

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

May 31, 2024

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

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order** – By President Linda Elliott-Nelson 12:10 pm.
- 2. Roll Call** – Secretary Deborah Bateman called the roll.
 - a. Present – Robert Ballard, Desirae Barquin, DeNise Bauer, Deborah Bateman, Greg Scott, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Colleen Byron, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker, Richard Powers, Wynne Brown, Kelly Corsette
 - b. Absent – Tom Foster, Eric Flohr, Sherry Rampy, Bruce Gwynn
 - c. Staff – David Breeckner, Chris Bradley, Rebekah Tabah, Vince Bradley, Melba Davis, Bill Ponder, Nikky D’Anzi, Marianna Touloumes, Sebastian Alt, Kaydi Forgia, Rachael O’Hara, Cody Taylor, Jace Dostal, Vanessa Fajardo, David Turpie, Jaynie Adams, Kristen Rex, Nicole Brownlee
 - d. Public – Gwen Groth, Jan Sgambelluri, Pat Loven, Anne Lupica, Norma Jean Coulter, Zona Lorig, Carlos Ramos, John Owens, Juniper Owens, Catherine Schumar
- 3. Minutes** - Discussion and action, if any, to approve the draft Minutes of the March 29, 2024, AHS Board meeting.
 - a. Motion to approve minutes of January 26, 2024 as posted on the AHS website unanimously approved. (Deborah Bateman, Greg Scott)**
- 4. Call to the Public** – Linda Elliott-Nelson
 - a. Gwen Groth spoke about her concerns about the Pioneer Museum. Gwen said that she would like to thank the work group who are working on this. She stated that it is imperative that we look to the past to move forward with the Pioneer Museum. She is interested in knowing where the salary savings from the last four years are and expressed her concern about Northern Arizona not being important to a statewide agency. She urged that we look to the future about the Pioneer Museum being an important and valuable part of the Arizona Historical Society (AHS). She also urged that it would be helpful in reports to distinguish between venue rental attendees and actual museum guests.

5. **Thank you to Historical League.** Linda Elliott-Nelson expressed gratitude from the Arizona Historical Society (AHS) Board for the work of the Historical League with the publication, donation and distribution of the *Taste & Treasures II: A storytelling cookbook of Historic Arizona* that they have donated and delivered to various museums around the state. She also mentioned that AHS has benefited from the Historical League's gift of a scanning machine in the AHS library. Linda Elliott-Nelson presented the Historical League members present – Anne Lupica, Norma Jean Coulter, and Zona Lorig – with a framed Certificate of Appreciation from the AHS Board. Anne Lupica also shared that thanks to the Historical League, 42 students received a check for \$300 to go to the national competition for National History Day.
6. **Jaynie Adams, History Engagement Coordinator, described her job and how she interacts with the state on history.** She shared that is a history communicator and communicates the value of Arizona's history to very diverse audiences. She gives public presentations and answers questions about history. She handles many of the media requests for information about Arizona's history and plans much of their public programming. She wrote an article with David Turpie on tours of part of Globe. She has also written about her experiences in Bisbee. She will start taking over more of the work with the certified historical institution programs.
7. **Boards & Commissions – Carlos Ramos, Director of the Arizona Governor's Office of Boards & Commissions described the process of applications for board and commission seats.** There are three staff members at Boards and Commissions. The appointment process is a robust one. The application is open to the public. There are over 200 boards and commissions in the state of Arizona. There is an interview process and any selection is run through the governor. They conduct background checks. This is a minimum of 4-6 weeks process. Currently, it is possible to appoint board or commission members, but at this time, the individual can serve for 12 months. All but one of AHS' current Board members has received Senate confirmation. Arizona Revised Statute allows those who have been previously confirmed by the Senate to continue to serve on the board. Carlos stated that his goal is to ensure that our boards and our commissions are set up for success so that those serving on the boards are those willing to move the mission of the organizations forward in a positive way. There are three specific tenets in serving: duty of care, duty of loyalty, and duty of obedience. Duty of care is ensuring that the organization is prudently using all its assets. The duty of loyalty reflects that the organization's activities are advancing the mission of the organization, and the duty of obedience ensures that members are good stewards and follow the letter of the law. Carlos mentioned that it is important to include everyone's voice since the perspectives of Arizonans are all different.

