

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
May 2017

1. Reaccreditation:

Creating Action Plan to Submit to AAM Reaccreditation Board.

- a. We will be submitting the AAM Progress Report by May 25th.
- b. CMU will be providing a letter of the support they will offer the museum and the new Collections Manager.

2. Staffing:

- a. **Collections Manager:** Ron Bloomfield, from CMU, has been working with me to vet resumes and interview potential candidates. We have yet to secure a Collections Manager. This partnership with CMU is the beginning of what could be a new paradigm for the Besser Museum, a training site for young museum professionals.
 - i. Besser Museum's biggest challenge is being in a rural location with a limited budget. This greatly hinders our ability to attract, and retain, the museum professionals needed to operate a museum with the collections and outreach programs of our size.
 - ii. Both Ron Bloomfield and Phil Deloria recognized and made us aware of the fact that we will have a difficult time hiring a Collections Manager with the skills needed on the salary we are offering. Phil recommended offering a starting wage of \$35,000. Ron informed me that Collections Managers capable of gaining physical and intellectual control of our collections, earn around \$80,000 annually and are in high demand.
 - iii. We are currently offering \$30,000 with benefits. After interviews, reference checks, emails answering the candidate's questions, we have yet to have a qualified candidate accept the position. Searching the AAM and MMA job postings, the job offers are between \$35,000 and \$60,000 for Collections Managers.
 - iv. I will consult with Ron Bloomfield (CMU) for our next plan of action for the Collections Manager. We may need to hire someone a new graduate with less experience, but they will continue to work with CMU and get the training needed.
 - v. Ron and I are also discussing long range plans for the Besser Museum to be an extension of the Museum Studies program, where CMU could place interns. We also discuss the possibility of setting up a program where the Besser Museum could offer newly graduated students a one-year contract to continue gaining work experience while also providing the Besser Museum much needed help. There may even be some funding available for such a college to work program.
- b. **Education Outreach Coordinator:** The same scenario is playing out with the Education Outreach Coordinator position. This has been a long drawn out process between advertising the position for a 30-day period, vetting the resumes, setting up interviews, following up with reference checks, second interviews/answering

candidate's questions, making a job offer to the most qualified candidate, allowing a couple days for a decision, By the time we move to the next candidate, they have taken another position. Researching AAM and MMA job postings, the job offers are between \$32,000 and \$50,000.

- c. **Planetarium Coordinator:** Tad tendered his resignation and will be leaving on May 15th. He has taken a position at that Bell Museum, University of Minnesota.
 - i. **Asis Gonzalez** submitted his resume for the position. Asis worked with Tad for approximately four years at the New Mexico University planetarium. According to his references (which were also Tad's references) Asis is highly qualified for this position. I offered Asis the position and waiting for his reply.
 - ii. **John Heath** will continue to run the planetarium on Saturdays and Sundays as needed.

3. Facilities:

- a. Elevator repairs. Schindler was on site and replaced the damage elevator parts on Tuesday, May 8th. The state inspection was done Friday, May 11, 2018. The elevator passed and is now in operation!
- b. Susan Edwards from R.S. Scott Associates spent approximately four hours at the museum on May 9th. Susan will submit an estimate for what it would cost to preparing the architectural drawings to renovate the museum for better collection storage areas. This is the first step in achieving AAM standards for the care and preservation of our collections.
- c. Bliss Painting provided a quote for \$5,968.44 to do some of the repairs needed on the Spratt Church. The Besser Museum received a total of \$5,475.00 in donations from Spratt Church members in September 2017 for the continued restoration of the Spratt Church. On 12/14/2017, Bliss surveyed the entire structure and submitted an estimate of \$27,981.98 for work needed to be done. That estimate did not include the interior wallpaper, that is falling off and needs to be repaired. The \$5,968.44 estimate will fix the windows, wallpaper, and paint the front of the exterior of the church. Bliss will also paint the small outhouse structure by the Green School.
- d. See Facility Report submitted by Matt Klimczak

