

History Nebraska Board of Trustees**January 15, 2021****9:00 a.m. – 12:46 p.m.****Minutes**

Marilyn Moore, President of the History Nebraska Board of Trustees, called the Meeting to Order and referenced a Notice published on January 10, 2021 and stated that this Virtual Electronic Meeting is in compliance with Executive Order No. 20-36 issued by the Governor and the Secretary of State on November 25, 2020, and is thus also in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Marilyn noted that the meeting is being recorded for notetaking purposes.

Marilyn Moore welcomed guests: Trevor Jones, Director and CEO of History Nebraska, Anne Dorsheimer, Executive Assistant, History Nebraska, Michelle Furby, CFO, History Nebraska. In addition, present were: Leslie Fattig, Director, Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation, Lori Heaton, Business Manager, Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation and Bryan Zimmer, President, History Nebraska Foundation. Additional guests were: Cindy Drake, John Rissetto, Katie Joseph, and Sarah Marsom. Marilyn stated that the mission of History Nebraska is to “collect, preserve and open to all the histories that we share,” especially all across Nebraska and during a pandemic.

Marilyn asked for Roll Call.

Present: Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth.

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Marilyn requested a Motion to approve the Minutes on October 16, 2020.

Motion by Richard Herink, Second by Pamela Snow.

Marilyn asked for a roll call vote.

Voting Yes: Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth

Present and Not Voting: Galen Hadley, Bob Wickersham

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Marilyn moved to the next item on the agenda and the introduction of new board members. She introduced four new board members: Galen Hadley, Mark Goodman, Bob Wickersham, and Jamesena Moore, who was not able to be attend. Marilyn requested each new board member that is present to share information on where located, career, background, and reason for running for the Board. After new board members had spoken, Marilyn asked each current board member to also introduce themselves.

Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation (NSHSF) Report by Leslie Fattig:

Leslie introduced her business manager, Lori Heaton. She stated she sent her report to current board members as well as new board members prior to the meeting today, and mentioned that any board member who would like to have an orientation may contact her to do so. Leslie inquired if anyone had questions regarding the grants made to History Nebraska included in the report from 7/1 – 12/31/2020. Marilyn thanked Leslie for the report and inquired if, in the future, the NSHSF can report on all the funds held for the benefit of History Nebraska? Leslie agreed to this request.

Marilyn asked for comments regarding the Report. David Levy thanked the NSHSF for supporting efforts to pass original legislation for the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit.

History Nebraska Foundation Report by Bryan Zimmer:

Bryan welcomed the new board members and shared that he served for over six years on the Board of Trustees and also completed six years on the board as past President.

He stated that the History Nebraska Foundation (HNF) has met recently via Zoom to discuss next steps and has welcomed a new board member, Ron Jensen of Lincoln. The Foundation is still looking for a candidate for the 3rd District to fill the board, which has nine members in total. HNF Board members are: Ann Bruntz, Katherine Endacott, Galen Hadley, Trevor Jones, Ron Jensen, David Levy, Pam Snow and Bryan Zimmer. Bryan noted that the goal is to build a diverse board throughout the state with former and new members from all three districts, with the addition of an Executive Director.

Bryan reported on the response to the annual campaign for the digital archiving project that the History Nebraska board has mandated as a priority. The campaign raised over \$8,000 and the Foundation is still receiving daily responses from new individuals, as well as those expected to provide a donation. The Foundation hired Doug Peterson, a consultant, to assist in hiring an Executive Director for HNF. Overall, 46 applicants applied, with seven chosen and narrowed down to four, which has now been narrowed down to two finalists. The next step is in-person interviews next week. Bryan concluded his report and asked if there were any questions.

Bob Wickersham inquired upon the 501(c)3 status of the Foundation. Bryan answered that an application has been submitted with the IRS. David also confirmed that his firm submitted the application and that the Foundation is waiting for a response from the IRS. Bryan added that any donations received will be treated as a tax deductible retroactively.

