

Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

12:15 – 1:00 p.m. CST

History Nebraska

Dr. Don R. Gerlach Capitol View Room and Google Teams

1500 R Street

Lincoln, NE 68508

Minutes

Chairperson Hull called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m. by stating that a notice to the press had been given and that compliance with the Open Meetings Act has been satisfied. Chairperson Hull welcomed guests and advisors to the Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee meeting.

Roll Call

Present: Jill Dolberg, Jim McKee

Present via Zoom: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Ron Hull, Aaron Wyatt

Not Present: Tim Heller

Approval of Minutes for Friday, May 23, 2022

Motion by Sara Crook, Second by Jim McKee

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Jill Dolberg, Ron Hull, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Motion carried.

Sub-committee for the Reception: Chair, Sara Crook

Medallions discussion:

Sara Crook indicated she had communicated with Medal Craft, a company that had bid on the Standing Bear medallions, and they would require a twelve week window for manufacture. The cost would be approximately \$2000.00 for 200 medallions. Sara Crook has obtained approval from the Secretary of State to use the State Seal on the reverse side of the medallion, with Cather on the front. She did ask Mike Zeleny if UNL might wish to have the University's seal on some of them as a sponsor of the reception. Mike Zeleny suggested going with one version using only the State Seal.

Katie Brossy shared that there had been only one version of the Standing Bear medallion, although fifty were offered to VIPs in small wooden containers. Most were given out in a plastic sleeve. She thought they had ordered more than 200 medallions, but would check for certain and share with the group. Ms.

Brossy also shared that they included the date 2019 on the medallions, but that this was risky since it is unknown when we might have our dedication and reception scheduled. The group decided to leave off a date.

Littleton Alton indicated that it would be best not to use the full Willa Cather figure on the coin, since the image would be too small. Focusing on the waist up would allow more detail to be shown. He also indicated that manufacture and supply lines are so delayed, we should plan for delays and rush the order.

In discussing the number of medallions to be ordered, Chairperson Ron Hull suggested ordering 500 medallions, with fifty or sixty in wooden cases for VIPs. Ms. Brossy suggested that given continuing restrictions after COVID, the Capitol may only allow 75 people to attend, therefore 200 to 300 medallions may be more reasonable.

Motion by Sara Crook, seconded by Mike Zeleny

That the full committee give the Reception Subcommittee permission to order between 200 and 400 medallions with Willa Cather on one side and the State Seal on the other side.

A friendly amendment was made by Mike Zeleny, and accepted by Sara Crook, that the committee could be authorized to also order inscribed wooden cases for VIPs if they choose.

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Jill Dolberg, Ron Hull, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Motion carried.

Discussion of Cather Sculpture Status: Littleton Alston

The statue is in good hands on the East Coast. Mr. Alston has communicated with Nebraska City about the process for bringing the Morton statue back, including providing advice on the base which will bear the weight of the statue. Sara Crook stated that the Morton statue will go in the new portion of the library in Nebraska City, and that they had a structural engineer assess the structure to make sure it could bear the weight of the statue.

Washington D.C. Update: Katie Brossy

If the midterm elections change Pelosi's role, the dedication date will likely be pushed back to the spring of 2023. March or April is likely. Ms. Brossy is trying to encourage December. There are no other statue dedications in the queue before ours, but there are lots of factors involved that affect when it might be scheduled.

Subcommittee for the Dedication Ceremony: Chair, Ron Hull

Chairperson Hull asked who will read the selections at the dedication, and have the selections been chosen yet? Ashley Olson, Willa Cather Foundation Director, stated that Laura Bush is willing to consider reading a selection if she is available. She would request that travel costs be reimbursed, which would be \$40,000. If necessary, the Willa Cather Foundation would be willing to pay for the travel expenses. Chairperson Hull requested that Laura Bush be warned in advance that there are no funds for travel.

In terms of reading selections, Ms. Olson stated that there are several passages under consideration, but

is not ready to commit. Asked for some guidance on whether the selections should elevate Nebraska only, or her national prominence. Members were urged to provide Ms. Olson with comments if they had strong feelings. The readings are expected to be given five minutes.

Sub-committee for the Invitation List: Chair, Aaron Wyatt

No update on the Invitation List. Sub-committee members, including Tim Heller, Ron Hull, Ashley Olson, Mike Zeleny, and Sara Crook, would be contacted soon to discuss.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Rod Bates, second by Sara Crook

Yes: Rod Bates, Sara Crook, Jill Dolberg, Ron Hull, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

No: None

Motion approved

Adjourned Willa Cather National Statuary Hall Selection Committee at 1:10 p.m. CST.