

**Montana Historical Society
Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
August 18, 2025, 2 P.M. MST
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)**

CALL TO ORDER:

Tim Fox called the meeting to order at 2:02P.M.; Jenni Carr took roll. A quorum was determined.

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members attending virtually: Norma Ashby Smith, Kim Briggeman, Carol Donaldson, Tim Fox, Pete Johnson, Bill Jones, Lorna Kuney, Rachel Reckin, Jay Russell, Ken Robison, Bill Whitsitt, Candi Zion

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members excused: Mary Helland, Steve Lozar

MTHS Staff present: Molly Kruckenberg, Director; Emily McKeever, Administrator; Jenni Carr; Administrative Assistant/Membership Coordinator; Martha Kohl, Outreach and Education Program Manager; Beth Strandberg, HR Generalist; Bennet Aube, AV/IT Support

Tim Fox briefly reviewed the agenda. He outlined Robert's Rules of Order and asked the board to make a motion, followed by a second, discussion, and then a restatement of the motion, a second, and then a vote.

Education Endowment Policy:

Motion: Bill Jones moved to approve the endowment policy as written. Carol Donaldson seconded.

Discussion on the motion: Bill Whitsitt noted that in the "purpose" section of the policy, it may need to reference a statement that was made in the Governor's announcement in that the fieldtrips were in connection with fieldtrips to the *Montana Heritage Center* specifically. Currently, it states "museums, and cultural sites." The primary grant purpose should reflect the Montana Heritage Center as the main location, with additional cultural sites and museums in Montana "to and from" the Heritage Center. Tim agreed that the museums should be in Montana, not schools taking side trips to Spokane or outside locations. Molly added that she discussed this point with Bill Whitsitt and would be comfortable rewording it to read "in conjunction with the Montana Heritage Center and Capitol."

Tim added that in the section "investment" under the second paragraph it states, "the Whitefish Community Foundation is the owner and has ultimate authority and control over the fund." Tim requests that the second part of the sentence be removed, or it be reworded to state "the Whitefish Community Foundation has fiduciary responsibility to the Montana Historical Society" for clarification. Tim is uncomfortable calling the Whitefish Community Foundation the "owner" of the fund. Emily stated that she reviewed the language of the paragraph and clarified that the way the endowment is set up, donors give to the Whitefish Community Foundation with the Montana Historical Society as the beneficiaries. Because the Whitefish Community Foundation owns the funds, donors can take advantage of the endowment tax credit. They are required to be a "good steward" and administer the funds appropriately in a way that benefits the Montana Historical Society. As the recipient of the endowment, MTHS would have to go to the Attorney General and

petition to have the funds transferred to another nonprofit to have the funds managed. Tim asked if he had received a copy of the agreement between the Whitefish Community Foundation and the Montana Historical Society and if the board had approved it. Molly confirmed that the process was discussed with the board, and the contract was reviewed with legal internally, but it was not reviewed by the board prior to approval.

Candi requested to approve revisions piece by piece in the event not all revisions are approved. Bill Jones called the question and approved the first amendment. Bill Whitsitt seconded. Jenni offered to restate the motion.

Restatement of the Motion: Bill Jones moved to approve the education endowment policy with the following amendment: “grants to student groups to pay for transportation costs, meals and lodging, and fees associated with field trips to the Montana Heritage Center, the Capitol, and other cultural sites or museums visited in **conjunction with the Montana Heritage Center** and Capitol.” Bill Whitsitt Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Tim continued the conversation and stated that he is uncomfortable with the paragraph that states the Whitefish Community Foundation as the “owner” of the endowment. Pete added that there are strict rules regarding the control over the funds for the foundation to follow. The foundation has control over how to invest the funds. As the beneficiary, the Montana Historical Society receives the benefits of those investments. Tim would like to replace the word “owner” with “fiduciary manager.” Pete finds this description redundant as it is implied. Tim asked if this is an internal document, so questions can be asked and clarified. Molly reiterated that it is an internal working document that would give the governor’s office direction on how the board wishes to spend the endowment funds. Bill Whitsitt asked if the board would receive a review of the Whitefish Community Foundation funds to see how the performance of the fund is doing. Molly answered that they do provide an annual review. Bill Whitsitt asked if they would be able to make it twice-annually. Emily believed that that would be doable. Tim added that he went to the Whitefish Community Foundation website and noticed that they have links to many of their funds and wondered if there was a way to have the endowment added to their website. Molly answered that the endowment campaign has been “behind the scenes” as MTHS finalized the Heritage Center campaign, but it will come to the forefront in the coming months. Emily reiterated that Ginny Sullivan and Colton Tash in the Development Office have plans for promoting the endowment. Tim asked for any further discussion. There was none.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Closing the Meeting to the Public:

Due to the nature of the discussion of the Director’s duties and performance, it was appropriate to close the meeting to the public at this time.

Motion: Tim moved to close the meeting to the public. Lorna seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Reclassification of the Director's Position:

Due to the nature of the discussion, this portion of the meeting has been redacted.

Motion: Carol Donaldson moved to approve the duties and responsibilities of the Director as set forth in the State of Montana's position classification of Business Executive. Kim Briggeman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on the motion: Redacted.

Motion: Candi Zion moved to adjust the Director's annual salary to \$156,000 annually or \$75/hour. Bill Whitsitt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on the motion: Redacted.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Bill Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Jay Russell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:00P.M.