To enter into any agreement where third parties might gain access to that information would defeat the donor's intent and might jeopardize the charitable status of the Foundation.

Further, the somewhat heavy-handed posture of the Attorney General in regard to the Foundation support of the Chimney Rock project-support which was timely and completely paid by the Foundation made it crystal clear that dealing with state agencies such as the Society brings one within the ambit of the Attorney General's evaluation of the matter. The Society is a state agency. The Foundation is not, nor does it seek such status. The Foundation does not choose to have its books, or donor lists, or its disbursements open to inspection by any state officer or agency. The Foundation is law abiding, will continue to be, and has its own counsel.

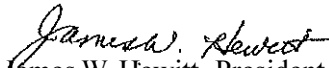
In the guidelines for museum accreditation (a subject which you have repeatedly advised is close to your heart) which the Society furnished to some members of the Foundation's leadership team, the following language appears: "if an MOU or other agreement is not feasible, the museum must provide documentation that shows a history of support from the organization (e.g. financial reports) that demonstrates for the Commission that there is a precedent for future support

as well as show evidence of efforts of the museum's part to address the contingency of a significant reduction or loss of this support".

The Foundation is preparing a listing of paid support for the Society for the past ten years, and will provide it to the Society when it is complete. The Foundation several years ago furnished the Society with its expense reporting guidelines and expects the Society's continued compliance, so that Foundation donors may be advised.

The Foundation Executive Committee will seek Board action on the matters set forth herein at the January Board meeting. On behalf of the Foundation, let me reiterate that the Foundation hopes for success on the Society's projects. It is our hope that the Society grows, prospers, and makes Nebraskans aware of our history. Our two organizations have worked well without any such agreement since 1942 and it is the Foundation's position that no such agreement is necessary, nor will one be forthcoming.

Yours truly,


James W. Hewitt, President

cc: History Nebraska Board of Trustees

Finance Committee Report:

Treasurer Bruntz gave the following report:

General Fund Appropriation for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year were \$4,784,654.89

Total Amount of general funds remaining as of 12/31/2019 was \$2,393,544.84

Amount of Cash authority remaining as of 12/31/2019 was \$3,065,182.99

Amount of Federal authority remaining as of 12/31/2019 was \$422,033.33

Bruntz stated that the committee had a good report from Michelle Furby explaining how things are appropriated, and that we are doing well. Bruntz reported that the Budget projections sheet shows these same totals with a comparison between where we were last year, and where we are now. Bruntz added that they did not see anything out of order. Bruntz made the motion that the Treasurer's report be placed in the record. Second by Schaepler.

Roll call yes:

Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Moore, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

Absent: Levy, Snow

Attending via teleconference and non-voting - Bartee

Motion Passed

Schroeder stated that he want to give kudos to Michelle. He stated that working at a state agency with outside sources of revenues is complex, and Michelle does an extraordinary job. Her capacity to understand and her confidence is exceptional. Bristol also extended his thanks to Michelle for her hard work.

Governance Committee Report:

President Bristol stated that Governance committee discussed issued presented at yesterday's board retreat and had no other specific Governance committee report for the board. Instead, Governance would be bringing items to the board's attention under the Administrative Issues section of the agenda.

Personnel Committee Report:

Marilyn Moore offered her appreciation to Lance Bristol for his work in organizing the Heritage Hero Award and that there were a total of 43 nominations, and 50 award pins being given out. The bulk of the awards given were in the third district. She thanked the board members for driving hundreds of miles to present the awards. Moore stated that Vickie Schaepler will be heading up the project this year. The board members took turns sharing their experiences on handing out the awards to the winners.

Moore commented on how each of their stories illustrate the breadth and variety of the organizations and people being

honored. The board members recommended that the suggested presentation information be pared down. Schaepler stated that they have some ideas for including emeritus trustees on this project. She also stated that former board member; Cherrie Beam-Callaway wants to continue to be involved.

Wirth asked the board to send her their presentation stories. She will compile them and work with David Bristow to publish them. She would like to have the stories ready in time to include with instructions for next year's Heritage Hero Awards project. She would also be delighted to do a story that could be placed online.

Moore encouraged board members to persist in contacting people who have not responded to their earlier attempts. Board members are to contact Vickie Schaepler with any suggestions for adjustments, and improvements, and share stories with Eileen. Eileen wants everything that everyone has collected before the April meeting.

