

STEELE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 18, 2024 - 6:00 PM
Steele County History Center – Wenger Room

Members Present: Elizabeth Anselmo, Tom Bonacci, Dave Effertz, Chris Fisk, Jerry Ganfield, Dan Gorman, Samona Grubish, Patty Jessop, Alexandra McGuire, Andy McGuire, Jane Middlestadt, and Nancy Vaillancourt

Members Absent: Keith Holman, Judy Johnson, Deb Lustig

Steele County Liaison: Rick Gnemi

Staff Present: Jennifer Thiele, MaryAnne Higgins, Amy Lowery, Anne Peterson

1. Welcome and Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Jessop

- a. Determination of Quorum:** Middlestadt announced that there is a Quorum

2. Approve Agenda and Consent Items a. – Action Item: Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes (M/S/P) (Gorman/Fisk)

3. Finance Committee Report

- Reports included in board packet
- Reviewed Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2024
- Reviewed Profit & Loss Statements (Oct '24 and YTD, Jan-Oct '24 vs '23)
- \$50K received from Sharon West's Estate (60% to Operations, 20% to Service Bay, 20% to Legacy); balance of funds remaining from the estate need to be applied for and approved by executors
- HVAC System Software – end of life, December '25. Need to replace. Approx cost: \$24K
- **a. Action Item: Approve October Financials - (M/5/P) (Ganfield – Finance Com/Middlestadt)**

4. Staff Reports

MaryAnne:

- Visitor log/spreadsheet included in board packet
- School tour held in October
- Children's Victoria Tea – held on 11.16, good turnout for both sittings
- Passed out sign-up sheets: looking for volunteers for upcoming events

Anne:

- Visitor log/spreadsheet included in board packet
- Surpassed previous year ('23) visitor totals so far in 2024
- Sales in the gift shop down a little bit
- Goal: to create a book on the history of the state school
- Ribbon cutting ceremony for Merrill Hall (home for LTO, We Pals – child care center) to be held on 11.19 @ 4 pm

Amy:

- Continuing to work on obituary database and transcriptions
- New exhibit: traveling to Circus World Museum in Baraboo, WI to pick up an object on loan for it

Jennifer:

- Primary Focus: sponsorships for upcoming events and programs – making progress; Depot/Caboose, Railroad History – still need (cost of \$500)
- Working on finalizing 2025 Events and Programs Calendar
- Maureen Mahoney made donation for Memory Cafe
- Met with other History Center Executive Directors/Leaders from the surrounding area on reciprocity; note: common thread – same challenges as we are experiencing
- Will be applying for remaining funds in the next five years from Sharon West's estate, executors are aging out and they want to disperse the money sooner rather than later; meeting quarterly on this topic

5. Committee Reports

Executive – Jessop

- Executive Committee met on Thursday, October 17 at 11:30 am
- Flashlight Friday Night in VOY and Murder Mystery Dinner (partnered with LTO) were successful events – dinner was sold out
- Xmas in the Village sponsors: CDI and Hy-Vee
- Bus Tour/Trip on 12.16 to Rochester – 32 people signed up
- Bold & Cold Event – Soup Supper being replaced with Souper Sweet Dinner (volunteers to make the meal, sit down meal with silent auction consisting of sweets) – to be held on Thursday, 1.23.25, cost: \$20 or \$25
- Asked SCFF Board for approval of different food items to sell at the fair in '25
- Increase in health insurance costs for Jennifer and Amy, agreed to keep the same policy for '25 and to look at a different company/policy in for '26

Governance – Lustig

- No report

Exhibits – Lowery

- See staff report for summary of items being worked on
- Working on final draft for new exhibit
- Old exhibit to be taken down (projected start date of 12.10)

Education & Programs – Vaillancourt

- Searching for new ideas to reach school aged children to increase their interest in SCHS programs
- During kid's day at the SCFF – have special items available that they can take home
- Bold and Cold Event: working on new and/or additional activities

Marketing - Thiele

- No report

Acquisition & Collections - Ganfield

- Still meeting on Wednesdays; more items being donated this week

Service Bay Capital Campaign – Thiele

- ‘On Hold’ – need to address more pressing issues of building/event sponsorships and fundraising for new HVAC system software

Events – Lustig

- No formal report; previously discussed upcoming events

Building and Maintenance – Ganfield

- Working on small projects in VOY

Tech/IT – Effertz/Gorman

- No update (nothing is going on as Baker Tech is not getting back to us)

6. Old Business

- HVAC Computer Software** - discussion regarding moving \$10K from Sharon West estate (designated for Service Bay) to be moved to fund for HVAC repairs/maintenance. Approximate cost: \$24K; will use balance of funds available in HVAC fund (approx. \$16,835) to cover expense - will move \$ to money market account until funds needed. Agreed to schedule work to install new software (EcoStruxure) in May '25 or first opening in schedule with Paape Companies, Inc. – Mankato. Need to get contract signed with them. (M/S/P) (Anselmo/Grubish)
Note#1: In getting on board now, we can lock in price (cost savings) as projecting price increase for '25.
Note#2: Approximate annual cost for updates to keep software running/functioning properly: \$1,000-\$1,200

Fundraisers – need to come up with one large event or need higher \$ amounts from other smaller ones. Will continue to do recap sheets, annual dinner recap – (62) dinners sold, some members called in sick so extra food was available. Give to the Max Day – not advertising for it on website, Facebook or sending out email notifications. Results show that the amount received is so small versus the effort put forth in advertising.

7. New Business - None

8. Open Discussion – None

9. Meeting Adjourned @ 7:35 PM

Next Meetings: Volunteer Potluck – Monday, December 9, 2024, 11:30 am
Board – Monday, December 16, 2024, 6:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted
Jane Middlestadt, Secretary