

Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors via Zoom

March 3, 2021

Board members present: William Browne Jr., board chair; Andrew Dahlem, vice chair; Andrew Briggs, treasurer; Liz Witte, secretary; Steve Anderson; Melissa Caito; Fred Cate; Nancy Jordan; Thao Nguyen; Kathy Roudebush; Alice Schloss; Judy Singleton; Mary Walker; John Wechsler; and Robin Winston.

Board members absent: Gary Anderson and Linda Conti.

Staff present: Cathy Ferree, president and CEO; Susannah Koerber, chief curator and research officer; Amy Ahlersmeyer, chief marketing officer; Brian Mancuso, chief officer of engagement; Nora Woodman, chief development officer; David Daum, vice president of finance and IT; Katherine Gould, curator of cultural history, Charlie Shock, concierge and volunteer manager; and Renee Bruck, manager of communication.

State-appointed representatives: Indiana District 82 Rep. Dave Abbott

Partners: Dan Bortner, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources; and Carolene Mays-Medley, executive director of the White River State Park Development Commission.

Guests: Emily Shoemaker, legislative intern to Reps. Baird, Eberhart and May; and William Smeltzer, legislative assistant to Reps. Heaton, Morrison and Payne.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

Consent agenda

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mary Walker with the motion seconded by Liz Witte. The motion was unanimously approved. The consent agenda included the December 2, 2020 board minutes, the Abuse Prevention Policy and the revised Fiscal Policy.

Investment Committee Report

Steve Anderson presented the investment committee report for Gary Anderson, who was unable to attend the meeting. Steve noted the investment committee has been very insistent about comparing the museum system's investments to a larger universe of similar size and scope. ISMHS is doing well and is in top quartile in similar peer groups since inception.

Steve noted that even though returns over the last decade have been extraordinary, returns over the next decade may be distinctly lower – or at least lower than the museum system has become used to.

Audit and Finance Committee Report

Andrew Briggs provided a finance and budget update, noting 60% of the museum system's attendance isn't there right now. He noted contributions are still coming in at a good pace, but school attendance

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has gone to almost nothing in the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and field trip restrictions that will continue throughout this school year.

David Daum presented the revenue and expenses statement for the first seven months of FY21. The museum system had \$5.569 million in total revenues, which is short of the projected year-to-date budget by \$246,208. Expenses total \$5.289 million, which is \$967,606 under the projected year-to-date budget.

David noted educational program fees is the biggest loss right now with a loss of \$170,342. This loss is offset by fewer expenses in engagement though. Facility rentals also are down by \$93,412, but no corporate events have been hosted at the museum this year. A total of 30 events are already booked through the rest of the fiscal year though. Development is doing well and running ahead of the projected budget. Membership renewals are currently at 59%, which is in line with what other organizations are seeing. December is usually the biggest month for membership renewals, but that unfortunately didn't happen this year due to reduced visitor attendance. The museum system is currently working to recapture those lapsed memberships by emphasizing membership benefits.

Expenses like contracted services, experiences, and travel are all lower than expected, which is helping to keep expenses under budget. David also noted that staff are doing a good job of watching expenses.

The full year forecast expects total revenues to be \$9.696 million with expenses \$9.689 million, which will have a surplus of \$6,194 after the 10% reversion to the state.

A motion to approve financials was made by Steve Anderson with a second by Judy Singleton. The motion was unanimously approved.

Cathy Ferree noted the expected 15% reversion for FY21 has been reduced to 10%, yet ISMHS would have had a deficit of \$427,000 if the 15% reversion wasn't reduced. The legislature is expected to keep the 15% reversion during FY22 with no expected reductions, so leadership at ISMHS is looking at ways to make that up.

Ferree said that a real return of visitors to pre-pandemic levels isn't likely until late fall or the holiday season. She noted that ISMHS hopes to see normalcy in the second half of FY22, but that will be when the museum system starts to grow back into the FY19 numbers.

Capital Match Projects

Ferree presented restoration, infrastructure and customer service improvement projects that could be part of the Capital Match project. These projects include "non-glamour" infrastructure work – or things that would be difficult to fundraise around.

Although there have been some changes to the budget and expectation on expenses, the ISMHS is still hoping to receive the full match amount for capital match projects.

