



August 1, 2025

**DRAFT - MEETING MINUTES OF THE ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

Action Taken:

Meeting called to order at 12:03 PM

- Motion to approve May 30, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. (Robert Ballard, DeNise Bauer. Motion approved unanimously.)
- Motion to approve June 27, 2025, special session meeting minutes as presented. (Dr. Colleen Byron, Greg Scott. Motion approved unanimously.)
- Motion to approve the Collections committee's recommended deaccessions. (Dr. Colleen Byron, Greg Scott. Motion approved unanimously.)
- Motion to approve FY27 budget for State submission. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)
- Motion to convene into Executive session to act on the 2025 Al Merito award winners. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)
 - *Executive session convened at 12:42 PM — Executive session broke at 12:51 PM*
- Motion to approve 2025 Al Merito nominees. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)
- Motion to adjourn the meeting. (Greg Scott, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion passed unanimously.)

Meeting Adjourned at 1:19 PM

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order- Kelly Corsette at 12:03 PM

2. Roll Call- Linda Elliott-Nelson

- a. **Present-** Kelly Corsette, Robert Ballard, Jim Snitzer, DeNise Bauer, Greg Scott, Dr. Linda Elliott-Nelson, Dr. Colleen Byron
- b. **Absent-** Bruce Gwynn, Rick Powers, Desirae Barquin
- c. **Staff-** Dr. David Breeckner, KD Forgia, Jace Dostal, Sebastian Alt, Todd Bailey, Dr. Rebekah Percival, David Nagelski, Kristen Rex, Vince Bradley, Dr. David Turpie, Cody Taylor, Leonard Moody, Salessia McGowan

3. Minutes - Discussion and action, if any, to approve the draft minutes of the [May 30, 2025, State Board meeting](#) and the [June 27, 2025 Special Session](#) of the Board Officers.

- a. **Motion** to approve May 30, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. (Robert Ballard, DeNise Bauer. Motion approved unanimously.)
- b. **Motion** to approve June 27, 2025, special session meeting minutes as presented. (Dr. Colleen Byron, Greg Scott. Motion approved unanimously.)

4. Call to the Public- Kelly Corsette

- a. Melba Davis- AHS Volunteer; No comment.

5. Collections Review Committee – Greg Scott, Rebekah Tabah

- a. The State Board was provided with a Collections Review packet prior to the meeting and viewed a slide document of the collection review during the meeting.
- b. **Motion** to approve recommended deaccessions. (Dr. Colleen Byron, Greg Scott. Motion approved unanimously.)
 - Dr. Colleen Byron expressed her concern that the items involved the Bayless items and asked if there were other items in the collection. Dr. Rebekah Percival addressed this concern and shared that there were many, many items in the collection representing the Bayless family. Dr. Percival added that this committee looks at winnowing down the sheer number of items in collections that may be duplicative. Jim Snitzer asked about mold with the items. Dr. Percival said that staff do frequent inspections to ensure that active mold is not present to harm other artifacts. Jace Dostal said that all items in this deaccession proposal were housed in the same box where there was mold and it was kept separate. Kelly Corsette said that he appreciated the work of staff with collections and for the work of this committee.

6. Finance Update - Jim Snitzer, David Nagelski, Sebastian Alt

a. FY25 budget

- David Nagelski said that AHS came in at a better number than originally thought. Deficit was around \$170,000 for fiscal year end. Revenue was lower as well as expenses.
- Revenue, Expenditures, YTD (See attached CSB June Report)
 - Revenue: \$3,925,064.30 (planned \$4,347,800)
 - Expenditures: \$4,095,137.83 (planned \$4,557,129)