Treasurer's Report by Vicki Schaepler:

Vickie stated that the Finance Committee met last Friday, members of which include Bob Wickersham, Jamesena Moore, Mark Goodman, Richard Herink, and Michelle Furby from History Nebraska. Trevor Jones from History Nebraska also attended the meeting. Jamesena Moore was not present at this meeting.

Vickie reported that members reviewed the budget process and Michelle provided information regarding Appropriations and the Biennial Report. Members reviewed the Treasurer's Report and the Revenue Budget Projections.

The total of legislative appropriations is \$5,037,983.46 and is listed in the Report sent to board members. Costs listed are associated with each area: Library Archives, Museum, Historic Sites, Archeology, Historic Preservation, Hall of Fame, Skeletal Remains, and Ford Center Appropriation. Vickie asked for questions.

Marilyn requested a synopsis on the area related to Skeletal Remains and Vickie deferred to Trevor Jones. Skeletal Remains is a statutory requirement for History Nebraska to determine whether human remains discovered are recent or historic as determined by the State Archeologist. Trevor stated that 12-15 of these investigations are completed each year, and funds for this effort are specifically earmarked in the state budget.

Vickie discussed General Operational Costs with expenditures and the remaining balance. The state fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th and History Nebraska (HN) is half way through and on target. Vickie reported that the 2021 budget projections as of December 31st go into detail on current status, as well as past comparisons. Vickie asked Michelle to explain this section.

Michelle explained that HN relies on the General Fund for only 50% of its budget. HN has federal grants for Historic Preservation operations through the U.S. Department of Interior and National Park Service. To generate revenue, HN also sells services. At the Ford Center, conservation work earns cash income and is currently at 61% of the current year goal. The Archeology division works under contract with the Nebraska Department of Transportation and also does private pay work. Admissions is another source of revenue, and more was received than anticipated, especially at Chimney Rock. Store sales are in the last section, and right now these include online and curbside sales, which resulted in a good quarter.

She noted that the Sesquicentennial Commission permitted HN to receive funds quarterly from license plate fees even after the commission dissolved; and the funds received continue to be better than our projections.

Membership is at \$42,000 and this has increased. Donations also contribute to HN and come in through multiple sources, including NSHSF reimbursements of \$91,000 so far. Michelle asked for questions.

Galen Hadley asked to define "earned income." Michelle stated earned income is anything where HN sells services or imposes fees. As an example, HN has the Ford Center and people will pay to have their personal items conserved, and that is income. Archeology does services for private entities and bills for that. Revenue is also earned when people are paying for

goods. HN also has retail operations at the HN sites and the museum in Lincoln. Earned income is the total of charges and sales.

Michelle noted that HN has completed its Biennial Budget Request for the Governor's Office and will discuss it at the agency's Appropriations hearing this spring. This year HN was asked to demonstrate how we would cut 5% out of the base budget. However, it is not a given that this potential cut will become reality.

Michelle explained that the state does not provide funding all at once. They give HN 25% per quarter with the authority to spend it. The HN budget is over two years, so the new budget will cover July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023. Each year, if unknown expenses come up, HN can go in for a mid-biennium budget adjustment in front of the Legislature, also with an emergency clause if necessary.

Vickie requested a Motion to accept the report.

Connie Spellman motioned, Second by Ann Bruntz.

Marilyn asked Michelle to call roll:

Present: Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Chuck Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Governance Committee Report:

Marilyn requested Bob Wickersham give an update on the trust fund for the Capitol Gardens.

Bob thanked Marilyn and reminded the committee that he will abstain from voting on this issue because of his interest in the project. The former senators raised roughly 1.4 million dollars to restore gardens in the four courtyards of the Capitol and plan to expend \$350,000 on the courtyards, with the balance of the monies intended for an endowment that would support maintenance of the gardens. He stated numerous attempts were made to create legislation to approve a fund to transfer monies and support the maintenance of the gardens, without success.

In December, three members made a presentation to the Capitol Commission to try to move the project forward. At this time, the necessary funds have been made, but there is no mechanism to make the donation to the state and create an endowment. As a result of that meeting, the members are gathering additional information for the Governor and will hopefully gain the Governor's support, as it is their hope to introduce a bill that would allow the Capitol Commission to accept the endowment.