Proposed capital match projects total \$1 million and include:

- A cultural landscape report at Angel Mounds State Historic site totaling \$100,000

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- Rebuilding the gazebo which hasn't weathered well at Corydon Capitol State Historic Site totaling \$40,000
- Residing the Sowers Barn at Gene Stratton-Porter State Historic Site totaling \$200,000
- A fence and gate restoration and engineering study at Lanier Mansion State Historic Site totaling \$25,000
- Gardens restoration to increase external programming offerings at Lanier Mansion totaling \$20,000
- A lower-level barn roof repair to help preserve the false-bottom wagon at Levi and Catharine Coffin State Historic Site totaling \$20,000
- Finish restoration on a second-floor room at New Harmony State Historic Site's Community House No. 2 totaling \$20,000
- Log replacements at Vincennes State Historic Sites' Fort Knox II totaling \$50,000
- Window restoration and siding repairs at the Vincennes State Historic Sites' Capitol Building totaling \$25,000
- An engineering study of Locks 242 and 25 and aqueduct at Whitewater Canal State Historic Site totaling \$100,000
- Exterior cleaning of the Indiana State Museum for its 20th anniversary totaling \$100,000
- Education center and lunchroom upgrades at the Indiana State Museum totaling \$200,000
- Celebration Crossing train updates at the Indiana State Museum totaling \$100,000.

A motion to approve the list of projects was made by Nancy Jordan and seconded by Andrew Briggs. The motion was unanimously approved.

Collections Pieces

Katherine Gould presented two recent acquisitions of ship models of the USS Indiana (BB-1) and USS Indiana (BB-58). These handmade pieces were created by Indiana veterans incarcerated at New Castle Correctional Facility in the Military Veterans Unit (HUMV). This program has one of the lowest recidivism rates at the facility.

Through the program, participants did research about the ship, printed off schematics and created the scale models with donated or repurposed materials, like craft sticks/tongue depressors and the aluminum wire closures from donut bags.

While creating these scale models of the ships, life lessons and skills are discussed and used to work through any frustration or anger that might come from obstacles encountered while completing the projects, which took 1,500 manhours to create and build.

Katherine noted participants did not have access to power tools or sharp instruments, so the models were crafted with the use of fingernail clippers, tweezers, used sandpaper and desk clips. These tools were also part of the donation. Katherine noted the ISMHS already has models of ships in the collection, but the story behind the creation of these models is unique and we have minimal backstory for the other models already in the collection. She said these models provide the museum system new stories to tell about Indiana's veteran populations, prison populations and creative art therapy.

Development – Nora Woodman

Nora Woodman started her presentation by saying that she wanted to deliver three takeaways:

1. Fundraising will be more challenging as we look ahead.
2. Your help as board members will be vital.
3. We are making progress and seeing indicators that we can be successful.

First, she shared a mission moment during her Development report. Development recently received a donation from a member with a note that said, “in honor of our granddaughter’s favorite Indy museum.” While calling to thank the member for their generous donation, the member who is a grandfather began to describe a favorite and cherished photo of his granddaughter at the Indiana State Museum. Although the donor has been a member of the museum system for nine years, the family had never given a donation like this before. During the phone call, the donor said the Indiana State Museum is a wonderful place and an overlooked gem in Indianapolis. He shared that he and his wife haven’t been able to travel during “this very strange year,” and they thought the museum could make very good use of the money. He ended the conversation by asking that the museum “keep thinking about the kids – like my granddaughter.”

Nora noted that the museum system’s values, interests and passions align with this family’s values, interests and passions, and they were willing to give because of all of these. It will be vital for us, in approaching our fundraising for FY22, to identify more people like this couple.

Nora provided an update on year-end appeals to demonstrate that we are identifying these donors. Even though the appeals were sent three months ago, the museum system is still receiving responses from that mailing.

This past year during COVID, we have experienced and continue to experience encouraging growth overall, but especially with individual giving.