b. FY26 budget

- Dr. David Breeckner was happy to report that on June 27, 2025, the House and Senate were able to approve the FY26 budget. A 3-year budget amount was approved for the Pioneer Museum and sent to AHS up front. Over 40 applications have been received to date for the manager position at the Pioneer Museum. Kelly Corsette asked about the wait for additional staff at the Pioneer Museum. Dr. Breeckner said there was a wait for the facility readiness, including exhibit refresh, internet connection, and more. Fall months will be spent doing repair work. Manager will be networking and working with regional partners in the fall and can begin hiring other staff in the spring of 2026. Kelly added that he was concerned about past AHS efforts to hire vacant positions at this location and asked AHS to relook at this wait on hiring staff.
- [FY26 budget](#) was passed by the Arizona Legislature and signed by Governor Hobbs.
- Includes full funding (\$359,700) for Pioneer for 3 years
- Continues the 3% budget cut (\$83,500) from last year.
- No other changes to AHS funding.
- Anticipate completing the load out of FY26 appropriation by August 1.

c. FY27 budget

- David Nagelski said that AHS took a very realistic approach to the FY27 budget. Numbers are fairly flat, although the Pioneer Museum allocation bumped some numbers up. Payroll will be increased with the addition of positions. AHS is trying to keep spending down, although repairs and maintenance continue to be substantial. AHS needs to look at additional revenue sources. Dr. Breeckner added that \$1 million increase request to the total budget is inclusive of the funds received for the Pioneer Museum. The end result is a deficit of around \$407,000 at this time for FY27 budget. He added that admissions and membership do not include numbers anticipated at the Pioneer Museum. If the increase to this FY27 budget is not received, expenses will be decreased. Kelly Corsette expressed his appreciation and asked about the 2nd column from the right and noted that the numbers are formatted like dollars and suggested that this be cleaned up. Kelly expressed his support for this proposed budget and

mentioned that it is important for there to be room for raises for AHS staff so that they are recognized. He added that the FY27 is a bare bones budget and shared that it's important to repair and maintain facilities. Kelly added that he is pleased that the efforts of AHS and Coconino County have helped to bring more funds in for the Pioneer Museum and added that the funding received is not unlimited funding and needs to be looked at for FY28 budget. Vince Bradley answered the question regarding the financial viability of Pioneer Museum and said that AHS is holding back on establishing admissions revenue since it is unknown what kind of numbers would be generated from Pioneer Museum. Mel Davis asked if the Pioneer Museum can be opened with a gift store. Dr. Breeckner answered that the previous model would reflect what had existed before: admissions, a gift store, and educational field trips. Rentals will be looked at later. Dr. Breeckner added that each dollar requested in FY27 budget can be itemized and justified.

- Final discussion & review of updated draft budget.
- **Motion** to approve FY27 budget for State submission. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)

7. Outreach Committee – Robert Ballard, David Turpie

a. Committee report and discussion of 2025 Al Merito Awardees.

- Robert Ballard reported that the committee met to review the nine submissions and has selected organizations and individuals to recommend for the 2025 Al Merito awards. Dr. David Turpie mentioned that last year the AHS Board went into executive session to vote on the Al Merito awards. Kelly Corsette said that the AHS Board is agendized to go into executive session.

b. **Action item** to approve 2025 Al Merito nominees.

- **Motion to convene** into Executive session to act on the 2025 Al Merito award winners. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)
Executive session convened at 12:42 PM — Executive session broke at 12:51 PM
- **Motion to approve** 2025 Al Merito nominees. (Kelly Corsette, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion approved unanimously.)

8. Board Update - Kelly Corsette

a. FY26 Board Officer Elections

- Kelly Corsette said that a Nominating Committee was created. Robert Ballard is chairing with Dr. Colleen Byron and Richard Powers serving on this committee. Kelly expressed his appreciation for these AHS Board members serving on this committee. He added that if any other AHS board members wish to run for Board officer, they should submit their request to Dr. David Breeckner.
- Current: Kelly Corsette (President), DeNise Bauer (Vice President), Jim Snitzer (Treasurer), Dr. Linda Elliott-Nelson (Secretary)
- Discussion on the Officer nomination process and slate.

b. **Possible Action Item** to advance Officer nominations.

