

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

ENTITY: WSHS Board of Trustees  
DATE: March 4, 2010  
LOCATION: State Capital Museum and Outreach Center, Olympia  
TRUSTEES PRESENT: Daniel Grimm, Chairman; Michael Allen; Charley Bingham; James Dawson; Melanie Dressel; John Hughes; Royce Pollard; Secretary of State Sam Reed; Harriet Spanel; Sheryl Stiefel  
STAFF PRESENT: Director, David Nicandri; State Coordinator of National History Day, Lauren Danner; Director of Information Technology, Tamara Georgick; Chief Financial Officer, Christopher Lee; Web Content Specialist, Kate Magner; Assistant Director of Human Resources and Administration, Misty Dawn Reese  
PREPARED BY: Misty Dawn Reese

I. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

As a special order of business, Lauren Danner presented an overview of National History Day, a program intended to increase interest in history by encouraging secondary school students to create presentations and performances dealing with events and people of historic significance. Students vie for recognition at regional and national competitions. Participation in National History Day has increased from 3,000 to 6,000 since the Society assumed responsibility for the program in 2005.

Ms. Danner praised the work of History teachers and the quality of the projects created by students. To demonstrate the quality of the projects, she introduced Nathan Maris, a student at International Community School in Kirkland. Mr. Maris presented and answered questions about his documentary, "J Harlen Bretz and the Great Missoula Flood: An Individual and His Radical Geologic Theory." The documentary placed thirteenth at the 2009 National History Day competition.

Mr. Maris has participated in History Day since eighth grade, when he competed nationally with a documentary on "The Battle of Wake Island". He won the US Marine Corps Special Prize for that project and was honored at the annual USMC banquet in Washington, D.C. This year he will compete at the North Puget Sound Regional History Day competition with a documentary on the history of blood plasma.

II. Consent Items

- a. Minutes, September 24, 2009 Meeting [Exhibit 1]  
The minutes were approved as submitted.

- b. Future Board Meeting Schedule [Exhibit 2]  
The proposed schedule was approved as submitted.

III. Policy, Planning & Governance

- a. Governance Committee

- Board Nominees 2010-2013

- Chairman Bingham submitted five Governance Committee trustee nominees to serve three year terms beginning July 1, 2010. Incumbent nominees are Royce Pollard, Harriet Spanel, and Victoria Woodards. New nominees are Jane Jacobsen of Vancouver and Corky Mattingly of Yakima. Ms. Jacobsen is the Executive Director of the Lewis and Clark “Confluence Project”. Ms. Mattingly is the Yakima County Auditor.

- The nominees were elected.

- b. Finance Committee

- i. Investment Report [Exhibit 3]

- Chairwoman Melanie Dressel reviewed the Investment Report. She does not anticipate the need for any changes in the investment strategy of the Society’s endowment funds. She also expressed satisfaction with the management of the funds by Laird Norton Tye.

- ii. Financial Report [Exhibit 4]

- Mr. Nicandri reviewed the Financial Report. He noted the WSHS budget has been cut nearly 30% from the previous year. Funds from the budget reserve have been used to limit the damage to programs and operations. Ms. Dressel noted that the Finance Committee has reviewed and endorsed Mr. Nicandri’s management of the budget reductions, emphasizing he has allocated limited resources in accordance with the Board’s strategic priorities.

- c. Executive Committee

- i. Governor’s Government Reform Report

- Mr. Nicandri reviewed the history of the proposed merger with the Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS). Governor Gregoire recommended exploring a merger in October, 2009 as part of her proposal to reduce the number of state agencies, boards, and commissions. Due to the lack of progress on a formal merger, the Governor included in her most recent budget a proposed “consortium” arrangement in which the two societies would share resources and offer joint programs.

- Sam Reed said he recently visited the EWSHS and is not surprised at the lack of merger support among its trustees. He said their primary concern is maintaining an independent identity despite the current financial problems. He asked if it might be possible for Mr. Nicandri to develop joint programs with EWSHS that would demonstrate a shared commitment to our common state heritage. Mr. Nicandri

explained that Head of Collections, Lynette Miller, is working on the creation of an exhibit that would be shown at both museums. He noted Ms. Miller is ideally suited for the effort, having worked at EWSHS prior to coming to WSHS.

ii. State Supplemental Budget

Mr. Nicandri said the Governor's most recent budget proposal recommended an additional five percent reduction in the Society's budget. The House and the Senate have since issued their own budget proposals, both similar to the Governor's proposal. While the reduction is less than he had feared, Mr. Nicandri said the Society may endure additional cuts over the next several years. Sheryl Stiefel asked if the Society's financial situation might be aggravated by collaborating with the EWSHS, given its financial distress. Mr. Nicandri stated that the joint projects are in the discussion phase. Any final agreements would stipulate the financial and operational obligations of both societies.

iii. Restated 2009-2011 Operating Budget [Exhibit 5]

Mr. Nicandri described the Restated 2009-2011 Operating Budget to reflect a refinement of what constitutes key production group activities.

The bottom half of the second page aggregates the realignment of these activities, translated from one side to the other, as adopted by the full board in June and reviewed by the Executive Committee in December.

Mr. Nicandri stated this tool has proven to be quite valuable in determining how to allocate assets. Ms. Dressel confirmed the Finance Committee will be reviewing Mr. Nicandri's budget proposals and how they align with the Society's strategic priorities adopted by the Board.

IV. Operations/Performance/Trend Assessments

a. Women's Suffrage Centennial Report

Shanna Stevenson reported on the success of the Women's Suffrage Centennial and showed slides displaying several items donated to the Women's History Consortium collection.

b. Web Portal Tour

Mr. Nicandri and Tamara Georgick provided an overview of the WSHS website, including: Google search capabilities within the site; E-Commerce site (Marketplace); Government Management, Accountability and Performance Measures; the ICONS of Washington exhibit; COLUMBIA Kids; and Columbia Anthology. Ms. Georgick provided a demonstration of the new Collections Catalog on-line.

V. The meeting was adjourned at 2:18.