

MINUTES
MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
July 16, 2020
9:00 A.M. MHS AUDITORIUM
HELENA, MONTANA

CALL TO ORDER

President Kent Kleinkopf called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Jodel Fohn took roll call.

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present via phone, skype, Zoom, or other: Bob Brown, Cliff Edwards, Ed Jasmin, Chuck Johnson, Kent Kleinkopf, Steve Lozar, Thomas Minckler, Thomas Nygard, Sara Scott, Jude Sheppard, Mike Shields, Crystal Wong Shors, Hal Stearns.

Excused Board members: Douglas MacDonald and Sam Phares.

Staff present:

MHS Director, Bruce Whittenberg; MHS Centralized Services Administrator, Denise King, MHS SHPO Program Manager, Pete Brown, MHS Education Outreach Program Manager, Kirby Lambert; MHS Research Center Program Manager, Molly Kruckenberg; MHS Publications Manager, Diana Di Stefano; MHS Museum Program Manager, Jennifer Bottomly O’looney, Information Technology, Rennan Rieke, Membership Services, Jodel Fohn and Public Information Officer, Eve Byron.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Ed Jasmin moved approval of the April and May meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Hal Stearns and passed unanimously.

President’s Report – Kent Klienkopf

When I was first appointed to this Board in 2005, I asked Governor Schweitzer what he would like us to accomplish. He replied two things; get the Heritage Center built and hire a new executive director. Well, we fired blanks on the first one. Then we thought we had the answer with Mike Cooney. Then we did a search and were lucky to land Bruce for the last 9 years. I can honestly say we have now successfully completed both areas. I am very pleased to be part of the combined efforts. It will be remembered that Senate Bill 338 enabled multiple entities across the state to benefit from bed tax collections hopefully forever. We are blessed with the beginning of a world class facility, which will put Montana on the map of places to visit. We have raised funding with the Board of Trustees to further our consulting efforts, and important to say all Board members have donated to this. Now we have replaced the retiring Bruce with a very capable executive director in the form of Molly Kruckenberg. In the consideration of Board members to be elected for one year, I will not stand for reelection nor will I accept a nomination. Thank you to all of the Board of Trustees for the support and trust placed in me this last year.

Director’s Report – Bruce Whittenberg

Bruce thanked Kent for his service as president of the Board of Trustees for the last year. Bruce said he has learned a lot during his time as Director of the Montana Historical Society and feels he has become

an amateur historian. Bruce had the program managers introduce their new employees. Diana introduced Jeff Bartos, Associate Editor for Publications. Pete introduced Eric Newcomb, Architectural Historic Specialist and Vickie Sheppard, Grants Coordinator. Jennifer introduce Aaron Genton, Collection Historian and Jacob Franklin, Exhibit Preparator. Denise introduced Chris Johnson, Guard and Diana Berry, Assistant Store Manager. Bruce thanked Denise and Carol for their work in recruiting the new staff. The background of Bruce's screen is General Meagher and Jeanette Rankin wearing masks in front of the Montana's Museum sign. Staff is also wearing masks and continue to work remotely. The Research Center is open by appointment only and staff is sanitizing as recommended. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday and a plexi-shield has been installed at the front guard desk and sanitizer and masks are provided. Interactive items have been removed from the Museum. Without classes and tours the Museum is down about 50% of the usual visitors. There was one Covid-19 case. The person was not a visitor to the Museum but used the restroom. This person came in, used the facility, and left. In coordination with the Lewis and Clark County Health Department and DPHHS, there was no reason to close. Denise and Jerry have championed what is right for the safety of our staff and visitors.

The Montana Heritage Center is coming along. The positioning study is continuing, and those reports will come later. Thank you to the Board of Trustees for the Montana Heritage Center commission campaign. Covid-19 has not slowed down the work we do, just the way we do it. The Centennial Farm and Ranch Program continued. The 47th History Conference will be virtual this year with some programs live and others recorded. The 2021 History Conference will be in Butte. The Research Center has reached the milestone in April of 1 million newspapers from around Montana and these are online. People in the community of Belt wanted their newspaper digitized, so they have been doing their own fundraising for it. The Barbara Van Cleve Collection was paid in full, a year and a half early. Publications is working on the 101 Objects book, the magazine continues to win awards, a new digital magazine (the first one for us) on Rural African American History in Montana. SHPO is working on the Revitalizing Montana's Heritage Program. They received Federal funding to regrant \$391,000 to 8 preservation projects from Miles City to Fort Benton. Kate Hampton is also doing great work with the wonderful and expanding African American Resources Project. The Museum is working on a new Portrait exhibit that will begin this fall and is likely to be the last new exhibit in this building. Good Beer Here opened February 27 to a great opening with Steve Lozar as our celebrity guest. Keep an eye on these and more through social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Social media has become very important this year and Eve has been working on that. Some folks are helping with the CARES Act Funding for the Governor's Office. Deb Mitchell and Anthony Schrippo have been reviewing applications. Bruce appreciates their work. Bruce thanked everyone for their support over the years.

