STEELE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Board and Annual Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 17, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Steele County History Center

Board Members Present: Elizabeth Anselmo, Tom Bonacci, Dave Effertz, Chris Fiske, Jerry Ganfield, Samona Grubish, Keith Holman, Patty Jessop, Janis Lueth, Andy McGuire, Jane Middlestadt, Alexandra McGuire, and Nancy Vaillancourt

Board Members Absent: None

Additional Attendees: John Glynn (Steele County Board of Commissioners liaison) and several Steele County Historical Society members

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

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by Jessop at 6:02 p.m.
   a. Determination of Quorum: Middlestadt announced a quorum present
   b. Election of Officers:
      i. Nominations: Patty Jessop - President, Dave Effertz – Vice President, Jerry Ganfield – Treasurer, Jane Middlestadt – Secretary
      ii. Thiele announced that due to an oversight, two of the Board members originally nominated for the officer roles of Secretary (Middlestadt) and Treasurer (Ganfield) in 2025 could not serve in those roles. Per the organization's bylaws, officers can serve a term of one year and are eligible to be elected to a second term. Since both Middlestadt and Ganfield have served in their respective roles for the past two years, nominations were requested.
      iii. Office of Secretary
         (1) One nomination received – Samona Grubish (M – Grubish / S – Effertz / P)
      iv. Office of Treasurer
         (1) One nomination received – Chris Fiske (M – Vaillancourt / S – Anselmo / P)
      v. Full slate of officers presented: Patty Jessop - President, Dave Effertz – Vice President, Chris Fiske – Treasurer, Samona Grubish – Secretary

2. **Approve Agenda and Consent Items**
   a. Action Item (Board): Approve Meeting Agenda (M – Ganfield / S – Fiske / P)

3. **Finance Committee Report**
   a. Reports included in Board materials
   b. Reviewed Balance Sheet
      i. Noted payment made for HVAC system controls
   c. Reviewed Profit & Loss statement comparing February 2024 to February 2025
   d. Review Profit & Loss YTD statement comparing 2024 to 2025
   e. Action Item (Board): Approve February Financials (M – Finance Committee / S – McGuire / P)

4. **2024 Annual Report**
   a. 2024 Impact Numbers (Thiele)
   b. Proposed Bylaw Revisions (Thiele)
      i. Action Item (Members): Article IV: Governance (M – Bonacci / S – McGuire / P)
         (1) Question regarding the effective date of this change. Thiele confirmed that it will be effective immediately, however moving to the decreased number of Directors will take place through attrition/expiring terms and that no Directors are being asked to leave the Board at this time.
      ii. Action Item (Members): Article VI: Ex-Officio Liaisons (M – Fiske / S – Effertz / P)
         (1) Question regarding an Ex-Officio seat for a township leader. This was not specifically identified in the revision. This individual would have an option to seek a regular Director position on the Board if they are interested.
   c. Necrology Report (Ganfield)
      i. Reading of the list of SCHS members who died between November 2023 and December 2024 to commemorate their support of the organization.
   d. 2025 Proposed Budget (Thiele)
      i. Noted various funding sources as options to address the deficit, including:
         (1) Membership Campaign
            (a) Bringing in new members
            (b) Recapture lapsed donors
            (c) Improved communication using new software to target email messages
            (d) Annual Appeal
         (2) Budget cuts Bookkeeper role
            (a) In response to the announcement that the Bookkeeper role was being eliminated, Jerry Ganfield shared information on the history of the role during his involvement with the organization. Questions were received as Jerry spoke and comments were also made by others in attendance. With several discussions happening at the same time, the conversion was a bit convoluted at that point in the meeting.
               (i) The Board Treasurer has done the books in some form over the years, except for when Kim Purcell was the Director. After Kim left the organization, another individual briefly handled data entry.
               (ii) The Finance Committee recommended the person in the role should be paid.
               (iii) After the previous Director, Kellen Hinrichsen, left the organization and prior to Jennifer being hired, the Board decided to increase the rate of pay for the role.
                  1. This was confirmed by Deb Lustig, Past President, who was in attendance. Deb also noted that the Board allegedly researched the topic and found no conflict of interest at that time.
            (b) Jennifer shared additional information regarding the decision to eliminate the role.
               (i) Concerns about best practices/questions were directed to the MN Council of Nonprofits. Response received included the following:
                  1. A Board member should not be a paid employee of the organization
                  2. Need for a clear Conflict of Interest policy; separation of roles and responsibilities
                  3. Concerns about checks/balances and having things going through one individual; could jeopardize the organization’s status as a nonprofit
                  4. Cutting the Bookkeeper position will reduce expenses (e.g., wages, savings in QuickBooks license, and using Wild Apricot to a greater extent)
               (ii) Including the responsibilities in Jennifer’s role as Director will allow her to become more familiar with the tasks and look for opportunities to increase efficiency
            (c) Jerry Ganfield was relieved of his duties of the SCHS on Friday March 14th for budgetary cuts and streamlining of the process.