Moore presented the personnel committee's comments on the Trustee Emeritus program. In 2006, the NSHS board of trustees approved the creation of the Emeritus program. The committee will work to revise the program and present recommendations at the April board meeting. Moore stated that the committee feels that everyone who has served as a board of trustee member is considered an emeritus without having to opt in or opt out. Moore stated that this is a great time to reconnect with past board members and provide specific ways to do so.

Bristol added that the governance committee discussed the annual meeting and this event might be a good opportunity to ask the emeritus trustees to help. **Bristol stated that he has appointed Eileen Wirth and Connie Spellman to work on the annual event and both have accepted the appointment.** He can appoint other board members if they want to help as well as asking emeritus trustees for their help.

Marilyn Moore left the meeting during the break at 10:15am

Director's Report:

Director Jones reported on project updates from the end of the 2nd quarter, starting with our five goals and vision for the organization. Jones stated that based on the board's planning conversation the day before, there is a shared vision to become an organization that teaches history and civic education across the state using digital resources. Jones stated that we need to become more resilient to survive financial challenges and grow our funding base. Jones explained that over the past three years our total budget has increased about 25%, attendance has increased 13%, and our earned income has increased by 55%. During this time, we also completed a name change and organizational rebrand, which has been successful beyond expectations. Jones stated that History Nebraska also faces major challenges, including the need for greater private fundraising, improved technology and infrastructure, and 21st century staff skills. We do not have enough staff with the skills to operate in a digital world.

Jones reviewed the Vision Traction Organizer and the Leadership rocks for the third quarter. These include updating the accountability chart, building a timeline for making changes to reference room operations, maintaining scheduled oversight of the Chimney Rock project, assessing needs and work with the board for financial sustainability; and implementing a Chimney Rock promotion plan that includes branding, advertising, and social media.

Jones stated that we completed 75% of our second quarter rocks. We missed two goals -- failing to complete all aspects of planning for growth in our budget, and not completing all parts of our quarterly plans for Chimney Rock. One key element was failing to fully identify sites for new billboards advertising Chimney Rock. We still need to find private landowners to allow us to put signs on their property. Elder stated that his contact will look at a list of names and give him some guidance on who to contact. Elder stated that he is working on getting the one mile spur leading to the Chimney Rock site paved.

The Chimney Rock Project is on schedule for May 4, 2020 completion. There have been change orders related to dry rot and grading issues. The contingency fund is being used to pay for these changes. Jones showed the board a diagram of the new addition that included a visitor flow chart.

Kraus asked whether the indoor classroom space would connect to the outdoor space. Jones explained that it has its own entrance and exit to the outdoor classroom. Herink asked about the plans for a grand opening event. Jones explained that the hope is to open to the public in May with a grand opening event to take place in June or July.

Zimmer added that the entryway also serves as storm shelter, utilizing FEMA rated magnetic doors that close in case of a storm. Zimmer noted that it is not supposed to be referred to as a storm shelter, but could possibly be referred to as a severe weather area.

Jones reported on Susie Wilkening's "Inclusive History in America— American attitudes towards inclusive history" Wilkening's research makes it clear that our society's polarization extends to history, but also shows our shared history is a vital bridge that can bring our communities together.

At this time, Bob Bartee asked to verify that board members who call in cannot vote. Jones responded that according to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, participants must call in from a public space and there are special facilities that callers can reserve to participate via teleconference and be allowed to vote. Bartee thanked Jones and the board and stated that he had another appointment and would have to leave.

Bartee left the teleconference at 11:20pm

Administrative issues:

President Bristol opened the floor to Zimmer regarding the discussion on the Chimney Rock donor wall that took place at the planning meeting. Zimmer stated that he wanted to reiterate what was said, and was asking for a resolution. Zimmer stated that working with Sinclair Hille and Blue Cadet, following the criteria of the NSHSF to create a nice professional donor wall, Blue Cadet had provided three schematic designs for review. History Nebraska selected one scheme asking for a preliminary estimate. Blue Cadet came back with a preliminary estimate at approximately \$50,000 that the History Nebraska board felt was too high. History Nebraska asked for a value-engineered solution based on one of the schemes. The resulting redesign estimate was approximately \$30,000. Zimmer added that the board reviewed that design and is in favor of moving forward with the \$30,000 option called "Option 4." Zimmer stated that he was seeking approval to move forward with the donor recognition plan. Elder asked if what Zimmer stated was in the form of a resolution. Zimmer responded yes. Elder then stated that if it was a resolution, the board should move to accept.

