

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING**

**March 12, 2018, 10:30 a.m.
Illinois State Museum
502 S. Spring St. Springfield, IL**

Minutes

Attending: Dr. Lorin Nevling, Chair; Board members Mrs. Donna Sack, Ms. Beth Shadur, Dr. David Sokol, Mr. Roger Taylor, and Mrs. Rosemary Winters; Illinois State Museum Society Board member Mr. Mark Pence; Museum staff members Mr. Robert Sill, Ms. Karen Everingham, Dr. Michael Wiant and John Lustig; Dept. of Natural Resources staff member Mr. Chris Young; Main Street Program Guest Tina Keller.

1. Call to Order - Dr. Lorin Nevling

Dr. Lorin Nevling called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

2. Roll Call – Ms. Karen Everingham

Ms. Karen Everingham called the roll and a quorum was present.

3. Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2017, Board Meeting - Dr. Lorin Nevling

Dr. Nevling asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2018, Board meeting. Mrs. Rosemary Winter so moved, Ms. Beth Shadur seconded, and the motion carried.

4. DNR Report

Mr. Chris Young reported he continues to work with Interim Director Mr. Robert Sill on administrative issues. He added that the lease for the Lockport Gallery has been sent to the State procurement office for approval and sign off from them. Dr. Nevling noted

5. Director's Report

a. Position Hires and Postings

Interim Director Sill reported several new hires have been made among them a Caleb Kotewa in Visitor Services at ISM-Dickson Mounds, an Anthropology Curator Brooke Morgan, and a Curator of education Lorna Shuman. He said all have impeccable experience. He noted the Director position for ISM-Dickson Mounds has been posted and interviews will be done in March. The next position in the cue is the Museum Technician III Registrar in Decorative Arts & History. This position will be under the Museum, but will have registrar responsibilities for the collections of the State Historic Sites. Further hires on the horizon are a Museum Technician for Marketing, Museum Technician to handle the archaeological sites file, Curator of Geology, and a Curator of Anthropology and Building & Grounds Laborer both at ISM-Dickson Mounds. Mrs. Sack commented that she felt the hybrid position with the State Historic Sites was a good move, but suggested some conversation take place about what that means for our strategic planning process. Interim Director Sill noted that he would chair the hiring committee accompanied by other staff in

the Art & History Department. Interim Director Sill reported that the recommended promotions would require opening the positions and those internal staff who have taken on these rolls in the interim would have to go through the competitive hiring process. Dr. Nevling noted that the Museum needs to take the word “promotion” out of its vocabulary because it isn’t possible under the Union contract. Dr. David Sokol asked how these positions fit into the proposed Museum organization chart. Mr. Sill noted that the plan has been to keep the top-level, non-bargaining positions open so that the new Director could play an active role in selecting the hires and shaping her/his team. Dr. Michael Wiant noted that upon examining the current make up and head count allotted to the Museum made it more similar to how it was historically, rather than prior to the closure. He therefore suggested that consideration should be given to restoring the prior structure with a Director and Assistant Director. Dr. Wiant concurred with Interim Director Sill’s comments on filling the higher level positions and opening the competitive hiring process. Mr. Young noted the Museum could leverage additional staff by partnering with DNR and other state entities for positions such as a State Ornithologist. Dr. Wiant said that in terms of our accreditation and the looming deadline of February 7, 2019, AAM needs to see a new organization chart that reflects our strategic plan for the future. He said the Board is obligated to look at the chart and determine how the Museum should be organized. Mrs. Donna Sack noted that the Board seems to be discussing these various issues here and there, but is lacking a concentrated approach. She added that at the last Board meeting there was general agreement with regard to the need for an outside facilitator for strategic planning. She also said the Museum needs to have more public facing positions and that needs to be integrated into the strategic plan.

b. Building Issues at ISM and ISM-Dickson Mounds

Interim Director Sill shared the current building issues at the Museum and ISM-Dickson Mounds. He noted the latter has had numerous issues including boiler failure which compromised the temperatures within the building. He said the extreme temperatures are not good for the collections and as result, ISM-Dickson Mounds was closed for one day to facilitate their repair. He added that he and others attended meetings with regard to the conditions and decay at ISM-Dickson Mounds with the Central Management System (CMS). The Museum pays about 70% of its contractual budget to CMS to take care of the building. In short, he said CMS is simply not fulfilling its obligations regarding these structures that have been deteriorating for years. The meetings have led to CMS accepting its failure to address the facilities issues that those funds support. He stated that ISM-Dickson Mounds needs two new boilers (one remains down), restroom facilities for the grounds (out-of-service), and the water has chlorination issues. Mr. Sill said the estimate for the repairs is about \$250,000 and that CMS wants to move the work to the Capital Development Board as a facilities project. However, this will further delay the work. Mrs. Sack noted that these are also health and safety issues.

