

**Minutes of the Executive
Committee of the Board of
Directors of the Arizona
Historical Society**

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

Meeting held virtually, Wednesday, January 27, 2021.

1. **Call to Order** – President Linda Whitaker

12:07 p.m.

2. **Roll Call** – Bruce Gwynn

Board members present in person: Linda Whitaker, Robert Ballard, Tom Foster, Kelly Corsette, Bruce Gwynn, Colleen Byron (Note: Gwynn and Snitzer joined the meeting a little late, but were present for all votes).

Board members absent: Jim Snitzer, Voie Coy

Staff present: James Burns, Kim Bittrich, Rebekah Tabah Percival

3. **Minutes** - Discussion and action, if any, to approve the draft Minutes of the November 16, 2020, Executive Committee meeting.

Minutes accepted as submitted.

4. **Call to the Public** – Consideration and discussion of comments from the public. Members of the public wishing to address the Committee should identify their interest at this time via the chat box. Those wishing to address an item on the agenda will be called upon when that item is being discussed and given up to five minutes. Those wishing to address an item not on the agenda will be allowed up to three minutes. Such items may not be discussed by the Committee but may be directed to Staff for study and consideration at a later date.

Michael Wade – no non-agenda items to address.

5. **Code of Ethics / AAM Reaccreditation – ACTION ITEM** – Discussion and approval of revised Code of Ethics per American Alliance of Museums' feedback. – Whitaker

The board voted to approve a Code of Ethics at its August meeting. The Code was submitted to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) as part of our self-study materials. AAM staff reviewed the Code, and found that it did not contain all of the required elements for a Code of Ethics, and that it did not clearly state that everyone associated with the organization is covered equally under one Code of Ethics. These proposed revisions are additive, not subtractive; there is much more detail, which AAM is looking for. The content itself was generally acceptable. This is the language AAM wants to see and how they want it to be organized. The Code of Ethics is a core document, required to even be considered for accreditation.

Byron made a motion that the Executive Committee accept the proposed revised Code of Ethics

with the following change: in the preface and at appropriate points throughout the document insert “AHS staff members, volunteers, chapter board members, state board of directors, and non-board-members who serve on any committees appointed by the aforementioned” and recommend approval by the full Board of Directors. Ballard seconded. Whitaker, Ballard, Foster, Corsette, Gwynn, and Byron voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.

6. **Sunset review** – Discussion about Auditor General’s January 8, 2021 presentation to the Board of Directors / understanding and working with committees of reference – Whitaker

Discussion ensued about the Auditor General’s presentation at the January board meeting. Committee members noted that there were no surprises, that the presentation was informative, that it was helpful in a careful way, that the insights were good, and that the presentation was handled in a very positive manner. Whitaker underscored the renewed focus on collections management.

7. **AHS Chapters** – Discussion about feedback from Board of Directors and Governance Committee report, the creation and circulation of new proposed guidelines, and process for spending down existing funds. – Whitaker

Whitaker asked if there had been any responses or reactions regarding the Board’s vote in January to discontinue 1107 funds. Has there been any feedback? Were chapters notified by their State Board liaison? Did the chapters respond? Whitaker personally reached out to acting President of the Southern Chapter board as they do not have a board liaison at present. That was a little over a week ago and she hasn’t heard anything in return. Will reach out again. Corsette reported that the central chapter has been dormant for about a year. He met with Tawn Downs to get some recommendations about how to spend down the remainder of the central chapter funds.

The Governance Committee has been working on a list of things the chapters could be asked to do, within certain parameters (adhering to the Open Meeting Law, functioning in an advisory manner with no role in administration or operations - facilities, collections, exhibitions, deciding yay or nay on programs). Wade reported that the committee will have some good ideas for the board to consider that he is confident chapter board members will be receptive to. These ideas will allow chapter boards to get excited about being involved. Wade agreed there needs to be clear delineation between chapters and staff.