4. Native American Exhibit Project:

- a. Subcommittees have been formed and tasks have been assigned for research and development of content.
 - i. I spent five hours with Brian Belanger on Tuesday, May 8th. We meet with Matt McCormack and Don LaBarre.
 - ii. I spent five hours with Brian Belanger on Wednesday, May 9th. We traveled to Cheboyan and spent time with historians, Keith Knetch and Rob.
- b. Good Design Group is working closely with the committee to provide conceptual exhibit plans for the Native American exhibit based on committee input.

5. **Fisheries Exhibit:** The committee is meeting and work is ongoing.
 - a. Grant ends May 15, 2018
 - b. Great Lakes Fisheries Trust report is due in July 15, 2018
 - c. Good Design and Brandon Schroeder is working with Jim Johnson on the Final Report.
 - d. Besser Museum will need to resubmit a Great Lakes Trust proposal. The trust will not reconsider our full Stewardship Proposal until the next round of grants and we cannot resubmit until January 2019.
 - e. Tom Moran will help haul the Kahlenberg Engine back to the museum. We are planning on scheduling the transfer mid-July. Tuffy plans to build a structure around the engine for protection and preservation.
 - f. Tuffy is continuing to work on the Katherine V exhibit, including some interpretation.
 - g. Tuffy and I decided not to hold a Fisheries Fundraiser this summer.

6. **Art:**
 - a. **NEMAG: Whatever the Weather** art exhibit is the Trelfa Gallery until the end of summer. NEMAG's annual Really Big Art sale starts Saturday, June 30th during Log Cabin Day and will run through the end of their exhibit. The Besser Museum receives 30% of all sales.
 - b. **Juried Art Exhibit** is scheduled for October. Brochures will be mailed out at the end of May. Erv Lewandowski will be this year's juror. The opening reception is set for October 27th and the exhibit will run through December 31, 2018.
 - c. **Drawing Classes with Erv Lewandowski:** Erv will be hosting a series of drawing class at the Besser Museum this summer. Brochures will be mailed out with the Juried Art brochures.

7. **Education:**
 - a. We are booking school groups for Spring Field Trips
 - b. I have developed the lesson plans for this year's school groups with help from staff and museum volunteers.
 - c. We are recruiting and training volunteers.

8. **Special Events:**
 - a. **Mindful Movement at the Museum: Yoga**
 - i. Paige Edwards Trisko will be instructing 11 Yoga sessions in the Wilson Gallery on Tuesday 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. This program will start May 22nd and run through July 31st. The cost is \$10 per person, Paige's fee is \$40 per session. We can host upwards of 30 people or more, so this does have the potential to generate revenue for the museum. After the 11-week program, we will decide if we want to run another session.
 - b. **Log Cabin Day:** Saturday, June 30th 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.
 - i. DTE Foundation donated \$1,500 to cover the reduced admission rate for Log Cabin. We will charge \$1 per person, plus \$1 per planetarium show.
 - ii. The City Band will play from 1pm – 2pm

- iii. There is a gospel singing group that said they would perform in Spratt Church.
- iv. We will have several reenactors set up this year
 - v. Founders Society will hold their annual Strawberry Social.
 - vi. There are a few details that need to still be worked out for this event.
 - vii. Need to start marketing the event.

9. Planetarium:

- a. John Heath will continue the programming while searching for a new planetarium coordinator.
- b. Accidental Astronauts was purchased for the Earliest Learners program with funds from the CFNEM grant.

10. Exhibits:

- a. The AHS art instructor will display some student work in May.
- b. The Alpena City Band 100th Year exhibit will open end of May – first week of June. Intern, Alayna Nugent is helping with this project.
- c. Ted Fines will be exhibiting his photography in the Trelfa gallery in October.

11. Marketing:

- a. I still need to work with Judy Suszek to budget this for next fiscal year.