Mr. Sill reported that there was also an issue at the Museum with the sprinkler system, but it was minor, no damage was done to the exhibits, and that the Secretary of State had taken care of the problem within a day. He added that the Secretary of State is incredibly responsive and helpful in taking care of the facility.

C. Bicentennial Exhibition

Interim Director Sill noted the exhibition gallery prep was underway and that the previous exhibitions have been removed. He noted staff are highly motivated and working as a team. He said he couldn't be more proud of what the staff has been able to accomplish and expects the exhibition to be exceptional because of it. He added that a gallery in New York City contacted the Museum to borrow the *Gertrude Abercrombie, Self Portrait as a Landscape* exhibition which will be presented along with several loaned works. There will also be a new publication created of her work. He said Abercrombie works had also been loaned to the Arts Club. He finished by noting that the Abercrombie exhibition had visitors from across the country.

d. Partnering Efforts

Interim Director Sill reported that the Museum has been working with numerous entities to present Bicentennial programming as well as new programming. He said the Bicentennial Minutes, a partnership with the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and Mid-West Family Broadcasting and researched and written by Mid-West's Program Director Jim Leach, ALPLM's Communications Director Chris Wills and Interim Director of Visitor Services Karen Everingham, are being syndicated state-wide. He said Curator Doug Stapleton was working with three museums in Oak Park, Evanston, and Elmhurst as well as the Ukrainian Institute to negotiate shared exhibitions and programming for the Chicago area.

Mr. Sill said he and Ms. Everingham had met with the Springfield Museum and Site Heads (SMASH) group for the second time. This meeting was hosted by the Museum at the Research and Collections Center to discuss opportunities for collective marketing, advertising and programming. He said the group included administrators from beyond Springfield including Chatham, Rochester, and Lincoln.

Mr. Sill reported that Art and History Curator Erika Holst had initiated partnerships with the Presidential Museum & Library and the Springfield Art Association to produce "Tales from the Vault" with the former, and a play, "Anybody's Story" with the latter. The Tales program explores objects and tells the stories of objects within museum collections and the play is a similar story that will be based on objects in the Museum's *Bicentennial & Beyond* exhibition.

Mr. Sill finished by noting the partnership with the Illinois Association of Museums on the *Story of Illinois: Celebrating the Bicentennial through Museum Objects* has been well received and continues to expand with the additions of museums from across the state.

e. Attendance and Revenue

Interim Director Sill reported for the year so far is at about 67,000 and is trending up. School groups have been picking up at all Museum sites. He said the Museum's budget was \$3.68M overall with about \$2.1M for staff salary and fringes. He added the contractual budget is \$1.27M of which about 76% or \$965,504 goes to CMS. Dr. Nevling asked how it compared with last year. Mr. Sill replied it is level with last year's funds and noted that the Museum is under the \$2.1M allotment for staff and should be able to make numerous hires

well within budget. He added that revenue from admission sales in also trending up with \$21,160 for the first six months of 2018. However, when you take out the expenses of the software system you end up with only \$12,762 in profit. He also said that there are three full-time staff salaries and fringes, two of which had to be added to begin taking admissions, which clearly demonstrate the admission fee is not at all cost effective. Dr. Sokol asked how much the Museum was losing. Interim Director of Visitor Services Everingham noted simply, a lot. The exact amount would have to be determined by figuring in the individual salaries as well.

f. Deaccession Requests

Mr. Sill reported that there were two requests to deaccession listed in the Board packet. The first was a series of botanical specimens that were curated by the Museum as part of a NAGPRA consultation. He noted that the samples should have gone back to the University of Missouri Museum. The second was archaeological material from North and South Dakota known as the Alfred Bowers Collection. Mrs. Sack moved to deaccession the materials to the University of Missouri, Dr. Sokol seconded, and the motion carried. Dr. Nevling asked for a motion to deaccession the Alfred Bowers Collection. Mr. Roger Taylor so moved, Mrs. Winters seconded, and the motion was approved.

g. Dr. Michael Connor—Curator Emeritus Request

Interim Director Sill requested that the Board approve granting Dr. Michael Connor Curator Emeritus status. Mr. Taylor moved that Emeritus status be granted to Dr. Connor, Dr. Sokol seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

The Board adjourned for lunch at 12:38 p.m. for lunch.