9. Annual Meeting Update - Kelly Corsette, David Turpie

a. Meeting scheduled for Friday, September 26, 2025, at the AHM in Tucson.

- Kelly Corsette shared that the annual meeting will take place on September 26, 2025, in Tucson. Dr. Breeckner shared that it will be a hybrid meeting. There will be a pre-board meeting prior to the annual meeting. Dr. David Turpie anticipates an early afternoon start with a shorter talk plus a quartet of musicians who will perform. Kelly said that he hopes to see the AHS board in person. Dr. Breeckner said that the AHS board meeting will be at 12 pm with the annual meeting starting at 2 pm. There will be light snacks. Vince Bradley asked if there are any recommendations from the AHS Board for businesses that would like to support this function or provide in-kind support.

b. Theme of "History in Harmony".

10. Director's Update – David Breeckner

a. Dr. David Breeckner shared that there are hard impact numbers and said that there are good upward trends in a number of areas. There is increasing visibility and return interest in AHS programs and services.

b. Pioneer Museum

- AHS is readying the Museum Manager position for posting, to be filled this fall to support on-site readiness preparations & work.
- x2 AA3 (Guest Experience, Education) and Curator positions will be posted in the early spring.
- Intention is mid/late spring reopening.
- Dr. Breeckner shared that there was a meeting on July 30, 2025, in Coconino County including the Northern Arizona Pioneer Historical Society regarding the Pioneer Museum regarding plans for the future.

c. National History Day

- 34 students from Arizona attended nationals in Washington, DC
- 1 first prize for documentaries and several individual awards
- Kelly Corsette asked if these students are recognized in some way. Dr. Breeckner said that the Historical League has invited the students in the past to an event. Kelly suggested that these students be invited to the AHS annual meeting. Kristen Rex added that the Historical League has supported the students in the past through effort and funding. Dr. Colleen Byron mentioned that any sponsors for NHD should be acknowledged at the annual meeting and suggested a short presentation on support for NHD so that they feel appreciated. Kristen Rex said that Leonard Moody will be ready to make this presentation. Leonard said that 5 minutes would be fine for this presentation. Dr. David Turpie said that the schedule of events can still be adjusted and that this can be included and had been previously discussed. Dr. Byron reiterated

mentioning any public or private organizations that are helping to sponsor NHD.

d. Development

- Several regional groups have approached AHS about new partnership opportunities (e.g. neon signs, WWII POW huts); AHS is considering each but will not proceed unless the viability of each project is demonstrated. Meetings with these groups continue.

e. Facilities

- FY27 CIP submitted 7/25/25, to be discussed with ADOA in early August.
 - **\$66m** for capital development, **\$1.8m** for essential building renewal
- Waiting to confirm AHC shutdown in December to support HVAC repairs (part 2).
- Historical League expected to approve final expenditures to install an ADA chair lift for the Steele Auditorium at AHC Tempe.

f. EOY review & highlights

- FY25 budget came in under expectations, with a **\$170,073.53** deficit.
 - This will be covered through R&M Reserves, due to the nature of the overage.
- **54% increase** to visitation from admissions, programs, and rentals.
- **49% increase** in JAH downloads (revenue-generating).
- **37% increase** in donations & dues.
- **21% decrease** in annual membership.

11. Announcements and considerations in future board or committee meetings.

a. No announcements

12. Adjournment- Kelly Corsette at 1:19 PM

- a. Motion** to adjourn the meeting. (Greg Scott, Dr. Colleen Byron. Motion passed unanimously.)

Arizona Historical Society State Board of Directors

DATE: August 01, 2025

Kelly Corsette

Kelly Corsette, State Board President

State Board Meeting Schedule

Virtual and at Noon unless announced otherwise

March 28, 2025	September 26, 2025 – Annual Meeting
May 30, 2025	December 5, 2025
August 1, 2025	