Montana Heritage Center Update – Russ Katherman & Jennifer James

Jennifer James and Lauren Burka shared renderings of the vision of the new MHC now that 6th Avenue is officially closed. They shared Schematic Designs of the site plan and floor plans. Ed Jasmin asked what the capacity for the event center would be. The new event center will be able to hold 2-300 people. Jennifer explained the exterior design is inspired from the photos of Montana. She shared some 3D Schematic designs, options, ideas for highlights and inclusion, and concepts. The project is hopefully closing in on an GCCM selection. Russ Katherman said the process is taking some time for a legal review and is under advisement. He hopes to hear this month, but it is hard to predict. President Kent Klienkopf asked what kind of stone will be used and will it come from Montana. Russ Katherman answered that it

depends on the weight of the stone, this is something that the GCCM will be assisting in the selection, but it might be panels. Chuck Johnson asked if the event center could be bigger. Russ Katherman answered that the design is still fluid, and budget constraints are being considered. The Tribal Outreach, Interpretive Design Team is working with Major Robinson and Andy Huff assisting a panel of stakeholders. The tribes, Major and Andy are sharing with people to get feedback, for inclusion of American Indian to showcase the tribes. Sever Lozar said he has had contact with different tribes but with the Covid pandemic it is difficult. It is especially difficult for tribes and caring for the elders, cultural aspects, and close knit families and Covid has slowed everything way down. Our Culture comes from our elders. We are doing everything to protect our elders. Our hearts and souls are tied to histories and cultures. Until we feel safe to have the elders get together, we are not able to be together. Many people hate computers, cell phones and do not have phones. Jennifer James said that Senator Susan Weber was on the call last week and had ideas on how to reach out to the elders. Lauren Burka said the bed tax was at 52.7 million before Covid and we are trying to get as much done as we can. Projects that are hoping to move forward are the front entry parking, utilities and foundation work this fall. We will be working with donor funds. Phase 2 ground-breaking is being planned. It will probably be partially virtual and some live streaming. We can highlight the project on the social media channel. We want to make as much progress as we can before the Legislature returns, but be mindful of Covid, funds and economic recovery. Bruce thanked Jennifer, Lauren, and Russ.

PRESENTATION FROM CURT MINER AND ASSOCIATES

Curt Miner and Laura Brehm reported that they are engaged for the External Positioning Study. The Principal Engagement is to make sure everyone is together on fundraising goals and keeping everyone engaged. The slides for the task force we presented and discussed. Next Thursday morning there is a meeting with the task force members to discuss the Statement of Intent and Potential Interviewees. We hope to do 30-40 interviews, probably by phone or zoom. We are still fine tuning the list. We are not just looking for people with the most money or big influencers. The interview process was discussed and there are volunteer and leadership possibilities. They ask if the interviewees have suggestions of more people to engage. The analysis is the of responses, results and review and approval. The status report with dates was reviewed. Tom Nygard asked about interviewees being 30-40 meaningful calls, utilizing the Board of Trustees and if the list of interviewees would be made available to the Board. Curt Miner said this is more than the bricks and mortar but endowment and future support. The fundraising study is beginning, and this is the beginning of fundraising for the project and philanthropic support. October 1 is going to be day 1 of the campaign and we need to get going right away. Ed Jasmin asked how the employment of the Development position was going. Bruce Whittenberg said there were 2 good candidates and there are interviews next week. Jennifer James asked to let them know how they can help collaborate with the pictures for the packages. President Kent Klienkopf asked Jennifer James about the model of the building design for the public. Bruce Whittenberg said there were images in the lobby currently. As for the model being updates, that is a funding consideration and we need people to come in the building to see it. Jennifer said Eve Byron is also partnering with 1889 Coffee to have images of our building in their window display.

Financial Report

Denise King reported that due to fiscal year in progress there is not a financial report today.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Program Managers Reports

Jennifer Bottomly O'looney reported they are working with a cleaning regime for the Museum. We suffered a great loss with our good friend Todd Saarinen. The museum has hired Jacob Franklin and Aaron Genton. The Scheurele Exhibit will be coming down soon and the Portraits Exhibit will be installed. We received some historic saws from Todd's widow Jeanne.

Diana Di Stefano reported the magazine is on schedule and she is proud of her team stepping up and working at home. The Publication program is working on press projects, 101 Objects book in time for Christmas. Farcountry Press is working on the children's coloring book of 50 objects and activities. The biography of Rose Gordon is progressing. They are working on the digital issue that should be available early next week, it is free and available online. It will also be a tool for teachers and instructors. We hope this is the first of several digital issues. The new Associate Editor Jeff Bartos has really jumped in and been helpful.

Molly Kruckenberg reported the Research Center's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Most staff are working from home, but it is difficult to not be in the building. The Research Center opened June 9 with restrictions, there have been people every day researching. The Barbara Van Cleve Collection acquisition was completed on June 30. Bruce, Denise, and Jeff Malcomson have been a great team in this acquisition. The Research Center digitized newspapers have surpassed 1 million pages for Chronicling America and Montana Newspapers and organically grows. There has been some interesting funding for it, and it shows the need for online resources. Our digital resource numbers are up, and this is very useful to people at home. The Voices of Labor digital project is wrapping up and digital recordings will be added to the Montana Memory Project. There are hours of interviews available. A change of Governor means records from him, electronic and paper. We will receive in the next few months.

