

## **Minutes of the SCHSFLA Board of Trustees Meeting on February 20, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Stephen Spero, Brian Lione, Jim O'Pecko, Eileen Baessler, Craig Benson, Kathy Matis, William Squier, Angie Zick, Rob Vermette, Peg Miller, Lorraine Chidester, Cathy Harter, Fred Cicilione

**Zoom:** Joann Reimel, Kathy Matis.

**Absent** (excused): Vicky Calby, Dawn Augenti

**Staff Present:** Kris Ely (Administrator/Librarian), Rita Cooley

**Call to Order:** Steve Spero called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM and welcomed guests to the meeting. The guests included Stephanie Sojka-Reisch, one of our Susquehanna County Auditors. This meeting was held at the Historical Society building on Monument St. in Montrose, PA.

Request by Steve Spero for motion for approval of January's Minutes: 1. Brian Lione  
2. Craig Benson

All in favor- all

Any Opposed- no

Motion by Steve Spero for approval of Written Reports: 1. Jim O'Pecko  
2. Cathy Harter

All in favor- all

Any Opposed- no

**Discussion of 2024 Committees:** Sign-up sheet was passed around to Board members. Brian Lione gave an explanation of the By-Laws and Policy Committee stating next meeting is March 6, 2024 at 8:30 AM at main library. He is looking for members and encouraged all those interested to attend this meeting. Many of the current policies were last reviewed when the main library was moved out of the Historical Society Building to the present location. Rob Vermette noted that the Fundraising committee is a very important one and that is open to everyone, not just Board members. Steve Spero added that we will need to raise a lot of money this year and also stressed the importance of this committee.

Property: Kris Ely encouraged all members with a knowledge of the property and grounds of the main library and historical society buildings to join the property committee. She informed us that George Conner (although no longer a board member) has volunteered to remain available for help with property issues.

Strategic planning- Rob Vermette (recently reelected as a board member) will be working on updating and forming a new 5 Year plan. Rob worked on the last plan 5 years ago and President Steve Spero noted that it has been a good plan and that the Association has followed it well. A lot has been accomplished in the past 5 years.

It was decided that a separate new committee will not be established to handle the Blueberry Festival. The festival will be handled by the Fund-raising committee, staff, and volunteers as it has been in past years.

### **Bonnie Yuscavage- Curator of the Historical Society**

Bonnie thanked all volunteers and the Friends of the library for all their time helping the Historical Society. She explained that in addition to herself there are 2 paid staff members. Steve Spero noted that ours is the only library in the state that operates an independent museum. He expressed pride in this fact.

Bonnie stated that the request for a grant called "America 250" for windows rehabilitation was sent in by the deadline date. Brian Lione and Bonnie are also working on obtaining a PHMC Grant which is a matching grant.

Brian Lione is working on getting bids for window work and painting, etc. Various contractors have been coming into the Historical Society building asking questions regarding proposed projects such as caulking, etc.

On Feb. 27 there will be a contractor stopping in to look at the exterior front steps to evaluate and give an estimate on repairing, etc.

Forest City Project: Bonnie said a few contractors have stopped in to look at the book case units in the basement. The Association would like to move these units (7' x 15' X 1 ½') to the Forest City library to be used for their newly expanded library space. These units would require being disassembled, moved, and then reassembled at the Forest City branch. Bonnie would like this to be done soon. The job will require skilled wood workers and they will reach out to the staff at the SCCTC (the Vo-Tech school at the Elk Lake School District). They may have the expertise to help in this move.

Rob Vermette asked about the Docent program. Bonnie stated that these persons have been very helpful doing tasks in addition to typical docent duties. Examples include vacuuming clothing at the museum, cataloguing information from the Carmalt collection.

School groups are touring the Historical society. Expected groups this Spring include 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Susquehanna School District in March and the Choconut Valley Elementary School in May. The Historical Society assists these schools with finances for these tours by paying for buses to bring the classes to the Museum and for substitute teachers to take over the responsibilities in the classrooms in the teachers' absence. Steve explained that in years past many of the county schools sent their students to tour the Museum but it had become cost-prohibitive in recent years.

