

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 – 7:00 pm

Monroe County Museum – 126 South Monroe Street – Monroe, Michigan 48161
ELECTRONIC VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE VIA ZOOM MEETING

Pursuant to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order No. 2020-154 (rescinding previous orders), modifying the State's Open Meetings Act issued July 17, 2020, this meeting will be held using remote participation via Zoom Meeting.

Public Comments may be submitted to the Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees Director Andrew Clark at andy_clark@monroemi.org until 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 to be included as part of the public record for this meeting. Click [here](#) for the required format.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Aug 12, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/93022948426?pwd=Nk9NbTZlWVU1RHg4RVJnU0twczRYdz09>

Passcode: museum

Or iPhone one-tap :

US:

+16465588656,,93022948426#,,,,,0#,,721920#

or

+13017158592,,93022948426#,,,,,0#,,721920#

Or Telephone:

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US:

+1 646 558 8656 (New York) or

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+1 253 215 8782 (Washington) or

+1 346 248 7799 (Texas)

Webinar ID: 930 2294 8426

Passcode: 721920 (if joining by phone)

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of July 8, 2020
5. Public Comment
6. Committee Updates
 - 6.1. Executive Committee
 - 6.2. Awards Committee
 - 6.3. Markers Committee
 - 6.4. Projects Committee
7. New Business
 - 7.1. Museum Reports
8. Old Business
9. Public Comment
10. Board Comments
11. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7 pm – Zoom

2020 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2020 COMMITTEES
Chair: Brian Egen, District 6 Vice-Chair: Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary: Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee: Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee: L William Conner, District 4 Trustee: Richard Micka, District 5 Trustee: Tony Trujillo, District 7 Trustee: Michael Humphries, District 8 Trustee: Nicholas Guthrie, District 9 Immediate Past Chair: Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus: Richard Sieb	Executive Committee Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Thomas Heywood, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak Awards Committee Chair: Mary Strevel Members: Tony Trujillo, Thomas Heywood, and Andrew Clark Markers Committee Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark Projects Committee Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, Tony Trujillo, and Andrew Clark

Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL BOARD of TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES

July 8th, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman Tom Heywood, Secretary William Conner, Member
Nick Guthrie, Member Michael Humphries, Member Hobby Nels, Past Chairman
Mary Strevel, Member Tony Trujillo, Member

Excused: Richard Micka, Member Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman Richard Sieb, Emeritus

Museum Staff: Andy Clark, Director J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director
Lynn Reaume, County Historian

This later meeting time was due to board member attendance at the Frenchtown Township Zoning Board. The new fence was an agenda item, and was accepted as meeting the township requirements.

This meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. and roll was taken. There was a quorum.

Motion was made by W. Conner to accept the meeting agenda; seconded by H. Nels and approved.

Motion was made by T. Heywood to approve the June, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by W. Conner and approved.

Public Comment #1: none via internet.

Executive: Chairman Egen explained there was nothing to report.

Awards Committee: M. Strevel said there was nothing to report.

Markers Committee: L. Reaume reported that the Berlin Township and St. Antoine markers were in progress (they later arrived from Sewah.)

Projects Committee: There was nothing to report, and Milan has not been able to advance with repairs to the Firehouse.

New Business: Museum Report: Motion was made by T. Heywood to accept, seconded by M. Humphries and it was passed unanimously. Discussion included the ownership of the Eby cabin at the Fairgrounds and the fence approval from the Frenchtown Board.

Old Business: there was none reported.

Public Comment #2: none was received via the internet.

Commissioner comments: W. Conner was thanked for his part in obtaining the map drawers from the La-Z-Boy office building.

T. Heywood encouraged conversation with the Monroe County ISD since our millage will probably run at the same time as their millage renewal in 2021.

Director Clark said the museum has been open on Thursday through Sunday and staff is working out at the Territorial Park.

Chairman Egen brought up the current political and public upheaval concerning historical statues and racial tension. The George Custer statue has also been the target of demonstrations and letters from the public, both pro and con. With history generally taken out of education in increasing amounts, there is the chance of ignorance and lack of understanding among the public. The museum will be part of a committee with the city to address these issues. Chairman Egen said “museums are not community centers but can be centers of community” and the board agreed.

