

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING
November 6, 2023, 10:30 a.m.**

**Department of Natural Resources
1 Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL**

Attending: Officers: Chair Donna Sack, Vice Chair Lisa Lee, and Secretary Sarah Doherty; **Board Members** Leverne Backstrom, John Barker, Tamira Brennan, Andrea Carlson (via Webex), Chris Pappan (via Webex), Beth Shadur, and nikhil trivedi; **Illinois State Museum Society** Board Chair Bryan Finn and Staff Member Jamila Wicks; **Illinois State Museum Staff** Jenn Edginton, Meghan Lindstrom, Heather Miller, and Brooke Morgan; **Department of Natural Resources** Director Natalie Phelps-Finnie (via Webex) and Chief of Staff John Teefey.

I. Welcome

Chair Donna Sack welcomed attendees and the meeting was called to order at 10:37 am.

II. Roll Call

Meghan Lindstrom called the roll and a quorum was present.

Leverne Backstrom moved to allow Chris Pappan to attend the meeting via Webex. Beth Shadur seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of the Minutes of August 7, 2023

Secretary Sarah Doherty presented the Minutes for approval. Tamira Brennan moved to approve the Minutes, Leverne seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. New Business

Chair's Report

Donna welcomed attendees and reminded the Board to complete the reapplication process by November 15th. She also reminded them to complete the Ethics and Sexual Harassment and Discrimination trainings.

V. Director's Report

Interim Director Jenn Edginton shared the Director's Report. She introduced John Teefey, the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Chief of Staff.

Staffing

Jenn reported that the current headcount for the Illinois State Museum (ISM) system was 36, near the record low of 28 employees retained during the 2015

shutdown. The new vacancies were due to three retirements, one death, and one employee accepting a different position at DNR. The only new hire was Adam Reich, the Site Technician at Dickson Mounds Museum (DMM), and Andy Hanson had accepted the Museum Tech II Exhibit Design position. Jenn reported that while staffing is still an issue the current ISM staff are managing the museums and continue to provide excellent programming for visitors.

Facilities

Jenn provided updates on the various facility projects. The roofing project at the Research and Collections Center (RCC) is ongoing, which necessitated the change to the Board's meeting location. She thanked the Director's office for allowing the meeting to be held at the DNR headquarters. Jenn is also working to update the ISM downtown's loading dock. The existing equipment has begun to decay and the current design does not allow anyone to access the dock during normal operating hours when the adjacent state employee parking lot is full. Jenn has been working with DNR to design a new loading dock that fits the Museum's needs. nikhil asked if the new loading dock would be accessible. Jenn confirmed the new design contained a ramp instead of stairs and she is working with the designers to ensure it is ADA compliant. She anticipates the new loading dock will be finished in spring or summer of 2024.

The planned plumbing project at the ISM is scheduled to start somewhere between January and April. The first step will be asbestos abatement. Once that is complete the water will be turned off for all floors of the building as all fixtures and pipes will be replaced.

Discussions are ongoing on how to properly update Dickson Mounds Museum, which is a Capital Development Board Project. The existing structure requires extensive updates and the first step is a \$5 million roofing project. Due to the estimated cost of repairs alternate solutions are being reviewed. One potential alternative is to build an entirely new museum and take down the existing structure. The ISM is also working with Tribal partners to determine the future of this site.

Exhibit changes

Jenn provided an update on current and future exhibits. The ISM was originally planned to be closed in September due to the plumbing project and staff removed the exhibits in the art galleries. Once the project was delayed staff did not have new exhibits to replace them. Smaller exhibits have since been designed to fill the space. The ISM collaborated with the Hispanic Women of Springfield and the Diversity Center at the University of Illinois

Springfield to create the second annual Ofrendas display. Curator of Art Doug Stapleton is creating small art galleries and Curator of History Erika Holst is developing a small exhibit titled *Kidz* featuring toys, children's fashion, and art. The Terra Grant exhibit has been delayed until the completion of the plumbing project. It will be on display at the ISM and then later move to the Lockport Gallery.

Growing Up Gen X was moved to the Lockport Gallery and officially opens on November 17th. It will be on display until June 2024.