Marilyn stated she hopes there is a legislative solution possible. Bob Wickersham noted he appreciated Trevor Jones' enthusiasm and the board's support for the project. He also noted that if History Nebraska held the monies in trust, the organization would not need approval from the Governor, although others have disputed this.

Marilyn expressed appreciation for the update and recommended discussion in Executive Committee in how to assist in further supporting the project. Marilyn moved to the next item under the Governance Committee which is regarding the proposed fee schedule changes for the Nebraska History Museum. This item will be voted on under the Administrative Issues section of the agenda.

Marilyn noted that the Governance Committee also discussed revisiting the strategic plan to discuss new topics that may be on horizon. They are not calling for a full revision of the plan, but rather a discussion of what has changed, what has not, and what opportunities HN should be planning for in the future. General agreement ensued regarding having a discussion at the April 16 meeting, possibly on the day before the meeting.

Personnel Committee Report:

David Levy stated that he is new to the committee and thanked Marilyn for her guidance in the transition. David stated that Heritage Heroes is an important program for the committee, and that Vickie Schaepler was kind enough to agree to keep leading that program. Vickie stated she sent an email to ask for volunteers for the awards and she believes she has some of the districts covered; however, there are gaps remaining. Discussion of assignments continued and Vickie asked Tom Kraus to send her the names of any recipients from the last round who were not recognized due to COVID.

David Levy asked Vickie to summarize the program for new board members.

Vickie explained Heritage Heroes started in 2019 as a program to recognize volunteers at other history organizations across the state. Vickie gave examples of good publicity and events in the community. She mentioned the local papers love it. Vickie emphasized that a lot of the museums do not have paid staff and that all may be volunteer, so this is a special recognition in many communities.

Eileen Wirth mentioned she wrote an online newsletter with HN regarding the program and its positive impact. Anne Dorsheimer will send the article to Bob Wickersham and the rest of the board members.

Vickie reminded the board that Pierce near Norfolk prefers its community event to be on July 3rd for their 150th anniversary. Richard Herink is happy to participate and reach out through email to Vickie. Tom noted that he never received a list of recipients this year. Vickie will send Tom the list. Bob Wickersham will help out on a separate list.

Director's Report by Trevor Jones:

Trevor started with the Strategic Plan (approved Jan 2017) and the organization's five goals that work in tandem to achieve success. The Board has established that their highest priority is increasing access to collections with an emphasis on digital collections. The audacious goal of HN remains to become the most engaging and relevant historical society in the nation by September 25, 2028 (our 150th anniversary). He reminded members that History Nebraska (HN) results this quarter are "pandemic" results and it has been an unusual year.

Trevor noted onsite attendance for this quarter was 4,769 (half of last year or 51%), which is better than he thought, considering all sites were shut down again in early November due to COVID. Right now, HN facilities are still closed with limited exceptions. Earned income this quarter was 159% of the goal and credit goes to the revenue generation team, as HN reached an agreement with Grow Nebraska products to sell products online (featuring the Good Life sign), and instituted curbside pick-up for items at the museum store. Foundation support was 61% of goal, and state and federal contracts 38%. State Appropriations is 93% of goal. 309 funds are at 25% of goal (due to reduced construction projects in the winter). Trevor asked for questions.

Bob Wickersham inquired about the Capitol Gift Shop, which is now closed. Will it return? Trevor answered that it is closed because low traffic meant it was losing money. HN will look at it in new fiscal year to see what attendance looks like at the Capitol. HN would like to bring the store back, but only if it can be profitable.

Bob Bartee applauded HN for its onsite attendance this quarter considering HN was closed for much of it.

