

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

January 26, 2024

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

Minutes

- 1. Call to Order** – By President Linda Elliott-Nelson 12:04 pm.
- 2. Roll Call** – Secretary Deborah Bateman
 - a. Present – Robert Ballard, Desirae Barquin, DeNise Bauer, Deborah Bateman, Kelly Corsette, Eric Flohr, Linda Elliott-Nelson, Thomas Foster, Colleen Byron, Jim Snitzer, Linda Whitaker, Greg Scott
 - b. Absent – Richard Powers, Wynne Brown, Bruce Gwynn, Sherry Rampy
 - c. Staff – Rebekah Tabah, Vince Bradley, Melba Davis, Bill Ponder, Nikky D’Anzi, Marianna Touloumes, Kristen Rex, David Turpie, Sebastian Alt, Rodd Bailey, KD Forgia, Rachael Black
 - d. Public – Gwen Growth, Jan Sgambelluri, Duffie Westheimer, Norma Jean Coulter
- 3. Minutes** - Discussion and action, if any, to approve the draft Minutes of the November 27, 2023, AHS Board meeting.
 - a. Motion to approve minutes of November 27, 2023 as posted on the AHS website unanimously approved. (Linda Whitaker, Deborah Bateman)
- 4. Call to the Public** – Linda Elliott-Nelson
 - a. No response.
- 5. AHS Staff Member Presentation** – Nikky D’Anzi introduced herself and shared that she works at the Guest Experience desk and does some work for Membership Services to introduce visitors to Arizona’s history. Nikky commended Todd Bailey at AHS on how he is able to talk about Arizona’s history to others. Nikky said she also listens to AHS guests talk about their engagements with Arizona history and that Arizona is full of stories.
- 6. Evaluation Committee** – Deborah Bateman shared that as the Chair of the Evaluation Committee, she solicited board member input on the evaluation and was disappointed to only receive 9 responses out of the 16 board members. The Evaluation Committee is comprised of Linda Elliott-Nelson, Linda Whitaker, Robert Ballard and Deborah Bateman.

The committee has put together their appraisal and the committee members are waiting for responsive comments from David Breeckner.

7. **Collections Review Committee** – Rebekah Tabah shared that this committee met on January 25, 2024, reviewed and recommended a list for items to be deaccessioned and has asked for a vote.

Tom Foster stated for the record that the Bullion Plaza is interested in accepting all the cartridges on the deaccession list.

Kally Corsette stated a question in chat from Eric Flohr on how it is determined what items on the deaccession list are auctioned off versus disposed of. Rebekah Tabah shared that the cartridges are live ammunition. Initially, the committee thought the cartridges could go to the police department, but can be directed to Bullion Plaza, if so requested by Tom Foster. Rebekah added that Education is contacted to see if they want deaccessioned items, and if the answer is no, those items go to auction.

Jim Snitzer added that some items on the deaccessioned list are listed as going to certain locations, and that it is possible those items are already present in those locations.

Linda Whitaker asked if the picture of George Washington on the deaccessioned list is a print. Rebekah Tabah shared that it is a lithograph.

- a. **Action item to approve recommendations for deaccession. Motion was unanimously approved to approve the list of items for deaccession. (Colleen Byron, Linda Whitaker)**

8. **Finance Committee** – Linda Whitaker stated that significant progress has occurred on bringing forward the financial reports in spreadsheet form on how funds will be spent. Vince Bradley added that treasury reserves are not current set up to be able to transfer funds. Linda added that AHS now has clear, internal documents and asked Colleen Byron if she is interested in receiving them as a former committee member.

Colleen Byron said that she is interested in receiving the two spreadsheets of financial documents as a former member of the Finance Committee. Linda Whitaker asked Vince Bradley to email Colleen Byron the spreadsheets mentioned.

Vince Bradley said that he is working today on the IRS 990 forms and has brought in the new AHS CFO, Sebastian Alt, for support. There is some tapping of other resources to get these completed and the goal is to complete this form by the end of next week. Vince added that they are considering different budget structures so that information is clear and trackable. Their goal is to make reports very clear so that everyone can follow the information and see how funding is available throughout the year. February and March

2024 efforts will be dedicated to the budget.

- a. **FY25 Governor's Budget.** Rebekah Tabah noted that the governor's budget had been received. AHS did not receive the increase of \$1.4m requested. The state currently has a large deficit. AHS should receive the final, approved budget from the legislature in May or June 2024.

Vince Bradley added that there is still hope for some budget increase from the legislature.

- b. **Introduction: Sebastian Alt (new CFO).** Vince Bradley introduced Sebastian Alt who started at AHS on December 26, 2023. Sebastian has worked in finance for the past 30 years, has air Force experience, and is completing his MBA.

9. National History Day – Kristen Rex

- a. **Competition Schedule** – Kristen Rex noted that the Yuma Regional Contest for NHD was cancelled due to a lack of student participation. The new NHD Coordinator, Leonard Moody, will be starting soon. Upcoming NHD events are scheduled for: February 24, 2024 (west); March 16, 2024 (south); and March 23, 2024 (Flagstaff). There are over \$3,000 in prizes available.
- b. **Call for volunteers** – Kristen Rex mentioned that if board members want to be involved, they need judges and are looking for remote judges. Judges will receive rubrics and will team with two other judges. They should have this information a week in advance of the event so that they will have time to review and score. Performances are live. Kristen can be reached at krex@azhs.gov by anyone interested in volunteering as a judge.

