

**Montana Historical Society  
Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting  
January 21, 2021 9:00MST via Zoom web meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Hal Stearns called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. MST. Jodel Fohn took roll call. Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present: Bob Brown, Ed Jasmin, Chuck Johnson, Kent Kleinkopf, Steve Lozar, Thomas Minckler, Sam Phares, Sara Scott, Mike Shields, Crystal Wong Shors, and Hal Stearns.

**Excused Board Members:** Cliff Edwards.

**MHS Staff Present:** MHS Director, Molly Kruckenberg; MHS Administrator, Denise King; MHS State Historic Preservation Officer, Pete Brown; MHS Research Center Program Manager, Roberta Gebhardt; MHS Museum Program Manager, Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney; and Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager, Kirby Lambert.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Ed Jasmin and seconded by Chuck Johnson to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2020 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**Presidents Report – Hal Stearns**

President Stearns said there have been several employee changes that will be discussed today. We will also have a legislative update, and the positioning study and art loans will be discussed today. MHS staff will investigate the ability to have a small plaque noting that it belongs to MHS and some info about the artwork. President Stearns reminded board members to be members of MHS. Douglas MacDonald had an article in the Smithsonian. An article in the Montana Magazine of Western History was discussed and how Montana is one small town. Assisting all Montana museums was discussed.

**Directors Report – Molly Kruckenberg**

Molly congratulated Douglas MacDonald on his Smithsonian article. A change to the Board of Trustees has been made on the MHS website. The new email is [mhsbot@mhs.gov](mailto:mhsbot@mhs.gov). Tours of programs will continue when it's safe to meet in person. There is a list of descriptions of what the programs do are in the Board packet today. Core Stats were reported. The impact of Covid-19 in Montana was discussed. Some restrictions have been lifted state-wide, though we are remaining vigilant and follow Lewis and Clark County requirements and maintaining cleaning responsibilities. Work on the new Montana Heritage Center continues. Parking on the East side of the building and in front of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is proceeding. Cushing Terrell has a new flyover of the project, and we will have a live stream of the project in the future. Progress photos of the construction were shared. Marketing and Development donations were shared. The Gift Acceptance procedure was reviewed. Ginny Sullivan gave a review of sustainable programs and process for accepting gifts.

President Stearns introduced Ginny and spoke about her previous experience.

Molly discussed that Strategic Planning is critical to the Capitol Campaign.. Tom Nygard said that was a perfect use of the funds. The strategic campaign work will continue from February to April. Molly is working with the Program Managers on Know and Grow our Communities, impact our Communities, Protect our Collections, Prepare for our Future for our Goals and Objectives.

The 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session has begun. HB5 is about long-range planning to appropriate bed tax and a one-year extension for the MHC. There are no increases, only an extension to compensate for the Covid decrease in tourism.

HB12 is the bill to award grants that will be approved for 92 historic preservation projects. Sixteen of those are likely to be awarded. This number shows a need for grant funding.

Denise King reported on HB12, the preservation grant – chair and vice chair of this committee of Long Range Planning spoke in support with enthusiasm for the bill. HB2 is Governor Gianforte’s budget. This will have an impact on MHS, in a reduction of \$232,000. Some of that will be holiday state health plan and a 2% vacancy savings. There is the potential to not fill some of the vacant positions. Also, if someone leaves, that position may not be refilled. HB9 is for the C and A grant, the coal severance tax for care and maintenance for the Capitol Complex Art. We will be digitizing some Haynes photos. HB13 is the state pay plan. There will be one \$.55 increase in the next biennium. SB73 is looking to change 75% of the lodging tax to give counties control of the funds instead of it going to the state fund. This will not affect MHC funding. There are 3200 bills in draft. We are watching 262 of the bills that could affect MHS.

Molly introduced Ginny Sullivan. Jodie Foley retired on December 31, 2020. Roberta Gebhardt is the new Research Center Program Manager, Laura Trenter is the new Library Supervisor, Rich Aarstad was selected as the Archives Supervisor, Kellyn Younggren is now the Senior Archivist, and Laurie Chips has been hired for Tech Services. Renee Kelly has been hired as the Grants Manager for SHPO.

By statute MHS is Montana’s State Archives and the MHS director appoints a State Archivist. With the retirement of Jodie Foley, the Director is asking for the Board of Trustees to accept the Directors nominee of Rich Aarstad to become the State Archivist. The State Archivist has historically been the Archives Supervisor. It was moved by Bob Brown and seconded By Steve Lozar to approve Rich Aarstad as the State Archivist. Motion passed.

Molly reported she has also worked with the Beaverhead County Museum board members about their operations. She represented MHS at the Centennial Bell Montana History Teacher of the Year ceremony, Abbey Kochel of Castle Rock Middle School in Billings received recognition for her work. She met with the staff of the Yellowstone County Museum for a tour of their facilities. She also worked with Darlene Gould of the Daly Mansion Preservation Trust and Ilona Besseney, representing the Besseney Family, to finalize an agreement to protect the viewshed of the Daly Mansion. The Besseney Family desired that visitors to the Daly Mansion would be able to experience the same view of the Bitterroot Mountains that the Daly family had a century ago. The agreement will keep farmland west of the Mansion undeveloped for as long as the Mansion remains open to the public. The core functions of MHS continue, even as we address the challenges of COVID and the opportunities of the Montana Heritage Center project. Below are a few highlights of the work being done by the exceptional MHS staff.

