

**Meeting Minutes of the
Board of Directors of the
Arizona Historical Society**

November 27, 2023

Mission: Connecting people through the power of Arizona's history.

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order** – By President Linda Elliott-Nelson 12:02 pm.
- 2. Roll Call** – Secretary Deborah Bateman
 - a. Present – Robert Ballard, Desirae Barquin, DeNise Bauer, Deborah Bateman, Kelly Corsette, Eric Flohr, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Thomas Foster, Bruce Gwynn, Sherry Rampy, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker
 - b. Absent – Colleen Byron, Diane Drobka, Matt Hernando, Richard Powers, Greg Scott
 - c. Staff – David Breeckner, Vince Bradley, Melba Davis, Rebekah Percival, Perri Pyle
 - d. Public – Catherine Shumard
- 3. Minutes** - Discussion and action, if any, to approve the draft Minutes of the September 29, 2023, Executive Committee meeting. Wynne Brown brought up that her name was misspelled in the transcript of these minutes.
 - a. Motion to approve minutes of September 29, 2023 as posted on the AHS website unanimously approved with the correction in the spelling of Wynne Brown's name. (Deborah Bateman, Wynne Brown)
- 4. Call to the Public** – Linda Elliott-Nelson
 - a. No response.
- 5. AHS Staff Member Presentation** – Perri Pyle introduced herself as an archivist who works with Rachel Black in the Tucson area. She has worked at AHS for 4 years as of January 2024. She shared that 90% of her job is working with the public.
- 6. Status of Board Appointments** – David Breeckner stated that there are no updates on the board appointments. There is an understanding that all members up for renewal who had sent in their request for renewal to the Department of Boards and Commissions will continue to serve on the AHS Board. Linda Whitaker asked when AHS board members will receive an updated AHS Board roster. David Breeckner said that the roster is updated; however, Gene Kunde continues to be listed. David mentioned

that the roster issued is updated and includes Eric Flohr. Deborah Bateman reiterated that the AHS Board list on the AHS website is current and up to date.

7. Finance Committee – Linda Whitaker is the chair of this committee and stated that the Executive Committee had approved the deficit of \$432,222. There is an anticipated deficit of \$484,000. Linda added that we will learn more about AHS revenue in the next quarter and shared that Vince Bradley has access to the investment account balances. Previously, only Bill Ponder had approval to see the AHS investment account balances. Vince is also working on how to track grants. Linda Whitaker asked Vince to share more updates. Vince shared that AHS is still expecting a budget deficit and that this deficit should be lower than expected. He is checking on the risk management accounting; the state allocations to the agency have decreased by around \$200,000. The agency budgeted 300,000 for insurance some of which may be able to be reallocated. The 990 form is in the process of being filed; the goal is to finish this form by December 31, 2023. Vince reviewed graphs that had previously been shared with the AHS Executive Committee. These graphs have also been emailed to AHS Board members. It is taking much longer to fill external positions at AHS. There have been 51 positions posted between January 2021 to November 2023 with a total of 1043 applicants. While expenses have recently been reduced, this expenditure reduction has mostly come from decreased salaries due to position vacancies. Expenses and revenue by museum location were also shared.

8. Sanguinetti House and Gardens Museum – Bruce Gwynn shared that the Yuma County Historical Society (YCHS) has talked for years about separation from the state. This is an opportune time for Yuma to regain local control of the Sanguinetti House and Gardens Museum. The downtown Yuma activity has significantly increased with collaboration between the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, the Visit Yuma agency, the Yuma Downtown Merchants Association, and the Yuma Children’s Museum. Yuma’s community has come together and done very successful fundraising. Bruce has received the financials of what AHS has spent to run the Sanguinetti House and Gardens Museum on a yearly basis. Deborah Bateman mentioned that she would like to talk with Bruce about potential sponsors for the agriculture museum planned for Yuma. David Breeckner stated that AHS is happy to have this conversation with a view towards sustainability. He mentioned that last year AHS spent \$275,000 on operations. AHS has closed the position opening in Yuma given the circumstances of this conversation. There is widespread support in Yuma for this action returning local control to operations. This discussion is not asking for an AHS board vote at this meeting. This discussion is planned for the AHS Executive Committee meeting in December 2023. Linda Elliott-Nelson added that the date proposed for the AHS Executive Committee

meeting is December 18, 2023, at noon.