10. Tucson Museum Update – Bill Ponder gave an update on the AHM in Tucson. They have identified a site (Site no. 3) for the new AHM in Tucson. After several meeting in Tucson, the officials there seem to be very supportive of the concept. They want to include a level of affordable housing on the site. The architect has seen what could be accommodated on site. From showing a photo of Site no. 3 of 6.7 acres, attendees could see how 60-80 units of affordable housing could be placed together with open spacing and the AHM. Bill is trying to obtain an appraisal for the current AHM building in Tucson. There is a challenge because appraisers need to look for comparable sales and there is not much comparable information in this area.

Linda Elliott-Nelson commended Bill Ponder for all the work he has done on this project and the various contacts he has brought together to have this move in a positive direction.

Kelly Corsette asked why AHS had zeroed in on this site (site no. 3).

Bill Ponder stated that AHS had identified three sites. Site no. 1 was in the downtown corridor on 2.2 acres. There were challenges with this site no. 1 since it was inferior to site no. 3. Site no. 3 allowed for a level of expansion that AHS did not have before.

Bill added that site no. 2 was property of the Arizona Deaf and Blind School – a 12.5 acre parcel. At the Arizona Deaf and Blind School sunset hearing, this school was asked to divest itself of some of its holdings. Site no. 2 has older buildings that would cost millions of dollars to rehabilitate or take down and funding is always an issue.

Site no. 3 is a superior site. The work done now will allow AHS to fully explore possibilities down the road since AHS is thinking of what the needs will be in 30 years.

Kelly Corsette added that this looks intriguing and asked if the sale of the current AHM site in Tucson would cover the costs of the new AHM in Tucson and if all proceeds would go to AHS. Kelly also asked about organic traffic by Site no. 3, and if visiting Site no. 3 would require a special trip by future AHM visitors. Bill Ponder responded that Site no. 3 is in the center of a highly sought after development area. It is close to the new Caterpillar site and two sets of apartment complexes. There is an increase in commercial development at Site no. 3, but not at the current AHM site in Tucson. Site no. 3 seems to be much more dynamic. He is working with the Menlo Park District who is very excited about having this AHM facility close by because they feel it will be a regional draw. There are early signs from Caterpillar that they are interested in being a partner.

Bill Ponder noted that AHS will apply the sale funds towards the purchase and construction of the new AHM facility in Tucson.

Linda Whitaker noted that although it was not apparent from the map shown to the AHS board during this meeting, the Site no. 3 is on the light rail line and is a very busy location. She added that there is a potential of getting the property (Site no. 3) donated to AHS.

11. Director's Update – Rebekah Tabah. Linda Elliott-Nelson thanked Rebekah Tabah for stepping up at the last minute to give the Director's Update at this meeting since David Breeckner needed to leave for a family emergency.

a. Hiring and Staffing Update – Rebekah Tabah. **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.

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. Shutdown Review – Rebekah Tabah shared that the AHS shutdown gave staff the

opportunity to take a deep breath and hit the reset button. Staff had the time to process the Yuma transfer of management. The Education department got a jumpstart on NHD activities. Vince Bradley was able to train the new CFO, Sebastian Alt. There was time to write a new Marketing Strategic Plan, and staff could focus on a new member campaign. There was a restructure of the gift stores. Mel and her team did administrative work to ensure AHS was in compliance. There was backup work on google drive and Facilities was able to accomplish maintenance, deep cleaning, and moving large items.

- c. Yuma Operations: Yuma County Historical Society (YCHS) transition. Rebekah Tabah shared that YCHS is ready to sign the lease agreement with AHS. February 1, 2024, is the target date for the transition. AHS is producing social media regarding the transition.
- d. Flagstaff Operations: Pioneer reopening efforts. Rebekah Tabah reported that David Breeckner approached the Northern Arizona Pioneer Historical Society (NAPHS). NAPHS noted that they do not have the capacity to transition to local operations and funding. The Arizona Daily Sun had published an article about the Pioneer Museum being closed and AHS received outreach from the Museum of Northern Arizona and the Coconino Center for the Arts about potential partnering and/or shared resources. Desirae Barquin added that NAPHS wants to see the Pioneer Museum open again and wants to see a resolution to this issue.
- e. 2023 Sunset Review results – Rebekah Tabah apologized to those board members trying to view the Sunset Review from a distance since there were issues with the connection to the different links provided. David Breeckner testified, and Linda Whitaker spoke as past AHS Board President. Sherry Rappy, AHS board member, also spoke, as did Dr. Eduardo Pagan, Michelle Reid, the Historical League and Barbara Fenzel. Rebekah thanked them all for being present in support of AHS at this sunset review. AHS was given an 8-year continuation. At present, there are only 1-to-8-year options for continuation. There is no follow up to date. The process should be finalized by June 2024.
Kelly Corsette thanked Rebekah for this report and said that the Pioneer Museum had been closed for a long time.

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

Linda Elliott-Nelson thanked all of the AHS staff that presented today: Nikky D’Anzi for sharing how she engages with AHS visitors and shares Arizona’s history with them, Kristen Rex for all the work that she does to engage various parts of the state with National History Day, Vince Bradley for all the work he has been doing with financial reports, and Rebekah Tabah for all the work she does and stepping up to report at this meeting at the last minute.

Linda Elliott-Nelson shared the following Information on board member holdover that came directly from the Interim Director of Boards and Commissions: There is an actual State Statute that dictates the "holdover" status of members. Please review ARS 38-295 (B) below:

B. Every officer shall continue to discharge the duties of the office, although the term has expired, until a successor has qualified. The discharge of the duties of office for appointments requiring senate confirmation shall be governed by section 38-211.

13. Adjournment by Linda Elliott-Nelson at 1:12 pm

Dated this 26th day of January 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-2hqDlsG9QarPDKi819C7uUohXboP9Q>

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-2opj4qHNEcUWuowtZ2nJl5HaZEciYX>

All meetings hosted are live-streamed via Zoom.

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