

DRAFT- Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee
of the Board of Directors
of the Arizona Historical Society
June 26, 2023

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

Minutes

1. **Call to Order** – By President Linda Whitaker at 12:05 PM
2. **Roll Call** – Colleen Byron
 - a. Present- Robert Ballard, Desirae Barquin, Deborah Bateman, DeNise Bauer, Colleen Byron, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Tom Foster, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker
 - b. Staff- Rebekah Tabah, Melba Davis, Kaydi Forgia; Absent: David Breeckner
 - c. Non- voting State Board Member(s)- Gene Kunde
3. **Minutes** - Discussion and action to approve the draft Minutes of the May 22, 2023, Executive Committee meeting.
 - Motion to approve minutes as submitted by Robert Ballard and Colleen Byron; Unanimously approved.
4. **Call to the Public** – Linda Whitaker
No members of the public present
5. **Board Updates**- Linda Whitaker
No information available at this time.
6. **Finance Committee Report** – Gene Kunde and Jim Snitzer
 - a. **Governor's Office Meeting** – 6/2/23 David Breeckner met with representatives from ADOA, OSPB and senior Executive staff to review the historical context of AHS funding cuts and the subsequent impact this has had on two decades of unmet needs. He provided the rationale to increase funding by \$1.45 million. The Governor's team recognized the need. No one disputed the proposed budget. The Governor's team would likely support the request but recommended that AHS secure "champions" in the Legislature to advance budgetary approval.
 - b. The Finance Committee **unanimously approved to put forward the \$1.45 million budget for full Board approval at the July meeting.** Jim Snitzer added that the request for a \$1.45 million increase was deemed reasonable and realistic because it was based on known increases in costs and begins to address statewide issues of deferred maintenance. A coordinated, unified approach by the Board and Staff to advance this

request had no foreseeable downside. Gene Kunde and Colleen Byron echoed this sentiment.

c. **Action Item:** The Finance Committee recommended a “Legislative Outreach Initiative” involving the participation of all Board members. AHS staff will provide contact details for local legislators (by district) to each Board member and will draft language and talking points into an information packet. Note that during the Finance Committee, Richard Powers shared his experience with budgetary advocacy for rural roads. He later provided a booklet that outlined the needs. That effort yielded a \$300 million allocation. **Sample booklet is available upon request.**

- Motion to approve Legislative Outreach Initiative as outlined above by Colleen Byron and Tom Foster. Unanimously approved. This will also be presented to the full Board in July.

7. **Nominating Committee** – Robert Ballard

Board outreach for nominations to start on June 23; all members asked to review their emails. Executive Committee members who have received the nominations outreach letter confirmed their intent to respond.

8. **Director’s Update** – Rebekah Tabah and Melba Davis

a. Central Services Bureau (CSB) contract and services update. -Item Tabled

b. OSPB (Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting) agent to audit agency. OSPB Audit is more thorough than other reviews and will guide AHS to an aligned approach with ADOA, GAO and the Governor’s Office expectations of operations, policy and procedures. Audit timeline is TBD. -Melba Davis

c. Staffing - Rebekah Tabah

i. The Vice President of Marketing & Communications position has been closed to new applicants following a strong response. Phase 1 interviews slated to begin within the next couple of weeks.

ii. Tucson Preparator position to continue phase 1 interviews.

iii. The Flagstaff Guest Experience position (Admin. Assistant III, PTE, 32 hours) is currently in review by ADOA Class/Comp. The position will be supported by visiting AHS staff and volunteers. ADOA Class/ Comp approval is expected soon; position will post after approval.

iv. Bill Ponder has been hired as Special Projects Manager for an 8-month, limited position. This is a part-time (19 hour) position to coordinate facilities-development efforts in Tempe for archival storage and to explore

possible sites for a new museum in Tucson. This involves research, paperwork submittals to the State, and initial meetings/discussions with interested parties.

d. **Action item:** acknowledge and/ or recognize possible land donation/ acquisition, and approve further research with a subsequent report back to the Executive Committee.

- Motion to acknowledge and/ or recognize possible land donation/ acquisition, and approve further research with a subsequent report back to the Executive Committee by Colleen Byron and Linda Elliot- Nelson; Unanimously Approved.

i. Discussion - Linda Whitaker - It has come to our attention that there is a 6.6-acre parcel in the Mercado District west of I-10. It is owned by the City of Tucson, is part of the Rio Nuevo tax increment finance district (TIF), and is integral to the ongoing development in downtown Tucson. These entities have expressed interest in having a cultural institution such as AHS in that neighborhood. Contact has been very preliminary with a focus on donated rather than purchased land. We are seeking permission at the front end, to explore this further.

Linda Elliot- Nelson inquired about the precedence of previous donations/ acquisitions. There is a precedent for accepting donated land for construction (e.g., City of Tempe for AHC). AHS has also donated property to other historical societies such as the American Flag Ranch which was given to the Oracle Historical Society. AHS has accepted and sold donated property, most recently in Paradise Valley. Bill Ponder has the institutional memory and will likely know other, earlier examples.

d. **Employee Engagement Survey** – Tabled until July

e. **Exhibits & Events**

i. “Hallelujah Hats”, curated by Bruce Nelson, opened at AHC Tempe on Saturday, 6/17/23. A celebration of the churches of Washington Park through the jewelry, hats, and fashion worn by church goers. This exhibit opens to the public on Sunday, June 18 during our annual Juneteenth Celebration.”

ii. Juneteenth event at AHC Tempe on 6/18/23 saw 603 attendees.

1. Community support has been overwhelmingly positive. AHS staff will debrief this week to discuss considerations for Juneteenth events in the future.

See media coverage below:

KJZZ link: <https://kjzz.org/content/1849886/arizona-historical-society-hosts-juneteenth-celebration-tempe>

AZ PBS link: <https://azpbs.org/horizon/2023/06/arizona-historical-society-hosts-annual-juneteenth-celebration/>

azpm Tucson link: <https://news.azpm.org/p/news-splash/2023/6/19/216420-breaking-barriers-how-tucsos-juneteenth-created-community-since-before-statehood/>

8. **Announcements** and other matters for consideration in future Board or committee meetings.

No announcements

9. **Adjournment** – By Linda Whitaker at 12:50 PM

Dated this 27th day of June 2023

Arizona Historical Society



Linda Whitaker, Board President

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Executive Committee Schedule: Noon and Virtual unless announced otherwise

Click the date to register for the meeting

All meetings are live-streamed via Zoom.

[July 24, 2023](#)

[August 28, 2023](#)

[September 25, 2023](#)

[October 23, 2023](#)

[November 27, 2023](#)

[December 25, 2023](#) *Tentative