Some suggestions included different interpretive plaques or markers to expand the story from diverse angles; there could be a summit or debate. Perhaps consideration should include possibility of vandalism to the statue. The board was encouraged to think on this topic.

With no other business, motion was made by M. Humphries to adjourn, seconded by T. Trujillo and the meeting was ended at 8:47 p.m.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
7 August 2020

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Maintenance and Operations

Museum

As we remain at Level 3: Medium-High Risk, public access continues to be restricted to Sundays and Thursdays through Saturdays.

Staff members continue hybrid work schedules.

As it has become stalled since our last meeting and not yet finished as anticipated, work continues on the reconfigured (COVID-19 proofed) guest services counter. I hope to have a positive report on this project for our September meeting.

Archives

Archives continue to be closed to the public while we remain at Level 3: Medium-High Risk of the recovery. Please reference Lynn's report for details of Local History Division activities.

Territorial Park

Grounds of the park are open but buildings remain closed to the public while we remain in Level 3: Medium-High Risk of the recovery.

Preservation work on the schoolhouse has been on hiatus due to heat and conflicting contractor obligations on other projects. Work is to resume this month.

As announced at our July meeting, the Frenchtown Township Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously approved the perimeter fencing project.

To avoid any pitfalls as I experienced with the first fencing project, I'm waiting to hear back from Frenchtown Township regarding our internal site fencing project before proceeding on installation.

Made contact with the architect that put together the blueprints for the replica French-Canadian Barn. We discussed the proposed lean-to addition to the south side of the barn as well as exploring options for the proposed site service barn. He stated an interest in both projects.

I've been in contact with a local contractor regarding additional water resources for the site. Some of you may recall that there was once a hose that was connected at the schoolhouse and buried in the parking lot, went across Willow Run, and was attached to a stake on the east bank of the run to provide water. In order to fulfill the long range plans for the site, we will need a bit more of a robust solution. Presently, all options are being investigated as to how we can meet this goal.

As JJ commented in his report, in compliance with COVID-19 operating recommendations, our historic buildings at RRTP remain closed and in-person programming is on hold. JJ and I have had several discussions regarding the feasibility of holding Lantern Tours this year. With so many unknowns due to COVID-19 and the continuous negative impact it has on long-range event planning, Lantern Tours for 2020 are cancelled.

Despite 2020 being a buzzkill of a year, I can report that our schoolhouse orchard planted in the spring of 2019 has produced its first apple. (A Summer Rambo, I believe.)

Eby Log House

As of this report, there are no significant updates regarding the matter of ELH ownership since our July meeting.

Custer Statue

Brian and I had a preliminary meeting with City of Monroe officials regarding the Custer Statue. From this initial conversation, the MCMS has formally agreed to be an active and cooperative partner with the city in helping to provide some additional interpretation. There is a considerable amount of thoughtful work to be done and we are anticipating that the project may take some time. The information gathered, content developed, and stakeholders consulted for this project may help with an update of the Custer exhibit, one of the long-term goals the MCMS identified last year.

Personnel Updates

Nearly all vacancies created as part of the MCMS reorganization have been filled. Ann Morris is our new, part-time Guest Services Specialist and Heather Piegza is one of our new, part-time Presenters. (Another Presenter has initiated the hiring process and should be starting before the end of the month.) The remaining vacancy is for the Operations Attendant; I expect the hiring process for this position to be completed before our September meeting.

Upcoming Closures

There are no planned closures of the MCMS until Labor Day.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

Friday, August 7, 2020

COVID-19: In pursuant to Monroe County's COVID-19 preparedness & response plan, and in consideration of *MI Safe Start* (<https://www.mistartmap.info/>), our abilities to enact general museum programming continues to undergo careful and constant scrutiny. Just as last month, all "traditional" (pre-pandemic) in-person programmatic activities have been deemed unsafe and therefore cancelled. In light of this, effort has been exerted to reimagine traditional programs, develop alternate (digital) delivery options, and enhance social media methods.

