

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

**January 22, 2024**

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

**Minutes**

1. **Call to Order** – By President Linda Elliott-Nelson at 12:00pm
2. **Roll Call** – Secretary Deborah Bateman
  - a. Present – Robert Ballard, Desirae Barquin, Deborah Bateman, DeNise Bauer, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker
  - b. Absent – Tom Foster, Bruce Gwynn
  - c. Staff – David Breeckner, Bill Ponder, Melba Davis, Rebekah Tabah-Percivel, Vince Bradley, Kristen Rex, Marianna Touloumes, Isabel Cazares
3. **Call to the Public** – Linda Elliott-Nelson
  - a. No members of the public present.
4. **Discussion: Minutes from December 18, 2023.** Approved as read. (Linda Whitaker, Deborah Bateman) Unanimous approval.
5. **Sanguinetti House Museum and Gardens update (SHM):** David Breeckner gave the update on this agenda item. The latest version of the lease agreement between the Arizona Historical Society (AHS) and the Yuma County Historical Society (YCHS) has been reviewed and approved by several different state departments. Bruce Gwynn has shared this latest lease agreement version with the City of Yuma legal department that is reviewing it. The current lease extends until July 1, 2024, and has a built-in 1 year extension; moving forward, the lease may be renewed on an annual basis for one-year terms that align with AHS'

fiscal year. This agreement includes \$7,500 in annual support to YCHS to defer costs for running the facilities, specifically utilities and maintenance. This agreement specifically covers the SHM, the Mellon Mercantile building, and the Molina Block grounds (excluding the Molina Block building). It excludes the Molina Block building itself which is currently not approved for occupation and facing known repair costs in excess of \$1m, which would otherwise be transferred in responsibility to YCHS if it was included. The agreement includes YCHS accepting all other buildings as-is. AHS is finishing around \$25k of repairs and maintenance in the facility. The December 2023 approval from the Executive Committee for \$50k as a one-time payment to help YCHS' stewardship and care of the historic properties, has been implemented as the first of a new grant program that supports AHS' tenants currently in lease agreements to operate and maintain AHS' historic properties. Additional grant funds will be made available to all qualifying AHS tenants for the purpose of repairs and site management; this is a limited-term grant program that is funded through AHS' restricted "Facilities & Sites" fund within its Investment Reserves. Currently, YCHS has received all contracts and agreements required in support of this transition: a lease agreement, loan agreement for use of AHS artifacts and exhibits, and grant contract for the \$50,000 award. Per the lease agreement, YCHS will accept AHS current memberships as admission to SHM. SHM will still be under the AHS umbrella and advertised as such. This direction is also scalable and could grow to include AHS' facilities in Douglas and Strawberry. The timeline for signing the lease agreement is expected to be February 1, 2024.

- 6. Arizona Historical Society (AHS) Sunset Review.** David Breeckner described the Sunset Review process. The legislative committee reviewing the Sunset Review met on January 11, 2024. AHS receive 8 years, the maximum number of years currently allowed for the sunset review process. Linda Elliott-Nelson commended David Breeckner for his excellent presentation in front of the legislative committee as well as Linda Whitaker who presented and the other partners present who spoke in support of AHS. David Breeckner stated that it appears that a full review and vote by the legislature on the Sunset Reviews should take place by June 2024. The initial response received by the legislative committee has been shared with the AHS Board and

Executive Committee through attached documents sent with the agenda. Robert Ballard commended David Breeckner and those staff members and board members involved in bringing AHS to the level it needs to be for the successful Sunset Review. Robert said that he knows that it took a lot of time to work with this.

- 7. Tucson Museum Update.** Bill Ponder gave an update on where AHS is in the process for a new location for the Arizona Historical Museum (AHM) in Tucson. The work started late summer/early fall 2023 and he has engaged with groups to identify locations. The City owned site at Avenida de Convento and Cushing St in the Mercado District of Menlo Park continues to be the primary and preferred site for relocation. There were several meetings during the months of December and January. Most important were the two with the Assistant City Manager (ACM) Liz Morales. The first with Liz also included Koren Manning Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services.

There are 6.7 acres available. The architect, Doug Sydnor with the Arizona Architectural Foundation, has done a massing plan to see if the current museum could fit on the site. The City of Tucson wants to see more affordable housing available in the area. Bill talked with Assistant City Manager, Liz Morales, who seemed to like the process that is going forward. Bill walked the site with Liz Morales. Local architect Corky Poster said that he would do a massing plan including the AHM, open space and affordable housing. In a 6.7 acre site, 1.5 acres for affordable housing would fit. Corky's team will put this on paper in around 2 weeks when the final product should be done. Most of the Tucson City Council knows of this plan. We should start to work with legislators to look at the next legislative session to put programs together.

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Linda Elliott-Nelson thanked Bill Ponder for his work and the contacts he has put together to move this forward.