The Board reconvened at 1:49 p.m.

6. Personnel Committee

a. Ratification of New Hires

Mr. Taylor asked that the Board ratify the three new hires detailed in Interim Director Sill's report. Dr. Sokol so moved and the motion carried.

b. Director Contract

Mr. Taylor noted that at the last meeting the Board decided to consider candidates for Director on a contractual basis and that Mrs. Sack had offered to approach a few possibilities. Mrs. Sack said she had approached several museum professional about taking on the Museum's directorship. She noted that the responses were very similar—too many issues with the State government and budget. She noted there were several suggestions made and she will follow up with those in the coming month.

7. Metropolitan Outreach Working Group

Dr. Sokol reported that Curator Doug Stapleton was working with several entities to find new partners. He said he and Ms. Shadur met at the James R. Thompson Center (JRTC) with the State Street Gallery. They discussed the artisans program and the possibility of presenting artisan works. He noted that the Artisans Program was largely an endeavor of

the Museum Society and that various cases and shelves remained at the JRTC. The State Street Gallery expressed interest in borrowing some of those items to display artisan work in their gallery. Dr. Sokol referred them to the Museum Society. Ms. Shadur noted that the Lockport model, with its partnerships, should be the model for the Chicago presence. She emphasized the Board should continue to search out a permanent location in the Chicago area. She said the area was far too important for the Museum to give up on a permanent presence. Mrs. Winters suggested that a developer might offer space as an incentive to bring in other businesses and entities and that she concurred with Ms. Shadur on the importance of this. Mr. Sill said without a Chicago presence we cut off a conduit for building the Museum's collections. He said the Museum has provided opportunities for many new artists over the years and those artists often give the Museum some of their work as a thank you. He added the connections with patrons also leads to donations to the collection and those largely come from the Chicago area. He noted that the Museum serves a niche in the area by displaying works by downstate artists that otherwise wouldn't be shown in Chicago and that Museum exhibitions are consistently rated in the top ten in the area. Mrs. Sack asked what the attendance was and said that she understood the main driver there was the Artisans Shop and exhibitions. Ms. Shadur, a member of the former Artisans Program, disagreed and said that the Chicago Gallery enjoyed an outstanding reputation and was frequented by the area's artistic community including artists, collectors, and other patrons. Dr. Sokol also concurred. Mrs. Winters and Mrs. Sack noted that the Museum could do some traveling or pop-up types of displays. Mrs. Sack said that is a big movement in the field and expects it will grow.

8. ISMS Report

Mr. Mark Pence reported the Society and Museum had lost a long-time supporter R. Lou Barker. Mrs. Barker has been involved with the Museum for more than 50 years. She attended the Bicentennial exhibition just before she passed. He said she would be deeply missed.

Mr. Pence reported that the Society is considering hiring a Development Director to assist with fundraising and had added some funds to its budget for that purpose. He said the Society's audit was complete and there were no significant findings. The Society Board was pleased with the financial standing of the Society.

Mr. Pence said the opening of the Bicentennial exhibition was a big hit and drew more than 385 people. He added that the Society Board received a donation from LRS Company in the amount of \$1000 to support the event.

He said that the Society was notified that a bequest was coming from the estate of Dr. George Rabb. He said the estimate was a donation around \$500,000.

Finally, he noted that the Society and Museum staff are working on a book on the Museum's collections. The *Treasures of the Illinois State Historical Library* is serving as a model. The estimated publication cost is around \$6,000 with SIU Press.

Old Business

Dr. Nevling asked for old business. Mr. Taylor asked about needed revisions to the policy manual in the document given to the AAM that were under consideration of the Board, but he said he does not recall this. Dr. Wiant said the topic has been discussed briefly in previous meetings and work is being done to address the issues.

10. New Business

None

11. Adjournment

Dr. Nevling asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Sokol so moved, Mr. Taylor seconded and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Approved:

Dr. Lorin Nevling, Chair

Date

Dr. Brian Anderson, Secretary

Date