Continuing Education: Director Clark brought to my attention a three-part webinar series by the National Museum of the American Indian entitled *Native Knowledge 360°*. I am happy to report that all staff serving in interpretive roles participated in the three-day program that discussed current fundamental understandings of teaching about Native Americans. Continuing education on core topics is essential for museum staff, and based on that principle, more workshops will be sought out in the future. Staff participation will accordingly be required or suggested.

Living History Programs: Early July saw the completion of a set of foundational documents regarding the hosting of external reenactors/demonstrators at the RRTP site. This set constitutes an organized policy, intended to guide any and all future cooperation with external living history individuals and organizations to better serve the community, and adhere to our mission statement. It includes a waiver, permit, authenticity guidelines, and COVID-19 advisory.

RRTP: Productive discussion ensues on the enhancement of the site. As an update to last month's report regarding key priority developments, the following progress was made: 1) a handwashing station has been installed near the schoolhouse; 2) an assessment of any pest infestations has been conducted; 3) an assessment of noxious/invasive plants has been conducted; and 4) a dumpster has been placed at the site to aid in rapid and substantial expulsion of trash. Select plans in-progress include: completion of interior period fencing, installation of gates for the bridge and access lot, installation of potable water sources in the kitchen basement and barn, and general substantial overall site cleanup. Pest control (stinging insects, powder post beetles), and noxious/invasive plant removal (Poison Ivy, Autumn Olive, Purple Loosestrife) will begin ASAP.

Digital Tours: I am happy to report continuous exciting population of our digital tour platform, OnCell (Stqry). Following training and explorations, several tour programs have been digitized into the platform. Following technical evolutions, branding considerations, and directional philosophies & fine content curation, the estimated time until public release, is approximately 8 weeks.

Programs Staffing: It pleases me greatly to inform all that we've hired two Museum Presenters: Heather Piegza and another who is awaiting processing by the County. At this time, a comprehensive presenter training manual and regimen is in the final stages of development, rooted in the teachings of Freeman Tilden, and based on industry standards.

Miscellany:

- An MCMS social media policy remains in-progress, set to be complete following development and execution of Museum Presenter training.
- Time and sweat has been invested in carefully arranging workspaces to accommodate all new staff, in compliance with COVID-19 policies.
- A COVID-19 sneeze-guard has been fashioned for the front desk at VVMM, in preparation for the staffing of the site.

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report
For July, 2020

The research room was not open to the public in July.

Rachel processed obituary requests for 12 individuals, with 46 obits. She handled 3 phone calls and 6 emails. She does some county work at home.

Robert handled at the museum 23 outside calls, 18 emails, 3 "Found in Collection" items and processed accessions. He assisted in the packing and moving of the Nortel stained glass bowler to Third Street storage. He has made good headway in relocating items and labeling shelves in the attic which we are planning to reorganize next.

July Accessions:

- 2020.17 Anonymous donor: Greening Nursery envelope & price list
- 2020.18 Gary Keck: photographs from Monroe Hollywood Studios
- 2020.19 Mary-Eileen McClear: photographs (incomplete)
- 2020.20 Paula Rush: Rush family items including a samovar, photographs and candlesticks.
- 2020.21 Laurie Schultz: Mercy-Memorial Hospital sign
- 2020.22 Thelma Moyers: pedal powered sewing machine & misc. sewing accessories
- 2020.23 Lucia Cousino: WWII Military uniforms & items of Lt. Col. Ligouri Cousino

July 21-23 Robert, Rachel & I participated in an Native American webinar from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian entitled "Native Knowledge 360" with sessions meant to be bringing awareness of Native Americans in the present, not just the past; sensitivity to stereotypes and bringing new thought to teaching and education.

My big July project was the tackling the Monroe County Schools in the Stacks. Since I had to go through everything, I tried to identify & streamline the hundreds of files into something cohesive. I continue to weed out non-local newspapers for a diversion from the big projects.