Bruce Whittenberg congratulated the Research Center on completing the Barbara Van Cleve acquisition 18 months early.

Pete Brown reported that SHPO is in a different building, and they are open by appointment only. Their work has not slowed down. Most of his staff are working in the office, it is more efficient to be in the building. They are plugging away with the Montana African American resources. They received a \$50,000 grant for oral histories and film on those and what multi-projects pulled together. We will be doing press for this. Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage Program has 8 grantees. Vickie, Kate, and Denise are working on getting the contracts together. SHPO is working with the State Historic Preservation Review Board to have follow up meetings with agencies that are required to report on stewardship progress. We write letters and are now meeting with them to improve consultations. We are working on updating the SHPO website.

Kirby Lambert reported that the teacher workshops were canceled and are doing online learning. This year's history conference will be virtual. There are a variety of programs over a 2-month period. There will be an Educators Workshops, Conference Sessions, trivia contests and a field trip. The 2021 History Conference will be in Butte and we already have the programs already lined up, it will be Sept 23-25, 2021.

Bruce Whittenberg asked Jennifer Bottomly O'looney to speak on the Montana Heritage Center. Jennifer reported that the Museum team is working with Main Street Design and should have an outline for the interpretation by the end of September of the Museum design.

Heritage Keepers Award

Hal Stearns spoke about the 3 candidates and their great credentials, he recommended all 3 be awarded. It was moved by Chuck Johnson and seconded by Mike Shields that all 3 nominees be accepted. Motion passed.

Motion on approving the use of private funds in the amount of 1 Million Dollars for the MT Heritage Center.

Kent Klienkopf explained the amounts of money in donations, pledges, and trusts. This proposal is asking for \$600,000 to be released now to get construction under way and support early work packages; and \$400,000 released by the end of the year to pay consultant fees. Ed Jasmin moved to use private funds in the amount of 1 Million Dollars for the MT Heritage Center. Tom Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve new employees.

Ed Jasmin moved to approve new employees: Jeffery Bartos – Publications, Dianna Berry – Museum Store, Christopher Johnson – Security, Eric Newcombe – SHPO, Vickie Sheppard – SHPO, Aaron Genton – Museum, and Jacob Franklin – Museum. The motion was seconded by Chuck Johnson and passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Bob Brown thanked Kent Klienkopf for his steady leadership. Bob explained how the executive board is elected and that the nomination committee had met. The Nominating Committee of Bob Brown, Crystal Wong-Shors and Steve Lozar recommend Hal Stearns for President, Chuck Johnson for Vice President, and Mike Shields for Secretary. Kent Klienkopf thanked the committee for their work on the nominees. A call for additional nominees was placed.

Motion to approve Hal Stearns for President

It was moved by Steve Lozar and seconded by Cliff Edwards, motion passes.

Motion to approve Chuck Johnson for Vice President

It was moved by Cliff Edwards and seconded by Bob Brown, motion passes.

Motion to approve Mike Shields for Secretary

It was moved by Cliff Edwards and seconded by Chuck Johnson, motion passes.

The executive Committee is made up of 5 members and advised by the immediate Past President. Hal Stearns, Chuck Johnson, and Mike Shields plus Kent Klienkopf plus an additional two Past Presidents.

Motion for Tom Nygard and Jude Sheppard to serve on the Executive Committee for the ensuing year

It was moved by Cliff Edwards and seconded by Mike Shields, motion passes.

Hal Stearns said he loves the direction, loves that we do our best to tell stories and great interest in the ethnicity of Montana. This work is really important to everyone on the Board and for our future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chuck Johnson proposed that at every Board meeting the Board members visit a different program in the Historical Society, to see what is actually happening and meet people. He would like to see what is going on in the building and has enjoyed touring the basement.

Bob Brown agreed that there are amazing things in the bowels of the building and recommended a 30-45-minute tour in the middle of the board meeting.

Bob Brown moved to tour MHS at each board meeting. Cliff Edwards seconded the motion. Motion passes.

Steve Lozar commented there is an amazing reverence and staff pays to the artifacts and items preserved forever. His great grandpa was an inmate at Deer Lodge and was probably framed.

Hal Stearns spoke about the annual picnic being canceled and suggested something be done at a later date and combine it with a reception for Bruce and Molly. After discussion, there was a call for the question.

It was discussed to hold the annual picnic later with a reception for Bruce and Molly.

Kent Klienkopf suggested visiting Steve Lozar's museum.

Chuck Johnson agreed people should visit Steve Lozar's museum. He thanked Jude Sheppard for reapplying to be on the Board of Trustees and hoped the Governor approves.

Motion to Adjourn

It was moved by Ed Jasmin and seconded by Mike Shields to adjourn. Motion passes.

Bruce Whittenberg thanked everyone for their support over the years and said he would likely still be around to help Molly in any way he could. The best is yet to come.

NEXT BOARD MEETING October 16, 2020

ADJOURNMENT 11:33 A.M.