Linda Whitaker asked if an appraisal had been made for the AHM. Bill Ponder said that he has a scheduled conversation for 1/22/24 afternoon on this. Going forward, Bill will share the information with David Breeckner so that it can then be shared with the board.

Jim Snitzer asked about open space requirements and how grants could be utilized to pay for outdoor exhibits to celebrate cultures in this area. Bill Ponder said that this would be nice additions and that cultural thinking should be part of the planned process.

David Breeckner commended Bill Ponder on the tremendous job of working with community partners from many years to move this forward.

## 8. Director's Update

- a. **Staff recruitment and retention. Two** new hires: 1) Sebastian Alt as new CFO and 2) Jack McCabe, Preparator 1 . Departures: Elizabeth Kapp, Exhibit Curator 2; Nathan Samoriski, Collections Manager; and Shelley Corriell, Membership Coordinator.

Working on hiring to fill vacation positions. Staff have stepped up to do duties of vacated positions.

Open positions are Membership and Outreach Coordinator, Associate Editor for the Journal of Arizona History, National History Day Coordinator, Facilities Rental Coordinator, and Business Development Manager.

- b. **Pioneer Museum** – an article was published in early December 2023 in the Arizona Daily Star describing the challenges at AHS. Partners have stepped forward to see how they can help – including, the Museum of Northern Arizona and Coconino Center for the Arts. At present, it does not look like there is support for direct operations for Pioneer Museum, Northern Arizona Pioneer Historical Society (NAPHS) has said they cannot. AHS is seeing what options are open for Pioneer Museum to re-open.
- c. **AHS Closure:** AHS will reopen on January 23, 2024. Staff are traveling to help locations open. They are working on getting the stock refreshed. Overall, David Breeckner will share a document with what has been done during the shutdown. These activities have included taking down cases, working to fill cases, working to do new exhibits, completing the Yuma inventory, preparing to de-access objects, retention records, prepared for National History

Day (NHD) sessions.

David is working with Vince Bradley on mapping the financial systems.

Publications – printed one issue, ready for February 2024. Merged Publications and Marketing teams. Working on the Strategic Marketing plan. Speaking engagement with Greater Tucson Leadership. Wynne Brown spoke did an online presentation.

AHS proceeding with interviews following new state procedures, which is a longer process.

Facilities are doing repairs, including improved drainage at Tempe.

Deborah Bateman said that board members were surprised at the closure. She asked if this closure a one time emergency situation or an ongoing action. David Breeckner said there should be consideration for a pause period, especially without full staffing and that it needs to be regularly scheduled, possibly in June or July when traffic is lower. Closure may not be every department, only certain departments.

Robert Ballard asked, that if different departments might temporarily close, the museum would still be open.

David Breecker answered that yes, a closure would help with getting areas prepped. The only thing that may impact needing to close would be a major construction project such as the project for 48 Women or the annex project.

Robert Ballard said that he was shocked that there was a closure. He felt that it was talked about behind the scenes and that full transparency is needed.

David Breeckner said that it was a shock to staff and unexpected. It could have been handled better in the future. The closure raised questions and created opportunities. It also created good press for AHS.

David Breeckner mentioned that there is a chiller replacement

needed for the AHM in Tucson this summer, which might involve some shutdown.

- d. **National History Day** – call for volunteers. Kristen Rex noted that during the closure, AHS met commitments for groups that had previously made reserved times at the museum. AHS hosted 25 senior citizens and there were 2 conferences with components where participants went to the museums during the conference. There were also private events that were honored during the shutdown.

The second largest event that AHS holds will occur 2/24/24. The NHD Yuma even has been cancelled due to loss of staffing. AHS will meet with Arizona Western College on May 24<sup>th</sup> about a possible event.

Kristen Rex said that she needs volunteers to help support and help judge for NHD. Judges will receive rubrics and can pre-score projects. This is the link to register as a judge or volunteer for NHD:  
<https://arizonahistoricalociety.org/education/national-history-day-arizona/#Judges-and-Volunteers>

Deborah Bateman asked how many people the NHD event needs. Kristen Rex answered that it depends on numbers. Deborah noted that organizations such as Chase and Arizona Public Service have employee groups that serve as corporate volunteers who can help.

Kristen Rex said that there is a post card contest for third graders where the students receive art and history lessons.

<https://arizonahistoricalociety.org/education/ahs-postcard-contest/>

Deborah Bateman said that when these events occur, AHS could leverage the Board of Director social media contact to do outreach. If AHS tells the Board of Directors, they can help share this information.

Kristen Rex said that AHS interns had sent information out to 119 school districts.

9. **Announcements** and other matters for consideration in future board or committee meetings.

a. No announcements.

10. **Adjournment** – 12:58pm by Linda Elliott-Nelson

Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2024.

Arizona Historical Society

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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

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.

February 26, 2024; March 26, 2024; April 29, 2024; May 20, 2024; June 24, 2024; 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.

January 26, 2024; March 29, 2024; May 31, 2024; July 26, 2024; September 27, 2024; December 6, 2024