I continue to work from home 2 days a week on the Monroe Evening News proof collection, which I use for my Friday Facebook posting. (July reach for Collections was 7,552.) I have processed 4359 images since I started in May, 2019. I have officially been back in Archives/Collections Local History Division for over a year now with so much to do!

Historical Markers: both Berlin Township and St. Mary's Church have seen images and been notified of the markers' completion. Both will have dedications TBD and would like the new posts installed when they can be done. I have no news on the Custer Home marker.

County website Obituary search #1 with 15,028 page views of 2,497 unique page views; Museum #47 (down) with 509 page views of 428 unique page views; Heck Park #118 with 118 page views; Archives #135 with 101 page views.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
04 August 2020

Monroe County Historical Commission

July 2020 Museum Exhibits Report

After a tragic early morning fire destroyed the Nortel Bowling Lanes in Dec. 2018, museum staff took on the task of preserving a large stained glass window spared by the flames. The successful effort to remove the 8 ft. by 8 ft. window was a last minute affair just ahead of the wrecking ball. Unfortunately there was no opportunity to properly store the item so it was placed in a covered location on the loading dock. This month a custom crate was built to contain the piece and it was moved to our third street facility. Weighing around three million pounds (possibly a bit less), it took a crew of four to achieve this move and we can at least say the window is now safely stored for the future.

Elsewhere on the exhibit front, a new exhibit was installed in our “Recent Acquisitions” case. Given the name of this case – meant to highlight items received within the past year - it is necessary to keep refreshing the items. Choosing, researching, and labelling the artifacts is a fun, and often challenging, process. Among the times chosen was a majorette shako worn by Ruth Ann (Orr) Smith at Ida High School in 1963. As it turns out the shako, and the uniform it accompanied, was worn by three Ida majorettes spanning the period from the mid 1950’s to 1963. The style was retired in 1963 after Ruth wore it. It is rare to get such a specific date and history for an item like this. Another piece, a cast aluminum Monroe High bookend, was much easier to date since it is emblazoned with the date of 1951.

Re-surfacing the museum donation bin with a faux wood surface (designed by Emily Phillips), researching and designing components of the future Post Office exhibit, Territorial Park exhibits, and a canoe/dugout display stand filled out the month.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerald P. Wykes
Exhibits Coordinator

August 3rd, 2020

Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

Guest Services Division Report ❖ July 2020

Following our Fourth of July holiday closure, I officially assumed responsibility over our Engagement Reports with the June 2020 offering being my first contribution. The new layout was crafted by Director Clark- it's neat and linear presentation helps with legibility and allows any statistics to be highlighted individually. Though our physical visitorship in June was down, our online presence continues to grow thanks to the efforts of our Local History, Programs, and Operations Divisions.

Our season of interviews continued with the Programs Division in their search for new presenters, and I was fortunate enough to be able to sit in on these meetings. Given my roots in Programs, I tried to provide relevant feedback in regards to each candidate's interview and qualifications.

My Division's interviews concluded for the time being with the hiring of Ann Morris, who had her first day with us on Saturday, July 25th. She comes to the MCMS with a wealth of customer service and retail knowledge, working in a managerial capacity for several years at a college bookstore and in sales elsewhere. She is extremely personable and makes a friendly addition to our staff as a Guest Services Specialist. In preparation for her arrival, I put together an Orientation packet outlining job duties, the physical layout of the Museum, and our mission/history as an organization. I hope to repetitively edit and refine the document as I receive feedback from employees and add content.

On the recommendation of Deputy Director Przewozniak, I and many others on staff attended a 'Native Knowledge 360°' webinar presentation(s) on July 21st-July 23rd, facilitated by the National Museum of the American Indian. It was illuminating and worthwhile, and prompted much thought and discussion as to how we tell the stories of others with reverence and consideration.

Aside from taking on the monthly Engagement Reports, I have also begun the process of learning the County's invoice system and how to process some of the Museum's financials. Deputy Director JJ and I met with Crystal Comer for a brief training session, and will hopefully have an additional training in the near future on the FASBE system. In the meantime, I am familiarizing myself with our vendors and attending to basic invoices.

Submitted by Megan Mullins, Guest Services Coordinator