

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

**June 24, 2024**

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

**Minutes**

- 1. Call to Order** – By President Linda Elliott-Nelson at 12:05pm
- 2. Roll Call** – By Secretary Deborah Bateman
  - a. Present – Robert Ballard, Deborah Bateman, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker, Desirae Barquin, Kelly Corsette
  - b. Absent – Bruce Gwynn, DeNise Bauer
  - c. AHS Board Members Present – Wynne Brown, Colleen Byron
  - d. Staff – David Breeckner, Rebekah Tabah-Percivel, Vince Bradley, Vanessa Fajardo, Kaydi Forgia
  - e. Guest – Phil Stewart, President and Director of the Bullion Plaza Museum
- 3. Minutes from May 20, 2024** – Motion passed to approved the Executive Committee meeting minutes from May 20, 2024, as read. (Linda Whitaker, Deborah Bateman)
- 4. Call to the Public** – Linda Elliott-Nelson

Phil Stewart, the President and Director of Bullion Plaza, thanked AHS for the invitation to this meeting and spoke of the passing of Tom Foster and the candlelight vigil scheduled on the front steps of the Bullion Plaza Museum for this Friday at 8 pm. He invited any AHS board members and staff to attend.
- 5. Recognition of Tom Foster** – Linda Elliott-Nelson asked those present to take a moment of silence to think of Tom Foster who passed away last week.

Reflection and discussion –

Linda Elliott-Nelson shared what a kind human being Tom Foster was, how he was actively linked to history, and asked if anyone would like to share their memories of Tom.

David Breeckner read from Greg Scott's email: David, Regrettably I'll be unable to attend today's meeting. I would like to add my sorrow about Tom Foster's passing. We served for more than a decade together on the AHS board although I'd worked with him in the previous decade as well. We, the AHS Board, met annually at Bullion Plaza. When COVID forced our meetings to zoom Tom and I were always careful to be sure we were decked out in our AHS ball caps. He and I often spoke about lesser-known Gila County historical events and he shared with me many sites worthy of a visit. He was a fine fellow and a fine friend. He will be greatly missed.

Linda Whitaker shared that during a COVID year the AHS Board risked not awarding the Al Merita Award, but unanimously decided to waive the usual restrictions and awarded the Al Merito Award to Tom Foster. It meant a lot to Tom, which he talked about with others.

Kelly Corsette shared that if our AHS mission is to connect people to Arizona's history, he said that Tom Foster did this as well as anyone throughout the state and his community. He will be greatly missed. He did so much for his community and the state.

**a. Action Item to determine Board response and recognition.**

Linda Elliott-Nelson asked the board members present what they would like to do to recognize Tom. She mentioned that there are opportunities to send a card, send flowers, or plant a tree from the obituary link.

Linda Whitaker asked Phil Stewart if there was something that the AHS Board could do for Bullion Plaza that would commemorate Tom Foster and complement the events there. Phil Stewart responded with gratitude for this kindness and that it was difficult to consider at this time since there was so much going on at this time, but they will take this idea under consideration. Phil added that it is their intent to keep the spirit of collaboration ongoing and circle back in the future with the AHS board.

Kelly Corsette suggested that the AHS Board should do something during the AHS annual meeting to properly acknowledge Tom Foster at that venue. Linda Elliott-Nelson thanked Kelly for this suggestion and said that it will be on a future AHS Board meeting agenda to plan for the AHS annual meeting.

Colleen Byron thanked Kelly Corsette for his suggestion of remembering Tom Foster during the AHS annual meeting and appreciated the time to consider how to codify her memories of Tom.

Wynne Brown asked if the AHS Board could send a sympathy card to his family, which would be something concrete. Linda Elliott-Nelson volunteered to send the card.

Motion passed for Linda Elliott-Nelson to send a sympathy card on behalf of the Arizona Historical Society Board via the link to the funeral home. (Linda Whitaker, Deborah Bateman)

6. **Executive Session to discuss the Appraisal process.** Motion passed to begin the Executive Session at 12:20 pm (Robert Ballard, Jim Snitzer). Motion passed to end the Executive Session at 12:26 pm (Linda Whitaker, Deborah Bateman)
7. **Update on Flagstaff Discussion Group** – Kelly Corsette shared that the Discussion Group comprised of himself, Desirae Barquin, Jim Snitzer and Bruce Gwynn, is working through the stakeholder interviews. There have been some already conducted and more are scheduled for July 2024. Sue Brown of Coconino County contacted Kelly and shared that Coconino County has held a couple of meetings about the Pioneer Museum. There was a conversation about scheduling a joint meeting during late July or early August that would include Coconino County, the AHS Discussion Group, and others.

David Breeckner shared that AHS has responded to the Northern Arizona Pioneer Historical Society (NAPHS) about their archives inquiry, updating that AHS plans to meet with the NAU Cline Library in late summer 2024 to begin conversations about a revised MOU involving the archives in question.

