

Washington State Historical Society
Board of Trustees

MINUTES

ENTITY: WSHS Board of Trustees
DATE: October 24, 2013
LOCATION: Tacoma, Peter Simpson Board Room, Washington State History Museum
TRUSTEES PRESENT: Larry Kopp, President; Representative Gary Alexander; Sally Barline; Robert Carriker; Carol Coe (representing Randy Dorn); Senator Jeannie Darneille; Leonard Forsman; Representative Sam Hunt; Alex McGregor; Richard Scheuerman; Victoria Woodards; Secretary of State Kim Wyman
STAFF PRESENT: Jennifer Kilmer, Director; Kim Ketcham, Marketing & Communications Director
PREPARED BY: Kim Ketcham

- I. Call to Order and Instruction
Chairman Kopp called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

- II. Consent Items
 - a. Minutes for June 22, 2013 meeting [Exhibit 1]
The minutes of the June 22, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.
 - b. Future Board Meeting Schedule [Exhibit 2]*
The schedule was adopted as presented.

- III. Policy, Planning & Governance
 - a. Governance Committee [Exhibit 3, 4, 5]
Chairman Kopp noted that WSHS is looking for ways to be more engaging and indispensable, and noted that board members conducted visits and filed reports evaluating the exhibits of other museums in comparison to ours.

Jennifer Kilmer explained that she had consulted with the AAG in regards to revising the WACs, and will be working with legislators on the Board of Trustees to revise them. The most substantive change being the inclusion of our administrative fee for HCPF. Revisions to RCWs will also be addressed. One of these is in reference to the Center for Columbia River History and how the new options for its previous \$14,000 operating budget are being considered. No concerns were raised by the board about the changes to the WACs or RCWs.

Chairman Kopp expressed the need to space the board meetings more evenly, which would be a bylaw change.

Chairman Kopp asked for approval on a letter regarding Jennifer Kilmer's performance as Director of WSHS. Jennifer left the meeting, and the letter was approved.

Exhibits were discussed, specifically the History of Golf we have been asked to present at the Washington State Fair in Puyallup, the exhibit with the working title “Washington Drinks”, and the upcoming changes to the Great Hall of Washington History. Board members debated the idea of “When Does History Start” and the need to be responsible in the Washington Drinks exhibit about presenting the discussion of how alcoholism affects the state. Board members were supportive of the concept of focusing on the agriculture and the industry and Jennifer Kilmer pointed out that there is more time for discussion on this particular exhibit.

Victory Woodards introduced Sally Barline and mentioned the re-appointment of Sam Hunt.

Jennifer Kilmer explained that in pursuit of the goal to bring on three new board members by June of 2014, a Boeing executive has been approached and is interested. Bob Carriker pointed out that a previous board member from Boeing served three terms on the WSHS board and was very effective.

b. Finance Committee [Exhibit 6, 7]

Alex McGregor announced the small loss in the Laird Norton Endowment of -.3% for the second quarter, but also the 5.7% increase by the end of the third quarter. All accounts currently total \$1,276,000. Laird Norton will make an adjustment to reduce the volatility with attention to maintaining return. Alex McGregor pointed out that, in reference to the Murdoch Grant, there is ongoing discussion regarding the plans for the budget from the Columbia River History Center closure.

Mr. McGregor also pointed out that while there is a small deficit in the operating budget for WSHS, we have had a growth in assets. Jennifer Kilmer is working with the WSHS CFO to improve fiscal reporting. Since we are using assets to compensate for the operating deficit, we will see our assets drop.

Jennifer Kilmer explained that in response to previous budget cuts, there was an aggressive 10% draw on the endowment. Jennifer plans to have that reduced to 7.5% this next year, and then to 5% in the next biennium.

Capital projects currently include the repair of the plaza membrane, which while anticipated to cost \$500,000, is now at an estimated cost of \$1,300,000. Jennifer has hired a consultant to evaluate the soundness of the bid, the scope of the project, and possible alternatives. We are resubmitting the Research Center expansion request to OFM, as it continues to be an issue needing an urgent solution. Jeannie Darnielle cautioned on building a warehouse in a residential neighborhood, and offered to be involved in the assessment and development of this project. Jennifer Kilmer

recommended a complete analysis of feasibility of selling the property and relocating vs expanding the current facility.

c. Development Report

Chairman Kopp stressed the importance of peer-to-peer cultivation events, including some held in Central and Eastern Washington to show the relevancy of our programs and exhibits to all areas of the state. This includes the behind-the-scenes tours of the Research Center. A request was made for a calendar of these cultivation events to be distributed to board members.

Jennifer Kilmer announced the receipt of the \$75,000 Boeing Grant, which will go to fund the new positions/duties in the Development and Outreach efforts. Also recently received are the \$170,000 Murdoch Grant, and the \$60,000 Cheney Grant. The one remaining grant outstanding is for \$105,000 from the Paul Allen Foundation.

IV. Operations/Performance/Trend Assessments

Bob Carriker reported on the current trend toward improving our major exhibits. He explained that the Exhibits Committee issued a report on March 7, 2013 stating that WSHS needed to make an effort to become a "Destination Museum." Over the summer, committee members visited other museums and compiled a report. The goals after this assessment are to 1. Support the development of major exhibits capable of attracting major funding, 2. Promote the strategic upgrade of the Great Hall of Washington History. Other areas to consider are the Land Bridge Theory and the Manhattan Project at Hanford.

In regards to the Great Hall upgrade, Bob Carriker explained that the process is currently underway. We have identified outdated presentations, including the problem that the exhibit stops with the year 1948. The primary area of the exhibit for immediate redesign is the Natural Settings section, which Jennifer Kilmer explained is under-utilized and is in a location key to capturing our audience. The new design will ideally use advances in knowledge not represented and will incorporate items we already have, such as the Clovis Points. This area is identified as a good place to invest public funds for an update so it can be used as a showcase on which to leverage future private funding for additional improvements to the gallery. An attempt will be made to connect the geology of our state to the people. The gallery, in general, will be updated to include the global perspective and connect what's happening in Washington to the rest of the world. This might include a re-do of the area now used for the Petroglyph Theater.

Jennifer Kilmer provided a look at the WSHS fiscal dashboard, noting specifically that we are only one quarter of the way into our fiscal year, but we are already two-thirds of the way to our grants goal for that year. Joint ticket sales, in the form of the Tacoma Museum Pass, are up, income is up, and admission is up (i.e.-45% over this time last year during the opening of the COOPER exhibit.) Jennifer also reported on the status of the new Museum Store, which

has been open for two months, saying that it is off to a good start, but is not yet performing to our goal.

V. Marketing Report

Marketing & Communications Director Kim Ketcham delivered a presentation outlining the philosophy, activities, and goals of the marketing efforts of the WSHS, using the promotions for the COOPER exhibit as a case study for an example of success on behalf of the museum.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45am.