Foster reported that he and Whitaker had discussed some ideas for the Eastern chapter funds, since there is not a bricks-and-mortar location of AHS in that region. There are a lot of rural museums that need assistance. Foster will determine which museums need the most help, divide up the funds, and disseminate them. We will work with Downs to develop a simple contractual agreement as to how the funds will be spent and how that that will be reported.

Tom Rose will work with staff and the Northern chapter on some ideas for spending their funds and Bruce Gwynn will do the same with the Rio Colorado chapter.

Whitaker observed that the lines of communication between the State Board of Directors and the chapter boards are not clear. Who is responsible to do what and when? The role of the staff is to assist with setting up virtual meetings, posting agendas, etc. In some regions they don’t have reliable internet, but they do have phones, and AHS has a conference call line that can be utilized. Chapters don’t have to, and should not, wait until the pandemic ends to have a meeting. How can

we delineate the lines of communication? Perhaps assign another chapter liaison from the State Board of Directors to each chapter? Relaying all of that information back is really important. Also, it is vital that the chapters reach out beyond the urban areas in their respective region to rural communities. That is a vital role.

Snitzer observed that the most important thing the chapters could do for us is advocacy with the legislature. Chapters need to contact their state legislators and local elected officials to let them know how important history is to them and to the people in their community.

8. Executive Director Update

- a. Strategic Plan – The spreadsheet has been simplified to look like the sunset review tracking document. It will be included in board packets going forward.
- b. Revenue generation /Fundraising – All of the micrographics equipment is up and running, and we are currently processing orders. Some of the current projects represent work that will take several months to a year to complete. We continue to garner interest, and as word gets out, micrographics could be a very successful revenue stream for the agency.
- c. Friends Board recruitment – Several invitations have been extended to prospective board members and a recruitment document has been developed. Meeting with new board members to encourage them to recruit individuals from their respective networks.
- d. Partnerships – The Banner project is moving along well; oral histories are being conducted, and Banner is donating the Good Samaritan Hospital archives to AHS. We continue to work with ASU on The Journal of a Plague Year project. David Turpie has joined the board of the UA Press, and is finalizing a partnership agreement with them.
- e. Membership – The marketing and communications team is preparing a one-pager to provide insights into the trends in AHS' rapidly evolving membership demographics. That should be ready sometime in February.
- f. Legislative relations – Meetings have begun. The ones who have agreed to meet so far have been supportive of the agency. Scheduling is a challenge as some are only willing to meet in person, and without masks. Others are taking virtual meetings, which is a wonderful way to connect at this time.

9. Finance Committee

- a. Report on financial view from 30,000 feet – Snitzer reported that the forecast is getting a little better due to higher than anticipated revenue and lower than anticipated expenses. The “burn rate” is slightly less than projected just a few months ago.
- b. “Feel the Burn” – Snitzer reported that the financial situation remains very fluid as there are so many external factors beyond the agency's control (pandemic, recession, etc.). His committee believes the ‘burn rate’ (pace at which AHS is spending through limited reserve funds) is probably close to \$415,000 annually. This cannot be sustained indefinitely.

10. Buildings and Properties Committee – No report at this time.

11. **Friends of AHS Inc.** – No report at this time.
12. **Outreach Committee** – Whitaker extended an invitation to Foster to take on the role of chair of the committee as the former chair, Janice Bryson, has rotated off the board.
13. **Collections Committee** – Three new members have been added to the committee: Holly Young, Christine Marin, and Gregory McNamee. The committee will meet on February 2. Agenda has been posted.
14. **Board appointments** – Whitaker reported that we have not heard anything definitive from Boards and Commissions. Foster reported receiving some information about his confirmation by the Senate. Burns reported that a prospective board member had been asked to go through the fingerprinting process, which is usually a good sign.
15. **Announcements** and other matters for consideration in future board or committee meetings. None.

Executive Committee Schedule

February 22, 2021

AHS Board meeting dates and locations: February 19, 2021 (Virtual)

Adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Dated this 29th day of January 2021

Arizona Historical Society



Linda Whitaker, Board President

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