



Willa Cather National Selection Committee Meeting  
February 9, 2023 - 2:00 p.m.

History Nebraska, Capitol View Room,  
1500 R St, Lincoln, NE 68508

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## MINUTES

2:00 PM

**Call to Order**, Ron Hull

**Welcome and Remarks**, Ron Hull

**Notice to the Press** - Published in the Lincoln Journal Star on February 2, 2023

**Nebraska Open Meetings Act** – in compliance

### **Roll Call**

PRESENT - Littleton Alston, Sara Crook, Jill Dolberg, Ron Hull, Jim McKee, Aaron Wyatt

ABSENT - Rod Bates, Timothy Heller, Ashley Olson, Ruth Haley Keene, Katie Brossy, Mike Zeleny

2:01 PM

**Review of Minutes from the September 28, 2023 Meeting**

Motion to approve September 28, 2022 minutes.

Motion by: Jim McKee

Second: Sara Crook

Motion passed

2:02 PM

**Virtual members joined meeting:** Rod Bates, Katie Brossy, Tim Heller, Ashley Olson, Michael Zeleny

Mike Zeleny announced his new position as head of Business and Finance at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

2:04 PM

**Washington DC Update**, Katie Brossy

Due to the recent election of the House Speaker, Kevin McCarthy, there is currently no one staffed in the office of Protocol and Special Events' ' which is the office that plans and coordinates these unveilings. Katie reached out to the previous person in this position who she has been working with over the past few years and was told it will take some time for staff to be hired. The following people have all been notified of our June 30, 2023 deadline and that we are ready to go as soon as we receive an unveiling date: Director of Operations in McCarthy's office, Senator Deb Fisher's office and Congressman Adrian Smith's office. Hopefully emphasizing the deadline will move things along a bit faster. We are next in line.

It is possible that we will need a one-year extension. Senator Murman could help us accomplish this.

In the past we had a one month minimum lead time between notification and unveiling.

We should be able to hold this in Emancipation Hall at no additional costs for moving the statue. Projected capacity for Emancipation Hall is 500-700 people.

2:12 PM **Sub-committee for the Reception, Chair, Sara Crook**

The following will be engraved on the wooden boxes:

NEBRASKA  
Willa Cather  
Author  
U.S. Capitol  
Month Day, 2023

2:15 PM **Reception Program Update, Ashley Olson**

Ashley has completed a mock-up reception booklet that can be edited quickly, as needed. Still waiting on a few missing pieces such as a paragraph summary of the key entities involved in this. Ashley will circulate this booklet to members so they can add in missing information.

2:17 PM **Reception Remarks Update, Sara Crook**

**Speakers:** Ron Hull will Emcee, Ronnie Green, Andrew Jewel, Ashley Olson, Former State Senator Burke Haar, Jill Dolberg, Littleton Ashton

Sara Crook will follow up with all speakers to make sure there are no duplicate sentiments. Each speaker is allowed 3 minutes with Littleton and Andrew allowed a maximum of 5 minutes.

Ashley will have a print-ready file and can send it to Mike when the time is ready so the University can print.

2:19 PM **Sub-committee of the Invitations Update, Aaron Wyatt**

Based on our list we have an estimated 450 to invite at this point. Each adult will need to have their own email address to receive communication from the Speaker's Office. Discussion as to whether we should send a letter to gauge interest for the purpose of paring down the list including the caveat that it is in the jurisdiction of Speaker McCarthy's office as to who ultimately is extended an invitation. In the past the final invitation list has been prioritized by importance. The Speaker's office sends to the first "so many" and then sends more invitations depending upon the regrets received. Aaron has decided to hold off on sending this letter gauging interest for the time being.

Aaron will circulate the invitation list to the group to see if there are any edits needed.

There have been discussions of watch parties at various locations across the state and Washington DC.

Jill will contact Governor Pillen's office to make sure he is aware that his presence at the unveiling in Washington DC is desired.

2:33 PM **Discussion of Status of Cather Sculpture, Littleton Alston**

Littleton had an interview with a local Washington DC news channel and was asked when the unveiling will take place. He anticipates that once the date is set that the interest will increase with the media reaching out.

2:35 PM **Sub-Committee for the Dedication Ceremony, Ashley Olson**

Mrs. Laura Bush's office has not been contacted for some time. Ashley told Mrs. Bush's office that she would be in touch once she had an update.

Ashley is working on editing a great passage from "My Antonia" that is well known, timeless and that will be loved by all. In order to tell a complete story she and her team are having to cut text. Currently this is clocking in at 7 minutes so there is some more trimming to be done.

2:39 PM

**Update of Budget Status of Laurie Smith Camp's gift of \$199,000**, Jill Dolberg

- \$67,652.08

The medallions have been purchased and paid for.  
University is paying for reception.

Group discussion regarding spending excess money on purchasing wooden boxes only and no plastic cases for the medallions.

Motion that the Sub-Committee for the Reception be authorized to buy imprinted wooden boxes for all 400 medallions, numbered 1 to 400.

Motion by: Sara Crook  
Second: Jill Dolberg

Discussion

Addendum to above motion:

Pending Jill's review of Littleton Alston's contract that there are excess funds.

Motion by: Sara Crook  
Second: Jill Dolberg  
Motion passed

2:47 PM

**Adjournment**, Ron Hull

Submitted by:  
Lezlee Williams, Executive Assistant  
History Nebraska

Approved by committee:  
April 6, 2023