5. **Staff Reports**
    a. Anne:
        i. Opening Cottage 11 tomorrow; ready for guests!
        ii. Nancy and Elizabeth continue to help organize the files in the basement; grateful for their assistance
    b. Amy:
        i. Working on the obituary database
        ii. Additional research into a new collections management system; will be talking with other current users of the systems being considered
            (1) Have been using Past Perfect, but because the software hasn't been updated, will be forced to find a new system to keep up with current technology
    c. MaryAnne:
        i. Successful "Business After Hours"; great turnout
        ii. Coin show at end of month
        iii. 11 lapsed members have now rejoined
        iv. Village will open on May 1; cleaning will be in April
    d. Jennifer:
        i. Increasing networking, reaching out to companies and possible donors
        ii. Started the Southern MN History Exchange
            (1) Creating a reciprocity program so that members can attend events at participating organizations at the member rate.
            (2) Goals include co-promoting and increasing engagement.
        iii. Applying to host the MN Alliance of Local History Museums Annual Conference in Owatonna
        iv. Participating in monthly meeting with other non-profit leaders in the area (part of the non-profit consortium)
        v. "Off 90" is interested in featuring the Extravaganza (tv show produced by KSMQ Public Television; concentrates on art, culture, and history in southeastern Minnesota)

6. **Committee Reports**
    a. Executive (Jessop)
        i. April 21st is the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (outdoors weather permitting)
    b. Governance (Thiele)
        i. Forming committee and reevaluating bylaws
    c. Education and Programs (Vaillancourt)
        i. Genealogy Games this Saturday at OAC
        ii. Exaggerated History of Steele County will be on April 12th
    d. Marketing (Thiele)
        i. Working on membership campaign
    e. Acquisitions and Collections (Ganfield)
        i. Inquiry about deaccessioned fabric
        ii. Line drawings of historic buildings have been hung at the History Center
    f. Events (Higgins)
        i. Shared information on the SCHS Gala Dinner in April
        ii. Partnering with the Sons of Norway for Syttende Mai celebration on May 17th
        iii. Working on Extravaganza
        iv. Steele County Free Fair planning
            (1) Jennifer noted that they are working with Scott Kozelka to increase the items SCHS is allowed to sell during the Fair. Given the amount of foot traffic, would like to see increased revenue. In previous years we've only had income from the Pop Stand and candy sales from the General Store.

g. Building and Maintenance (Ganfield)
    i. Possibly doing additional boardwalk replacement after the Fair. Already have the boards on hand; routing will cost approximately $15/board.
    ii. Addressing Carriage House issues (e.g., squirrels chewing the eaves). Have received an estimate of $11,300 from Rocon for repair. John Glynn asked if we would be seeking a second bid. This wasn't planned, but the committee is open to it. Jennifer shared that multiple bids aren't required since we are using funds we already have on hand and aren't seeking public funds. John will provide the names of some additional options for contractors.

7. **Old Business**
    a. None

8. **New Business**
    a. None

9. **Open Discussion**
    a. Question about the counties/organizations participating in the Southern MN History Exchange. Jennifer said that Rice, LeSeur, Freeborn, Blue Earth, Olmsted, Winona, and Waseca are currently involved.

10. **Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned by Jessop at 7:26 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Wenger Room at the History Center

Respectfully Submitted
Samona Grubish, Secretary