John Owens stated that he wants to reemphasize the really incredible work that the Boards & Commissions Office has done. John also mentioned that David Breeckner has been a real advocate for the AHS. Deborah Bateman expressed concern about the delay in the Senate confirmations. She added that the application is perceived as a very onerous process and that the AHS Board is currently down to 14 members, which does not give AHS full representation throughout the state. Carlos shared that he is very appreciative of the patience shown with the process. His department is doing its due diligence and can move through the process more quickly. Deborah Bateman thanked Carlos for his leadership and commended him on his eloquence. Carlos addressed questions on the chat and said while he does not have the specific data to provide, he does know that there are new applications that have been received.

Linda Elliott-Nelson asked Carlos Ramos to confirm that those board members whose term may be done, could continue to serve. Carlos confirmed this.

Deborah Bateman expressed her concern that the delay in board member confirmation has hurt the board from a statewide representation standpoint.

8. Finance Committee. Linda Whitaker, Chair of the AHS Finance Committee, shared that the Finance Committee is in maintenance mode. She said that thanks to Vince Bradley and Sebastian Alt, the reports are coming in regularly and that Vince has reviewed them so that they are digestible. The numbers are posted in the minutes. She expressed her concern that the primary concern is the cap on positions at the AHS. The savings at AHS has occurred due to positions not filled. AHS has 49 positions, but is capped at 36 positions. This has a big impact on what AHS is able to do. She added that there are not easy fixes to this.

a. **Action Item:** the motion to approve the AZ DEMA Authorized Representative change as Resolution #0002 (a closeout for the Federal COVID relief grant) was approved.
(Linda Whitaker, Kelly Corsette)

9. Flagstaff Discussion Group – Kelly Corsette reported on the activities of this group. He reviewed that the discussion group is Kelly Corsette, Desirae Barquin, Bruce Gwynn, and Jim Snitzer. This group has talked about what they want to accomplish. Their goal is to develop potential solutions through which the AHS could reopen the Pioneer Museum in Flagstaff on a long-term basis. They also recognize that as a discussion group they don't speak for the board, they don't have the authority of the board, and are going to just

conduct conversations with individuals who have perspectives, have ideas, etc. They will be fact finding and opinion gathering. They will be conducting stakeholder interviews. They have a list of around two dozen individuals, many of whom are in the Flagstaff area. The group has a set script so that consistency is maintained in each conversation. The interviews should be completed plus any recommendations by later this calendar year. Kelly also mentioned that the Coconino County staff and one of the Coconino County Supervisors is interested in this topic and has convened at least one conversation in the Flagstaff area. Kelly has talked with one of the deputy county managers who is working on this project as well. Past conversations have discussed that the discussion group and the county work on their own separate paths. This discussion group looks at the stakeholder interviews possibly being accomplished by August and will move any recommendations to the full board during Fall 2024. Deborah Bateman urged that as much as could be accomplished would be preferable by the AHS annual meeting in October when the board meets in Flagstaff.

Linda Elliott-Nelson thanked this discussion group for all of their work.

David Breeckner commended the discussion group on their efforts and mentioned the AHS staff that is providing resources to the discussion group.

David Breeckner mentioned an outreach letter that was published through the Newsletter of the Museum Association of Arizona that was a call to the public to direct any thoughts or notes to representatives of the AHS.

10. Update: Annual Meeting

- a. David Breeckner noted that during the March 29, 2024, AHS Board meeting, the AHS Board had voted to move the 2024 AHS Annual Meeting to Friday, October 18, 2024, and to be located in Flagstaff.
- b. Kaydi Forge reported that October 18, 2024, is difficult as a specific booking date since venues are not available on that date. There was also discussion regarding fundraising for the expenses involved with the AHS Annual Meeting since this would be at a location other than an AHS location. David Breeckner stated that the state budget does not allow for purchase of food. Kelly Corsette asked if the state budget allowed for paying for the cost of the venue itself. Melba David confirmed that this was a permitted expense. David Breeckner will advise on the approximate cost of the venue and food so that the amount of fundraising necessary can be advised.
- c. **Action Item:** the motion to change the date of the 2024 AHS Annual Meeting to “on or around October 18, 2024” was approved. (Deborah Bateman, Wynne Brown)

11. Update: Special Meeting – David Breeckner shared that the special meeting for all AHS

Board members to attend was approved by the AHS Board on March 29, 2024. A list of viable dates was submitted to all AHS Board members. The results were tallied and shared with ADOA for their availability. The Special training on State Procurement and Conflict of Interest has been confirmed for Friday, June 7, 2024, from 11 am – 12:30 pm. A calendar invite will be sent to all AHS Board members directly. Linda Elliott-Nelson asked if this session will be recorded and accessible to AHS Board members. David Breeckner said yes, this session will be recorded and accessible should AHS Board members miss the June 7th meeting, although they are urging everyone to attend so that they can ask questions.