Kelly Corsette observed that AHS does not want to be seen as an impediment to this discussion and that it is good to have this conversation. Kelly encouraged the AHS Board to think through what this discussion and possible action means for other parts of the state and how AHS is evolving. He urged the board to consider how difficult it is to operate how AHS has operated in the past. Vince Bradley added that the partnership and relationship in the future between Yuma and AHS will also evolve and exist.

David Breeckner shared that there are two conversations taking place about this discussion: 1) immediate operations, and 2) longer conversations and possible multiple pathways to consider for the Sanguinetti House and Gardens Museum for the future.

Bruce Gwynn added that over 15 years ago, the state announced closure of the Yuma Territorial Prison and the Quartermaster Depot. These did become a 15-year lease and are operated by the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. Linda Elliott-Nelson added that these areas are being run very successfully.

- 9. Director's Update.** David Breeckner apologized for the delay in packet sent to the AHS board. He stated that there are two significant actions in November 2023 that took place. First, there was a proposal to address retention and recruitment issues at AHS. Operations have been affected due to the lack of staff. In recruitment, there are a number of applicants that are not meeting minimum qualifications; other candidates turn down job offers due to the low level of pay. The retention incentive initiative approved by the AHS Executive Committee is currently under review by the state ADOA. Second, AHS looks to resolve the salary issue through review of the budget, review of how funds are being spent, and possible reallocation of funds to salaries. With the conversation regarding Yuma, this potential action will free up significant funds that can be redirected towards salaries for staff. David announced that AHS has initiated closures from November 21, 2023, through January 23, 2024. AHS will be closed to public programs during this time. Deborah Bateman asked about the retention incentives and asked what AHS will do if the state does not approve them. David Breeckner said that salary increases might proceed with the change in Yuma. He added that the shutdown period will be a catchup period and readiness for refreshments in exhibits and operations so that AHS can look towards the future. Kelly Corsette shared that while this action was surprising to people, he appreciated the details shared by David Breeckner. Kelly said that he hopes that after this shutdown period, David will report to the AHS board what was accomplished during this time. David shared that AHS will continue to post activities on social media and will share information on activities through the Executive Committee.

10. Future Meetings 2024 Calendar – Linda Elliott-Nelson announced that the following dates for full AHS board meetings in 2024 were listed on the agenda: January 26, March 29, May 31, July 26, September 2, and November 29. Deborah Bateman questioned the September 2, 2024, date. David Breeckner said that this was a typo and it should be September 27, 2024. Desirae Barquin mentioned that November 29, 2024, is the day after Thanksgiving. Sherry Rampy suggested changing this meeting date to December 6, 2023. The AHS Board meeting dates for 2024 should be: January 26th, March 29th, May 31st, July 26th, September 27th, and December 6th. AHS will send invitations to AHS board members to register for the 2024 AHS board meetings; when board members have registered, they will receive a new registration link for all AHS board meetings in 2024.

11. Announcements – no announcements

12. Adjournment by Linda Elliott-Nelson at 12:54 pm.

Dated this 27th day of November 2023.

Arizona Historical Society

Linda Elliott-Nelson, Board President

The Arizona Historical Society does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the administration of its program and services as prescribed by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation such as a sign language interpreter or alternative formats, by contacting AHS Administration at 520-617-1169. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange for the accommodation.

Upcoming Executive Committee Meetings

Noon and Virtual unless announced otherwise

Click the date to register for the meeting; all meetings are hosted are live-streamed via Zoom

Upcoming State Board Meetings

Noon and Virtual unless announced otherwise

Click on each date to register for the meeting; all meetings are hosted are live-streamed via Zoom