Trevor stated HN has digitized over 4.5 million pages of newspapers and 60,000 pages of marriage records. The goal set in June was one million digital objects for the entire year, but HN has surpassed it with nearly five million digital objects, and HN was only half way through the year. HN is now using the Nebraska Secretary of State's office to digitize microfilm of marriage records. It is low cost and convenient, as there are no shipping costs and billing is easy because it is another state entity. We expect to spend \$250,000 digitizing marriage records over the next two years. Trevor remarked that an independent group for the State of Nebraska's IT department rated HN's digitization project as one of the highest valued projects in the state and recommended that it should be approved by the Governor's Office. However, the Governor's Office did not support the project in the budget. HN will therefore present the request to the Appropriations committee, as this IT project remains a strategic priority. Bob Wickersham shared his concerns regarding the denial of the budget request by the Governor's Office and discussion ensued on next steps.

Trevor discussed HN's goals for next quarter and how the organization is adapting to the pace of change. HN was changing rapidly before the pandemic, but the current disruption to visitation and working patterns has created both challenges, and opportunities to do things differently. He discussed the nature of "continuous change" that can be anticipated and managed, and the "discontinuous change" HN is experiencing right now. He explained how those ideas impact our current and planned projects, and how HN will be trying new things to earn revenue from digital, engage audiences in new ways, and become more efficient in data management. The organization will be trying new things, will probably fail at many of them, and then learn from those failures and try again. A core value of HN is "Do it Better Every Time" and that's what we're focused on.

Bob Bartee inquired if the strategic plan anticipates discontinuous change? Trevor responded that this is exactly the type of issue the board should discuss in April. Bob Bartee emphasized management, as well as the Strategic Plan. Trevor agreed.

Trevor outlined HN's legislative priorities for the year and thanked the HN Foundation for contracting with Catalyst Public Affairs:

1) Ensuring funding from the Appropriations Committee, especially for digitization for \$380,000 over next two years

2) LB 194 by Senator Vargas, to extend the Nebraska Job Creation and Main Street Revitalization Act that sunsets in 2022, modifies the program, based on recommendations from users and the Historic Preservation team

3) LB 275 by Senator Brewer for the celebration of the 250th anniversary of U.S. and creation of a commission chaired by the CEO of History Nebraska

4) LB 317 by Senator Cavanaugh to provide for History Nebraska license plates since the current license plate sunsets in 2023. Trevor shared images of potential license plate designs.

Trevor mentioned that the Nebraska History moments are provided to Senators and staff on a daily basis and HN is working on producing a book of these moments.

Marilyn thanked Trevor for his presentation and stated that the board would take a short break and reconvene at 11:17 a.m. to listen to a guest speaker, Kris Kluver, to give further insight on the management and operation of HN.

At 11:17 a.m., Marilyn welcomed Anne Dorsheimer for her first board meeting and then introduced Kris Kluver, a consultant, who has helped HN implement the Traction system.

Kris has worked with many organizations, but had reservations about working with HN, as it is a government agency with for profit and nonprofit elements and a 140-year old legacy culture. He anticipated challenges, but the whole team has done an amazing job in terms of focus and transition in culture with the support of the board. Enhanced communication, accountability, and problem solving benefits both for profit and nonprofit alike, so this process clarifies and makes operations more simple.

Kris noted that most entities are reactionary as opposed to pro-active. He commented that leaders get hammered by a million things all day, but these items are typically symptoms that fall into six core components. Kris turned to focus on the components.

- 1) Vision: Where we are going?
 - a. Values – Who are we?
 - b. Focus – What is our purpose, and what are we best at? What is the cause, passion, and niche?
 - c. Audacious goal – In unreasonable, extraordinary lives. This is the north star, the direction; shooting for a big goal with clarity and unity
 - d. Marketing – Who are we going after?

- e. Paint 3-year picture and leadership it
- 2) People: right people, right seats
- 3) Data: no ego, clear quality decisions
- 4) Processes: most neglected, scalability and streamlining and profitability
- 5) Traction Component: accountability

Kris stressed that strong organizations stay focused on goals for 90 days and then evaluate and retool and start again for the next 90 days.

Bob Wickersham inquired as to the 10-year target and 3-year picture: how often do you revise this? The 3-year goal post helps the organization re-adjust every year and reflects and helps to define where the organization is going and the vision. People often hit this sooner than three years, which is the reason for being reset frequently. The 10-year target is the organization's "moon shot" and does not change until the goal is reached.