12. AHS in the News – David Breeckner brought up the series of articles that appeared in the Yuma Sun newspaper and asked if there were any questions on these articles. David commended the AHS staff who worked on projects in Yuma and commended Jace Dostal and David Turpie for their assistance in drafting AHS responses. These articles had been emailed to AHS Board members. There were no questions.

13. Director's Report – David Breeckner referred AHS board members to his written report and highlighted a few areas. The biggest change was including a top sheet with a quick summary of the major activities. It covers staffing concerns and the activities and events that staff are running. One of the biggest events is Juneteenth. It has grown to a 600 plus person attendee event and is fully driven by staff. He commended Todd Bailey, Jenn Merry, Isabel Cazares, and others for their efforts on this. The update from the governor incorporated a headcount cap and budget cuts. The headcount cap includes contract workers. The AHS count went from 49 to 36. There is a process in place to request exemptions on this cap, which AHS is doing to demonstrate there is a need and has the financial capacity for. In 2008, AHS had 100 staff members with a budget that was double what it is today. The strategic plan is being updated with recalibrated expectations. All agencies had to submit proposals for FY24 with roughly 5.5% cuts from appropriated state funds, and proposals for a continuous 2% cut for all subsequent years. AHS has updated its FY25 budget to reflect cutting around \$61,000 yearly. AHS is assuming 41 positions, if the headcount exemptions are approved. This is based on assumptions. David shared the updated FY25 budget on the screen. The report shows a reduction of \$60,900 out of the appropriations. It also accounted for the reduction in staffing positions. With the reductions, there is an updated deficit of around \$198,000; this is based on every position being fully staffed from day one. This information is incomplete and is based on approximations.

Deborah Bateman asked with all the impact on the budget and the headcount, we need to reimagine with AHS is and need to go back to the Strategic Plan. She highlighted that the Board needs to be engaged in working with the strategic plan to take this organization forward. She urged that we must look at opportunities to divest certain functions and use our

creativity, imagination and experience to anticipate where we need to go and what we want to do. She added that it is time for a dramatic change.

David Breeckner said that it is important to fulfill our core mission and look at a reconsideration of where we invest our resources. We may be shifting models on how we operate. AHS currently has two physical locations, staffed by AHS and manned by staff in the two largest population centers in Tucson and Tempe and provide statewide presence through AHS services.

Deborah Bateman shared that a board meeting where we begin to collect our perceptions and our thoughts are ideas would be beneficial. She urged that a SWOT analysis done by AHS staff would be very helpful. This could be reviewed by the board and added to. Kelly Corsette agreed with what Deborah said and said that AHS is working with a staff that is at a third of what it was in the past. Things will need to be substantially different. Kelly also mentioned the public comment from Gwen Groth and said that he would like to see as much data as possible. This information would be helpful and insightful.

Sunset Review: David Breeckner mentioned that AHS had received a general update on the sunset review. Only the 2-year recommendation is moving forward at this time. All state agencies reviewed this year were swept up in this bill to receive a flat 2-year review. Any comments have been asked to be directed to Chaplik who originally wrote this bill. Kelly Corsette asked what would happen if the governor vetoes the bill. Unless a continuation is approved by June 30, 2024, AHS and the other described State agencies will officially enter into a period of Sunset afterward. This begins a 1-year process to close the described State agencies. This is a process that can be reversed by the subsequent passage of a continuation bill. David Breeckner stressed and called for public support and positive messaging against this difficult and time-sensitive topic.

14. Announcements and other matters for consideration in future board or committee meetings. David Breeckner noted that the AHS Board received a resignation from Eric Flohr.

Action Item: motion to accept Eric Flohr's resignation was approved. (Kelly Corsette, Greg Scott)

Kelly Corsette asked if the AHS Board would consider an item in a future board meeting to empower the Executive Committee to formally express their thoughts to the state legislature to support the Arizona Historical Society. This will be put on the Executive Committee agenda for June 24, 2024.

David Breeckner mentioned that there are three AHS staff members who are registered as public lobbyists for this agency. These are Rebekah Tabah, Vince Bradley, and David

Breeckner. He added that there are many agencies that would be affected by the sunset review.

15. Adjournment. Linda Elliott-Nelson adjourned the meeting at 1:49 pm.

Dated this 4th day of June 2024.

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.

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.

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 hosted are live-streamed via Zoom.

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