As of last week, individual giving is \$45,844 or 34% ahead of where we were this time last year. We plan on staying the course, building relationships with individuals and also with foundations, and she invited the board to help where it makes sense for each of them. Additional pressure will be put on fundraising in FY2022 because of several factors:

1. The reduction of our state allocation.
2. The non-repeatable nature of several of the funding opportunities we received this past year, such as the Restart and Resilience grant and the FSSA grant.
3. Corporate sponsors are still slow to respond and commit.
4. Attendance is not expected to be at full capacity until the second half of the fiscal year.

Moving forward, the Development team will continue to connect, invite, convert other donors and share stories, and she asked board members to do the same. She also noted the team will be diving into the database and asked board members to consider making first introductions or connecting the Development team with others or foundations that might align with us. The team also will continue to work to convert members into donor members.

In summary, fundraising will be more challenging; board help will be vital with all three funding types (individuals, corporations, foundations); but we are seeing signs that we can be successful.

Nora also said that more than half of board members have already recommitted to making donations.

President's Report

Cathy presented the dashboard, which showed paid daily attendance has returned by a little more than 50%. She said this shows that the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites is a place people are willing to try and trust to visit. She also noted locations with outside spaces have also had an increased attendance and have come up with new ways to safely interact with audiences. Site manager Mike Linderman and site staff at Angel Mounds State Historic Site created an outdoor tour that has paid dividends. Site manager Jay Dishman and staff at the Whitewater Canal State Historic Site has the opportunity to share more of the canal transportation story with visitors through an improved space at the Grist Mill. T.C. Steele State Historic Site manager Jessica Stephens and staff also are capitalizing on the gardens and outdoor space.

While attendance numbers aren't near where they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, ISMHS is still providing value to communities we serve.

Community Partnership Meetings

Amy Ahlersmeyer told board members Community Partner meetings have been scheduled in March. Under the new Community Partnership Guidelines, the museum system plans to hold quarterly meetings in the communities served by the 11 historic site locations. The first meetings in March will take place via Zoom, beginning with Limberlost, Gene Stratton-Porter, Lanier Mansion, T.C. Steele and Whitewater Canal state historic sites. These meetings will run for one hour – from 6 to 7 p.m. The meetings are purposely run by site managers with assistance of regional directors and ISMHS staff also will be there to help or support as needed.

General agenda items will include quarterly financials, COVID-19 operational adjustments, volunteer opportunities, upcoming programs and events, recent or upcoming facility maintenance and site improvements, as well as a question-and-answer time. Invitations will go to Friends groups, volunteers, community foundations, merchants' associations, convention and visitors bureaus, local history organizations, program partners and legislative offices specific to each site.

Plans are to hold these Community Partner meetings in person at locations in June.

2021-2023 Exhibit Calendars

Brian Mancuso presented the exhibit calendar schedule for 2021 and potential schedules for 2022 and 2023.

Experiences still set to open this year include "Creativity Studio: Nature," which opens March 17, the 97th annual Hoosier Salon, which is slated to open Aug. 19 and Celebration Crossing, which will take over the South Gallery with a new train experience.

“FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis” will close Aug. 1 and move to Minnetrista in Muncie for exhibition through May 2022. There are no opening dates set for FIX to open at Minnetrista just yet, but 98% of the exhibit currently on display at the Indiana State Museum will be traveling to the new location even though the space is smaller.

Plans for 2022 experiences include a Major Taylor exhibit opening in March in South Gallery, a traveling exhibit from the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh called “How People Make Things” from Jan. 22 through May 15 in NiSource Gallery, and an experience on Nocturnal Indiana which will run from Memorial Day through Halloween in NiSource Gallery. An art experience featuring pieces from the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites collection is planned from late January through July 11, and the annual Hoosier Salon and Celebration Crossing holiday experience also will return in 2022. The Clowes Gallery also is scheduled for an updated experience, so “Birth of the Earth” will be demolished with a new rock and geology entry experience installed in that space.

The 2023 calendar plans include an Indiana Music experience in South Gallery, a young child rental, an experience focusing on Frank Dudley’s works featuring the Indiana Dunes, a Lincoln experience and the 99th annual Hoosier Salon so far. Brian noted the 2023 calendar is a concept, but it’s too far in the future to be completely set in stone at this point.

Meeting adjourned, and board members entered into executive session at 1:40 p.m. The next board meeting will take place on June 2 from noon to 2 p.m.