The winning art pieces from the *NOIR* exhibit were moved to the Governor's Mansion for exhibit. The ISM was asked to host another art exhibit at the mansion over the winter.

Work is ongoing for the 1908 exhibit which will be displayed in the future Springfield Transportation HUB. All Community Conversations have been completed with the help of outside consultants Richard Josey and Dina Bailey. The ISM is waiting for a report from the consultants before meeting with the county to discuss next steps.

Accreditation

Jenn reported that ISM staff were busy updating the institution's core documents including the Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, Disaster Plans, and Collections Management Plan in preparation for reaccreditation. Jenn stressed that the updated Collections Management Plan will center the needs and knowledge of Native partners. She said that work is also ongoing to update the Education and Interpretation Plan although they are optional in the accreditation process.

Jenn reported that work on the strategic plan had started last year but was currently on hold. There was an issue with the strategic planning consultant's contract due to it being between the consultant and the Illinois State Museum Society (ISMS). This would need to be resolved between the ISMS, the ISM, and DNR. Meanwhile, the ISM will make a smaller temporary strategic plan to bridge the gap until a permanent director is chosen. Jenn received confirmation from the American Alliance of Museums that this would not negatively impact the ISM since the museum field has been adapting more short-term plans in wake of COVID.

Sarah asked if the contract with the outside consultant was voided. Jenn said that had not been resolved and would be discussed at a later meeting with

the Society. Sarah asked if the contract could be funded by the state instead of the Society. Jenn said that had not been accounted for in this year's budget.

Lisa asked how the Board's advisory role would be included in the accreditation process particularly in updating the core documents. Jenn said the Policy Manual had been updated but was being reviewed by Legal and later DNR leadership. After that it would be brought to the Board for review and advice.

Donna asked when the ISM would be evaluated for reaccreditation. Jenn confirmed it was March 2024 but she had been told the Museum's circumstances qualified them for an extension. Donna expressed concern that the March 2024 deadline meant there was only one remaining meeting for the Board to review all the documents. Lisa recommended a process be established to allow the Board to provide advice earlier. She further recommended a committee be established to review documents and provide advice before they are presented to the Board for approval.

End of Year Wrap-Up

Jenn shared that the ISM was finally seeing attendance numbers akin to the pre-Covid years. She credited *Growing Up Gen X* and its extensive media coverage with contributing to the restored attendance. She also credited the rebuilding of education staff and programming which were drawing in higher numbers of attendees, with record numbers in attendance in May's "Day of the Kid" and November's "Day of the Dead" events. She commended the work of Brooke Morgan, Heather Miller, Logan Pappenfort, and Christa Christensen as they have planned a robust November event list to tell Native stories with authenticity.

Sarah moved to allow Andrea Carlson to join the meeting virtually. Beth seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Andrea joined the meeting at 11:05 am.

Leverne moved to allow Director Natalie Phelps-Finnie to join the meeting virtually. Tamira seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Director Finnie joined the meeting at 11:08 am and the DNR vote passed from John Teefy to Director Finnie.

Jenn opened the floor for the Board to share their ideas for activities and goals for 2024.

Donna expressed hope that the planned Field Office would soon open at the ISM, especially with next April's "History Day" quickly approaching.

Tamira recommended that the Museum focus on establishing itself in Southern Illinois following the official loss of the Rend Lake location.

Lisa recommended that the Museum establish a process for Illinoisans to contribute ideas. Jenn said that much in the Gen X exhibit had been crowdsourced so some Museum staff have experience with that.

Beth recommended the Museum find new ways to reach out to people in the Chicago area. The Lockport Gallery is seen as suburban and many in Chicago do not know of the Illinois State Museum System. Lisa recommended that the Museum partner with Chicago institutions like the Chicago History Museum or art museums.

Donna recommended the Museum develop relationships with smaller organizations like historical societies, who could exhibit loaned pieces from the Museum's collections that would otherwise remain in storage.

nikhil recommended that measurable goals be established for repatriation to track the institution's work in an easily understandable way.

Lisa hoped that the relationship between the Board, State, and Society would be properly established especially as they move forward with the new director search.