Zimmer made the motion to approve going with second design (Option 4) and estimate given by Blue Cadet.

Second by Elder

Roll call:

Yes: Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer all vote yes.

No: zero

Absent: Levy, Snow, Moore, Bartee

Motion Passed

Deaccessions

Jones stated among the items up for deaccession were some that had been stored at Fort Robinson. Museum staff had assessed the items and recommended deaccession due to the items being a hazard to human health and to other collections.

Motion to approve deaccessions made by Schroeder, Second by: Wirth

Roll call:

Yes: Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

Absent: Levy, Snow, Moore, Bartee

Motion Passed

Modifications to the Collections Policy

Jones stated that the Board had approved a collections policy for the organization and has authority to accept and dispose of any collection. The Collections staff have made some modifications to the policy and is now asking the board

for approval of the modifications. Trisha Nelson, Director of Collections, submitted a letter explaining the modifications to the board. Jones explained that one change is mentioning IRS Form 8283 on both the Acquisition Stipulations section and the Deaccession Restrictions. A second change states that efforts will be made for the disposition of any deaccessioned objects within one year of deaccession approval, allowing for up to two 1-year extensions to that deadline. Jones stated that this would correct issues with storing unwanted collections but not disposing of them. Kraus asked about the IRS Form. Jones explained that we have to hold the objects for a certain amount of time before deaccessioning so people cannot profit by taking a tax deduction.

Motion to approve modifications to the Collections Policy made by Bruntz, Second by: Schroeder

Roll call:

Yes: Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

No: zero

Absent: Levy, Snow, Moore, Bartee

Motion Passed

Fee schedules for FY 2020-21:

History Nebraska is asking to increase the admission fee at both Chimney Rock and Fort Robinson. Proposed fee for Chimney Rock is Adults 19 and over - \$8.00, children 5-18 - 4\$.00, children 4 and under-Free, HN members – Free, AAM/AASLH/ICOM members – Free, employees of NE museums w/staff ID – Free. Proposed fee for Fort Robinson is Adults 19 and over - \$5.00, children 5-18 - \$3.00, children 4 and under – Free, HN members – Free, AAM/AASLH/ICOM members – Free, employees of NE museums w/staff ID – Free

Jones also stated that the admission fees at Chimney Rock and Fort Robinson have not been raised since 2001. Herink asked about the \$20 membership at sites. Jones explained that a \$20 membership for a family of four will be cheaper than paying admission and that this may be an incentive to increase membership.

Motion to approve FY 2020-21 fee schedules made by Bruntz, Second by: Spellman

Roll call:

Yes: Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

No: zero

Absent: Levy, Snow, Moore, Bartee

Motion Passed

Break to check the weather at 11:45am

President Bristol called the meeting back to order at 11:55am, asking if there was any other Business & Trustees Roundtable. With no other business, President Bristol asked for public questions and comments.

Tony Dworak read the following statement:

“In the spirit of positivity and respect, I would like to say that the NSHSF thanks the board for their cooperative spirit for the 150 Fund donor display at the Nebraska History Museum, and that the Foundation hopes the donor display within the Abbott Center at Chimney Rock is worthy of those generous Nebraskan’s who made this historic campaign a success. The Foundation remains available to you, the society, along with our volunteer donor representatives, to work with you on this critical component for this valuable state asset. We believe that it is unfortunate that there was no interaction allowed between donor representatives and the out of state vendor retained by the society for this display. We also regret that no opportunity was granted for Nebraska artists, and in particularly western Nebraska artists, to submit their visions for this project. The foundation remains open to utilizing our own resources for the purpose of appropriate and outstanding recognition for the donors of the recent Chimney Rock projects (Reiterating the plural “projects”), should our board and donor advisors deem this necessary or desirable. The Foundation requests a deadline for which all donor names are to be submitted to Blue Cadet or the society as in-between for the vendor for inclusion on display. This references the prior reference to a Foundation mailing.” Dworak added: “Otherwise, good luck, and thank you. Appreciate the opportunity.”

With there being no further comments, President Bristol asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Schaepler, Second by: Nelson

Roll call:

Yes: Bristol, Bruntz, Elder, Herink, Kraus, Nelson, Schaepler, Schroeder, Spellman, Wirth, Zimmer

Absent: Levy, Snow, Moore, Bartee

Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm

Next meeting date:
April 17, 2020 Grand Island

Important dates:
February 19, 2020 Legislative Reception, Lincoln
May/June 2020 grand re-opening of Chimney Rock

history.nebraska.gov