

Sharon Historical Society Interim Board Meeting, Aug. 5, 2021 Minutes

The Board met remotely by Zoom on Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021.

Present: Brad Larson (president), Don Williams (vice president), Elisabeth McGregor (secretary), Carolyn Weeks (treasurer), Doug Southard (archivist), Maria Anderson, Marie Cuneo, Debbie DeBassio, Jimmie Keating, Paul Lauenstein, Shirley Schofield, Meg Winikates

Brad Larson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM, from his new home on Deerfield Road, surrounded by boxes. He reported that he's doing well despite the chaos of moving and that things seem to be going well with the Society, with positive energy and good connections with the community.

Treasurer's Report: Carolyn reviewed the report previously circulated, showing receipts of \$1490, disbursements of \$3140, a working balance of \$4027.57, and overall cash assets of \$28,789. Shirley asked about a charge made on the Visa card; Carolyn replied that it's automatically taken out annually by Microsoft. It was uncertain who originally set up the Visa card and Office 365. Joanne when asked thought the Microsoft 365 had to do with archiving; Doug thought it might be on the museum laptop which is currently held by Don. Brad will make a note to find the receipt, follow up and cancel automatic charges.

Nominating Committee: Maria reported that she had contacted all the candidates who put their names up last spring to determine if they're still interested. Most have chosen to remain on the ballot; she hasn't heard back from quite all of them yet and will follow up with the remainder. We'll review the ballot and voting system under Actions.

Communications Committee: Don reported that the Committee had met and covered several topics. They agreed to expand the scope of the Pandemic project to include collecting periodical articles reflecting the pandemic experience along with personal accounts, writings and photos. Carol Gannon is pulling back from editing the Heritage Hunter newsletter. Paul agreed to compile and lay out the next edition, and can turn to Carol for needed information. Deadline is 15 Aug for submitting all newsletter items to Paul.

Website: Kevin is busy with other things and can't help for now. Morey Waltuck got the website and running again. Some things like minutes that didn't get posted need to be sent again to him via Don. **Fundraising Letter**—Don reported that appeal letters are going out to about a dozen companies that have supported us in the past; new ones can be added later.

Grants: Meg reported on the success of the July 5th "Reading Frederick Douglass Together" event. Over 200 people attended despite the rainout and rescheduling, and feedback was positive. Some town officials are interested in making it a part of the town 4th of July celebrations next year. One attendee expressed interest in establishing a series of talks on Sharon's various ethnic groups. She thanked Beth, Don, Paul, Carolyn and all who helped her put it together. The final report to Mass Humanities still has to be submitted. She posted a link in the chat to a report on audience feedback at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ksMkp-z8ywOev9cAu2lrLiLJZs10Ha6-US4GhgG_Sl/edit Brad-encouraged her and others to share some of these positive reactions on Facebook.

Archives: Doug reported that we've been approved for Digital Commonwealth free digitization services for photographs in our collections. They're working through backlog and will get to us when they can, which is just as well because it will take a lot of work to be ready for them. Doug needs a team to work on pulling photos to be scanned and entering metadata. The committee is currently meeting two Monday evenings a month. Joanne is continuing to review items from Cliff Towner collection, and Jean Zaniwski and Jim Zuis are also working on projects. Doug would like the Board to take a decision-making role on accepting additions to the permanent collections at some point.

Action on reports:

Finance: Carolyn expanded on our financial situation. She doesn't anticipate much more income from dues in the coming months, while we have a number of fixed costs. She expressed concern that we soon won't have enough cash on hand to pay expected bills and will have to draw from our savings accounts again. She estimated that the building costs about \$17-19,000 per year for utilities, insurance etc. Plus there are regular expenses for accountant, taxes etc.

Paul asked about utility costs, particularly electricity, and she provided more specifics.

Doug felt that there aren't many ways to cut costs, and that we urgently need to put more energy into raising more money or we could be a year away from insolvency. Maria expressed nervousness about our finances. We don't currently have a Ways and Means committee and need one.

Action: Doug, Maria, Meg, Carolyn and Don agreed to serve on a Ways and Means Committee.

Don said that we're beginning by soliciting local businesses, and that he's willing to lead an effort to send out a broad community appeal with help on strategy and language from Meg and Beth; he hopes that this appeal will cover basic annual expenses. We also need to do other fundraising, such as a Yard sale, or maybe multiple ones on Saturday afternoons when the Museum is open.

Brad asked where we are in making it possible to donate by clicking on link on our website. Don replied that we just went back to Morey Waltuck to run the website, and Don will discuss with him how to establish such a link. Meg noted that we also have an option of receiving donations via Facebook. She has Facebook administrative access and can set it up with Carolyn. Meg recommends keeping it just for donations, not dues payments.

Moved (Beth), seconded (Paul) and voted (unanimous): to authorize Meg to explore the Facebook option and report to Ways and Means, which is authorized to make the decision.

Nominating: Maria shared the ballot form drafted by the Committee. It was agreed to change the word "Recommended" in the option to vote for the slate to "Recommended by the Nominating Committee."

On voting procedures, Marie reported on her conversation with former town clerk Marlene Chused, whose recommendation is not to put the ballot in the newsletter, but either to send ballots only to those who request them or send them enclosed in an envelope, with a return envelope requiring name, address, and signature under penalty of perjury. Maria asked her what wording we needed to use; Marlene said we should consult a lawyer for the proper language. She also offered to set up ballot-tallying procedures and train the counters.

Don noted the problem of a tight timeline for people to request and return ballots, and the possibility of increased Covid interfering with the planned September 30 in-person meeting.

Doug asked whether we should plan on a zoom annual meeting. Brad suggested that we separate the two issues, the ballot itself and the procedures for meeting and voting.

Moved (Don), seconded, and voted (10-1) to approve the ballot with the one agreed-on wording change.

There was discussion of how the ballots should be circulated and the voting should be conducted for those not at the meeting. Don noted that the Board needs to clearly agree on how process is done. Doug noted that normal rules have been suspended during Covid. Paul suggested that we bundle the ballot in the newsletter along with a return envelope with perjury language, and mail the whole thing in a larger envelope. Meg asked if we were overcomplicating it.

Moved (Debbie), seconded (Jimmie) and voted (9-1, 1 abstention): To send a ballot to every member address in an envelope with the newsletter, requiring signature, name and address on the envelope in which the ballot is returned.

New Business:

Antique Car Show: Shirley announced that plans are underway and the necessary parking lot use approvals obtained for the Antique Car Display on Sept 12, 1-4 PM, in conjunction with Porch Fest. Jimmie will contact the owners and assemble the cars for display. We may explore having music as well. Meg noted that any event should have some easy, fun ways to donate and sell goods, for instance donation jars to vote on your favorite car. Jimmie noted that they didn't want people leaning, climbing on, or getting into the cars, and we couldn't offer rides for liability reasons. The fundraising possibilities were referred to Ways and Means to develop.

Sharon Day: We've been encouraged to apply for a booth at the planned Oct 3 Sharon Day festival at the lake. We reviewed the application and opportunities for visibility and sales. Carolyn is on the committee, and Beth offered to cover the \$50 booth fee.

Moved (Beth), seconded (Debbie) and voted to authorize our application and plan for participation.

New décor for Museum rest rooms: Debbie presented photos of vintage New England outhouses that she proposed displaying in our rest room.

Moved (Carolyn), seconded, and voted to approve hanging the photos.

Review and approval of minutes: No additions or corrections.

Moved (Don), seconded, and voted to approve the minutes of the June 3 Board meeting

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 2, 7:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Elisabeth McGregor, Secretary