Andrea wanted more Native involvement at the ISM beyond programming. She expressed concern that the Board would soon only have one Native voice after she steps down and echoed nikhil's recommendation for setting tangible goals for repatriation work.

Jenn thanked the Board for their suggestions and invited them to email her any further ideas so they may be discussed at the February Board meeting.

Repatriation and Deaccession Requests

Brooke presented a repatriation request for the Osage Nation of human remains of 19 individuals from various locations in Missouri along with artifacts that were part of the original accession process. The artifacts were unlikely to be funerary in nature, therefore not subject to NAGPRA, but had been with those ancestors at least as long as they had been at the ISM so the Osage

Nation had requested them as well. Notice had been published in the Federal Register and there were no competing claims. Donna called for a motion. Leverne moved to approve the repatriation request, nikhil seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Brooke presented a second repatriation request for the Osage Nation of human remains of 2 individuals and 17 associated funerary objects. She explained that this request was an illustrative example of some the difficulties of repatriation work. The ISM did not have legal control of the individuals and objects because they came to the Museum for storage from United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects. USACE published these in a Notice of Inventory in 2015. After publication, the USACE determined the materials collected from the site were not under their jurisdiction as they were not collected from USACE property but the ISM could not republish them as part of the Museum's inventory. After conversations with the National NAGPRA Program and USACE, ISM was given the green light to facilitate repatriation to Osage Nation. A Notice by ISM was not required since one had already been published by USACE.

Andrea asked if it was common for USACE to publish something for repatriation and then transfer them to a museum for storage. Brooke clarified that the collections were held at the RCC before USACE published notice of inventory. The collection was held at the RCC since 2007 and left behind when USACE returned in 2016 to take other collections for repatriation. This collection was never under the ISM's legal control so the ISM could not legally repatriate them.

Andrea asked if this issue was brought to the Board's attention in 2007. Brooke said she was unsure of what was shared with the Board when the collection was brought to the RCC. She only has copies of correspondence confirming USACE delivered them to the facility.

Tamira moved to approve the repatriation request, Leverne seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

John Barker joined the meeting at 11:35 am.

Brooke presented a deaccession request for 29 boxes of fauna from Arkansas. They were collected in the late 1950s for analysis by zooarchaeology under the auspices of the Gilcrease Institute. They were later transferred to the ISM for analysis and were retroactively given accession numbers. Analysis of the

collection found the human remains of 10 individuals and 1 associated funerary object which were culturally affiliated with the Quapaw Nation. They were repatriated in October 2023 following Board approval at the August meeting. In consulting with the Quapaw Nation, they expressed support for a transfer of the remaining fauna collection to the Arkansas Archaeological Survey (AAS), with whom the Nation works closely, for curation. Since the material is from an archaeological site in Arkansas, the AAS would be a more appropriate repository. A transfer would also give Quapaw Nation the opportunity to reanalyze the fauna and train Quapaw students in zooarchaeology. The AAS has agreed to accept a transfer of this material.

Beth moved to approve the deaccession request. Lisa seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

nikhil thanked the Board and team for continuing repatriation work. He recommended changing the 'faunal' language in the original accession description and to prioritize human-first language.

VI. DNR Report

Director Finnie provided the DNR report. Much work had been done to improve internal processes at the Department. Director Finnie reported that she is working with the agency and division heads to figure out the budget needed for next year. She also said the Department was focused on increasing the current headcount and the hiring process had changed. In the past, the most new employees added per month was 5. Since August the Department had been able to bring on at least 15 new employees per month, with September adding a record 32. The Department's current headcount is 1198 and Director Finnie is requesting funding for 1490 employees in the next budget.

Director Finnie reported that the DNR's new friends group is close to being launched.

Director Finnie reported that she is working closely with Jenn and the ISM's Leadership Team. They are focusing on diversity, continuing forward with moving State Historic Sites under the ISM, and finding other ways to help the ISM branch out into the state. Sarah asked if there would be a Director hired to manage all State Historic Sites. Director Finnie confirmed that one would be hired but there were still outstanding union issues and an organizational chart to finalize. She hoped the issues would be resolved and the Director position

filled in time to go live with the merger on July 1st.