- Digital content is continually being added to our many online resources, including Montana Newspapers and the Montana Memory Project.
- MHS again partnered with the Montana Outdoor Hall of Fame. Eve Byron was instrumental in coordinating their virtual awards ceremony in December.
- The Outreach & Interpretation program partnered with HCTV to create a virtual tour of the Montana State Capitol.
- The Museum installed a small exhibit of John Fery works in the Montana Moments gallery.
- The winter issue of the magazine arrived, with some fantastic articles, which I'll let Diana tell you about later.

### **Montana Heritage Center update.**

Russ Katherman reported that A&E, Jennifer James appreciated the coordination with Molly and Denise. Russ shared a bar graph of where we are in the construction progress. Fiber optic line is being relocated along with other utilities. Russ discussed the timeline and upcoming target dates.

Kent Klienkopf said it is a necessity to show daily progress during legislature and will be pleased to see the upcoming progress.

Molly thanked Russ and Jennifer for keeping the project moving forward. Russ said the enthusiasm among the team is high. Molly played the new video of the Montana Heritage Center.

### **Program Managers Reports**

Roberta Gebhardt reported that the Research Center has had a lot of changes in staffing. One position will remain open for vacancy savings. Molly finished two grant proposals. They resubmitted the National Newspapers Grant. Homegrown Radio interviews from Brian Kahn are being acquired. John Olehan papers are being digitized. Planning for the new Research Center is ongoing.

It was moved by Ed Jasmin and seconded by Chuck Johnson to accept the Deaccession List. Motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney requested approval for an art loan to the Phoenix Art Museum for the Art of Mining in the American West would have 3 painting insured for \$6,000.

It was moved by Hal Stearns and seconded by Chuck Johnson to loan the art to the Phoenix Art Museum. Motion passed unanimously.

Kirby Lambert reported that the Outreach and Education Program has been organizing a Christmas card collection from Betty Babcock. There are cards from Governor Reagan, President Reagan, the Peter Yeagan family in 1963, Governor Schwinden and many more.

Mike Shields thanked Kirby for an article magazine Montana the Magazine of Western History. Mr. Shields also noted that there is a book in the store on Senator Mansfield and Burton K Wheeler.

Kirby continued that he is working on the next history conference and hopes it to be in person September 23-25 in Butte.

Diana Di Stefano spoke about the article on Senator Mansfield and mentioned Mark Johnson was great to work with. Diana reported the winter issue of the magazine is available. An article by Patrick Lozar is in the works. The second Emerging Scholars Contest had 9 submissions. Most were grad students from Montana, but also from Kansas, California, and Oklahoma. The winner will be announced in February. The Press is working on the 101 Objects book, as well as a book on Rose Gordon, and many being reprinted. Diana spoke about the outreach of the magazine and the U of M and MSU history departments. She will be presenting a class at U of M this spring and Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Ginny reported she is excited to be here and establish a Development Program. She has been reading, learning, meeting staff and external people. She said the support for MHS is vast and broad. She is incorporating best practices and procedures, planning and learning, working on strategic planning, and reaching out to gift providers and guiding pledges forward. She will be meeting with the remaining Board of Trustees soon.

Denise reminded the Board that the packets have a yellow, green, and gray sheets of paper that have to be returned to Jodel. The Governor and First Lady came to look at artwork and the First Lady stayed to visit the galleries, store, and look at the MHC project. Denise invited them to come for a private tour and discuss the MHC. Financial statements were reported. Operating expenses and personal services were discussed. Pledges and private funds were discussed. A hard copy of the financials are now available, please let Jodel know if you would like a copy.

Pete Brown reported that Renee Kelley has been hired as the SHPO Grants Manager. Pete is working on the biannual Preservation Awards. The Governor's Award is going to the Veteran's Affairs at Fort Harrison for renovation homes for Homeless Vets, benefitting communities with tax credits and saving 11 buildings and housing 96 people. Pete is working on awards presentation. The National Park Service funding is due in February for operating funds. Pete is revising the operating plan. SHPO staff is hoping to get out to communities this year. Pete will send invites for the Preservation Awards shortly.

### **New Business**

Approval of new employees per MCA 22-3-108. It was moved by Bob Brown and seconded by Chuck Johnson. Motion passed unanimously.

Art loans to qualified State Offices and MHS policy 300-01 and the history of the policy were shared. Art has to be secured, be access by the public. It was moved by Mike Shields and seconded by Jude Sheppard to reaffirm this policy. Motion passes unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

The next meeting will be April 15,2021.

Steve Lozar reminded everyone of a past Board of Trustee member and honored the memory of Jim Murry. He asked that we keep him in our hearts.

Molly said that the Society Star is in the mail and there is a memorial to Jim Murry in there.

It was moved by Steve Lozar and seconded by Chuck Johnson to adjourn. Motion passes unanimously.