8. **Finance Committee** – Linda Whitaker shared that the committee met. Just before the committee meeting, the state legislature voted on the budget. They will receive an end of the year summary on FY24 sometime in July. There was also some information on FY25 and FY26 budgets, which should be received in July.

David Breeckner added that last week was very tumultuous and confirmed that the state legislature passed a new budget for FY25. There were changes made to both baseline dollar amount and a sweep of all state agencies. HB2897 was the bill passed for the budget. AHS baseline budget from last year was \$3,214,700. Next year there is a drop to \$3,045,800. There are adjustments the state makes to the budget, which could be positive or negative or a mixture of both. The positive adjustments are when the state loads more money into the budget to accommodate what they anticipate are new expenses for that year for changes and services. A negative adjustment or decrease is when the state predicts that AHS costs are going to decrease for that year. Last year (July 2023 for FY24) \$184,400 was taken out of the AHS baseline amount as an adjustment to account for an equivalent reduction in known service costs (liability insurance) in FY24. AHS is still waiting to determine any possible financial impact to risk management or otherwise on the upcoming Yuma transfer. From the Governor's sweep to agencies' FY25 budget, a rate of 3.5% was applied. \$83,500 will be deducted from AHS' appropriated funds for the year (\$3,045,800). AHS risk management is calculated

in July based on last year's status. There will be more concrete and confirmed information on the AHS budget in July. After all the changes, it is possible that AHS will have an operating budget of around \$4.3m to \$4.7m. AHS is waiting for permission to move forward on requested increases for salaries.

9. **Arizona Historical Society Board position on the sunset review** – this agenda item is an update since no further action is necessary. HB2632 (the 2-year continuation recommendation for sunset review) failed the final vote at the Senate. HB2210 was created that restored the original recommendations for sunset review to those agencies involved (AHS's original recommendation was for 8 years.). HB2210 passed both the House and Senate and is waiting on the governor's signature. David added that, unlike in 2013 when AHS was given a very extensive list to correct, to date AHS has not received any further areas it needed to address on the latest sunset review, which is a commendable achievement for the last 10 years of work on sunset review.
10. **Annual Meeting** – David Breeckner thanked those board members who responded on dates they are available for the AHS annual meeting. The overall response was for the weekend of October 25, 2024, for the annual meeting. Kaydi Forgia thanked everyone and shared that she will be in contact with those board members who would have suggestions about venues and catering.
11. **Director's Report** – David Breeckner announced that Ardyn Shepherd was hired as the new Facilities Rental Coordinator for Tempe. This position helps with the revenue generating side of AHS and for around the past year has been covered by Kaydi Forgia. AHS received a notice of resignation from Melba Davis for August 2, 2024. AHS is working on the transition plan with Melba. Sebastian Alt (current CFO) has been promoted to double-fill Melba's role, with the position of CFO posted to be refilled. The CFO and Finance team will now report to the Operations & Facilities division instead of DnO. The Guest Experience team will report to Vince Bradley, which will work together with front operations, including rentals, programs and communications.

David Breeckner shared that the Juneteenth event happened on Sunday, June 16, 2024, and was a success with around 300 attendees. He said that each year this event is bigger and better, gave full credit to the AHS staff and commended Todd Bailey, Jennifer Merry and Isabel Cazares.

David thanked those board members who attended the AHS Board meeting on May 31, 2024, in person, and for the positive comments on the *Dusty Trails* exhibition, which were shared with AHS staff.

Vanessa Fajardo spoke about the new exhibition, *Shaping Arizona*, the story of the evolving border, which is exhibited in both Tempe and Tucson. Vanessa shared

that this exhibition exhibits Arizona's shifting shape from Spanish colonial times to present day and includes some new exciting items.

David Breeckner added that the AHS transfer to the City of Yuma will occur between September 14 – 29, 2024.

**12. Announcement and considerations in future board or committee meetings.**

**No** announcements were made.

**13. Adjournment.** Motion passed to adjourn the meeting. (Deborah Bateman, Kelly Corsette)

Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2024.

Arizona Historical Society

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Linda Elliott-Nelson, Board President

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*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

Please use the following link as a hyperlink to solicit online registrations. It has been set up to work (individually) for all Executive Committee meetings in 2024.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlc-2hqDIsG9QarPDKi819C7uUohXboP9Q>

All meetings are hosted and live-streamed via Zoom.

July 22, 2024; August 26, 2024; September 23, 2024; October 28, 2024;  
November 25, 2024; December 30, 2024 (to be discussed)

Upcoming State Board Meetings

Noon and Virtual unless announced otherwise

Please use the following link as a hyperlink to solicit online registrations. It has been set up to work (individually) for all State Board meetings in 2024.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAod-2opj4qHNEcUWuowtZ2nJI5HaZEciYX>

All meetings are hosted are live-streamed via Zoom.

July 26, 2024; September 27, 2024; December 6, 2024