Andrea asked if Director Finnie was involved in any NAGPRA conversations ongoing with Tribal nations. Director Finnie confirmed that repatriation is a top priority for her office and the Governor's Office. She had met with Heather to discuss her Tribal Relations Plan. In the previous week she met with Peoria Nation Chief Harper at Dickson Mounds Museum. She has also met with the Prairie Band Potawatomi for different projects.

VII. Society Report

Bryan Finn provided the Society report. He commended Jamila for completing the FY24 budget. The Finance Committee had approved it, followed by approval by the Society Board.

Bryan reported that the Society's Annual Meeting would be held at the Research and Collection Center in Springfield. All members have been invited to attend for a tour of the facility and an introduction to the four new Board members. The new members are all from the Springfield area and the Society hopes to recruit new Board members from a wider range in Illinois. Bryan asked the Board to send along any recommendations for new potential Board members. nikhil asked what skill sets the Society Board needed. Bryan reported that they would like more members with experience in finances and law. Donna asked if the Society Board could meet over Zoom or only in person. Bryan confirmed the Society could meet by Zoom and do not have to be physically present for meetings. Leverne asked how many seats were vacant. Bryan said there were 14 seats filled out of 15 but some Board members had indicated they would step down, potentially opening more vacancies.

The Society's Policy Committee is discussing the MOU that directs how the Society works with the State. It has been recommended that the Society engage legal counsel for this process. John Barker asked if the Society had engaged a local attorney. Bryan said the Society was researching local attorneys with non-profit experience.

Bryan reported that the Society continues its fiduciary duties managing grants and donations. These will also be evaluated to ensure the work legally matches the outlines in the MOU.

The Board took at break at 12:01 pm.
The Board reconvened at 12:14 pm.

VIII. Old Business

Donna invited Director Finnie to update the Board about the Director search. Director Finnie said there was no forward movement in the Director search. The Board had previously requested to hire a search firm but the Governor's Office requires more information before they will consider approving the plan due to the cost. Director Finnie warned the Board they would need to provide solid justifications and expected costs. Donna confirmed she would send along the estimates she had received from search firms. She recommended there be a meeting to solely discuss the process of finding a new Museum Director and define the process.

Director Finnie recommended that, instead of hiring a search firm, DNR would post the Museum Director position while also sharing it on LinkedIn, Indeed, and DNR's social media accounts. Donna recommended it also be posted at the various historical and museum associations and alliances.

Director Finnie said she will update the current job description for the Museum Director and have it passed to the Board for review.

Sarah asked if the salary could be made equitable to the Director position at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Director Finnie said that could only be done with approval from the Governor's Office due to funding.

John Teefey recommended that the Board make a one-page brief on the Director position and include a list of locations they want it posted.

John Teefey asked if the Board had broader authority in the past over the Museum Director position as it was once a governing board. Donna clarified that the actual wording was that the Board 'shall make a recommendation' on the selection of the Museum Director to the Director of DNR. Director Finnie further explained that the recommendation is not binding and she is not legally required to follow it but would seriously consider any recommendation in good faith.

John Teefey recommended that the Board nominate multiple candidates instead of one, as was previously practiced. Lisa recommended the Board follow the University standard and propose three potential candidates for the position. Donna said that the last search ended with two top candidates. Both met the staff and toured the Museum facilities. DNR staff and ISM staff were

present at the interviews and everyone had opportunities to ask questions before the Board's recommendation was finalized. She asked if this was an amenable process.

Donna said she would be in touch with each Board member to determine their expectations for a new Museum Director.

Director Finnie recommended any proposed candidates have experience in state government.

Board meeting lunches

Donna said that the Board would need a plan on how to pay for lunches if the normal Board meeting time remained at 10:30 am. In the past, a Board member would foot the bill for all in attendance. She had discussed alternate options with Jenn and it was determined that the Museum would not be able to fund Board lunches. The Board discussed different options and agreed to discuss further funding possibilities at a future meeting.

IX. Public Comment

None present.

X. Adjournment

Donna asked for a motion to adjourn. Lisa moved to adjourn, Leverage seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:42 p.m.