Bonnie noted that they have a very active Friends Group. They help with many events:

1. Cemetery tour
2. Military uniform exhibit planned for this summer
3. Bus trip to Penn Museum (pending)

Future activities include involvement in the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in Montrose event. Bob & Betty Smith will speak at the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend event in March regarding the topic The Women in History. This will be a discussion of Susquehanna County artist Susan Waters and her work. April's 3<sup>rd</sup> Weekend speaker will be on the topic of archaeology.

Bonnie noted that in June 2023- The Historical Society underwent a CAP Assessment. This was for the purpose of learning about the preservation of our collection and the building itself. The assessment personnel presented a report which includes many ideas/suggestions on how to safely maintain the Historical Society building and the collection housed there. The Association paid for these national level experts to do this assessment. This will be of great benefit in setting our future goals.

### **Finance Committee:**

Rob Vermette gave info on the association's income, expenses and net. From the January 2024 financial statements: Income \$121,465; total expenses \$103, 653; net income \$17,812; total assets (including endowments) as of 02/06/24: \$1,135,658.

#### McKeage Estate:

Rob Vermette reported that the finance committee had voted to restrict the money remaining in this account to be used by the Historical Society going forward to maintain the integrity of building and maintenance of the museum. The Board's discussion resulted in the following motion: The funds remaining in the McKeage Endowment will be restricted for use by the Historical Society for non-routine maintenance and capital improvements at the 18 Monument St. address. (Examples of non-routine maintenance or capital improvements would be projects requiring bids being sought).

1. Lorraine Childester
2. Craig Benson

All in Favor- All

Any Opposed- No

### **Internal Controls:**

There was discussion re increasing the internal controls on finances.

- Always have required signatures of two Board members on all checks.
- Since Nov/Dec 2023 we have required an approved stamp on all invoices along with the two persons signing the checks to initial all invoices indicating they have been reviewed.

Payroll is done by T&S accountants. The payroll information will now be available for review prior to the payroll date. This will also be approved and signed.

Rob Vermette will reconcile all bank accounts quarterly.

There will be further review of the David Mitchell Estate account. The Finance Committee will continue to monitor this account.

All three of the Endowment Funds are handled by an outside investment firm. The Finance Committee will follow up with the investment firm Janney Montgomery Scott regarding fixed vs. equity accounts. The McKeage Estate is currently invested 100% in fixed securities and CD's. Our other two accounts (the Post and Lott accounts) are in equity based investments.

Rob discussed the updating of financial reports. The use of Quick Books has made our new reports more clear and easily read. We are working on ways to increase the controls of what goes on in the Association. The reporting changes will now show income and loss records and a balance sheet on a monthly basis. There will be statements by branch as well as year-to-date comparisons.

Kris Ely spoke about the State Aid check. (\$ 281,514.10). This money was deposited by the State in the old operating account at First National Bank, Montrose, PA. Although the First National Bank account is still used for deposit of Blueberry Festival funds, our current operating account is with Peoples Security Bank and Trust Company in Montrose, PA.

Kris has filled out all of the paperwork with the state to have the deposits switched to the People's Security account. This will need Board approval.

T&S suggested/ asked to have it moved as one transaction, in one lump sum instead of many small ones.

Steve Spero requested a motion to approve the State Aid being moved to Peoples Security Bank-operating account. 1. Rob Vermette

2. Jim O'Pecko

All in Favor- all

Any Opposed- None

### **Discussion of Policies: Brian Lione**

The Policy and By-Laws Committee meets once a month. Updates most recently reviewed include the Patron code of Conduct. A few of the proposed changes involve the dress code policy, having assigned smoking areas on the properties that are owned by the Association, and wording of the policy on library staff not being responsible for children left unattended in the library.

Once policy changes have been reviewed by this committee they will be posted on our website for public review. The next step is a Board vote. Once policy changes have been approved, the dates of implementation will be documented. The policies will then be placed in the Board Manual.

Upcoming policies to be discussed at the March meeting will be the By-Laws (which were last reviewed in 2011) and the Articles of Incorporation (last reviewed in 1985). In addition, the Personnel Policy will be reviewed.

The By-Laws and Policy Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at the Main Library at 8:30 am.

Steve Spero requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:01 pm

1. Jim O'Pecko
2. Brian Lione

All in favor- all

Any Opposed- none

Respectfully submitted,  
Joann Reimel

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joann Reimel".

Recording Secretary