Galen Hadley asked if these principles have already been implemented with the staff and leadership team? Trevor answered, yes. Every HN team has a 1-year plan and each person has 90 day goals. Galen asked if consensus is present with this approach? Trevor answered, yes, with the leadership team and there is no question on process, accountability, honesty and goals. He reiterated the same with the Board of Trustees.

Kris stated that Trevor and the team have been great at consistency in the midst of change and keeping it transparent. Kris stated that "right people" are based on values, and that HN hires, rewards and reprimands based on these values. Those hired are people who align with the values. The "right seats" pertain to clarity on where HN is going, how team members are contributing, and what they are accountable for.

Trevor highlighted the four values organizational values: 1) We Do It Better Every Time, 2) We Have Each Other's Back, 3) We Own It, 4) We Are Curious.

Kris spoke about the importance of using data to make clear decisions and how a scorecard can create a way to measure leading indicators that can be used to make quality decisions. HN has an issues list for short term opportunities and challenges. Then HN has the problem solving process of IDS: Identify, Discuss, and Solve. The purpose is a healthy discussion and moving forward with issues solved.

Kris concluded with emphasizing the ongoing need to improve and streamline things to get better. The most successful organizations are those who have a crystal clear vision where they are going and can problem solve.

Bob Wickersham asked about strength finders for staffing and recruitment. Kris said hiring is based on the values. Strength finders are helpful, but values are crucial.

Galen Hadley inquired if HN's leadership team can be introduced to the board. Trevor agreed that this can be done in the board's quarterly meetings.

Administrative Items:

Marilyn asked for a Motion to approve the deaccession as recorded.

Mark Goodman motioned, second by Bob Bartee.

Marilyn asked Michelle for a roll call vote:

Present: Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Chuck Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz.

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Discussion ensued. The board discussed the request for implementing a fee schedule at the Nebraska History Museum. Trevor stated that a suggested donation had been tested, and that museum staff recommend having a set fee. A key audience for the Nebraska History Museum are members of underprivileged and minority groups and it is important that any fee does not provide a barrier to entry. Staff have developed an additional “community access program” to allow groups and partners visit for free, and help HN work toward equity.

Marilyn clarified that there has never been a fee for the Museum before.

Mark Goodman asked if a suggested donation might earn more? Trevor stated that HN has done that with Neligh Mill, and it worked well, but the museum’s attendance is much higher, and there’s a tipping point. HN will review the success or failure of this effort in a year and will ask the board for a change if it isn’t working.

Eileen Wirth mentioned a way to increase membership is free admission and this is an item to discuss in the planning meeting in April.

Bob Wickersham stated that the community access program should be added to the fee list to make it clear that the board has approved that part as well.

Marilyn asked for a Motion to approve the proposed fee schedule.

Galen Hadley motioned, Eileen second.

Marilyn asked Michelle for a roll call vote:

Present: Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles, Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Opportunity for the public to comment or speak: No one chose to speak.

Executive Session:

Marilyn requested a motion to enter executive session.

Motioned by Mark Goodman, second by Connie Spellman.

Marilyn asked Michelle for a roll call vote:

Present: Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles, Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman, Galen Hadley

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Marilyn requested that Trevor remain for Executive Session and that everyone else leave who is not on the History Nebraska Board of Trustees.

Marilyn asked for a Motion to come out of Executive Session and resume Open Session at 12:44 p.m.

David Levy Motioned, Second by Pamela Snow.

Marilyn asked Anne for a roll call vote:

Present: Galen Hadley, Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles, Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

Marilyn stated that the matters discussed in Executive Session were related to personnel, legal matters or real estate.

Marilyn requested a Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motioned by Galen Hadley, Second by Ann Bruntz.

Marilyn asked Anne for a roll call vote.

Present: Richard Herink, Tom Kraus, David Levy, Marilyn Moore, Vickie Schaepler, Charles, Schroeder, Pamela Snow, Connie Spellman, Bob Wickersham, Eileen Wirth, Bob Bartee, Ann Bruntz, Mark Goodman

Not Present: Jamesena Moore

The meeting adjourned at 12:46 p.m.