

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
August 2017 – September 2017

1. Reaccreditation:

- a. Still waiting to hear reply for AAM on reaccreditation site visit.
- b. Still working on updating employee handbook. The insurance company supplied us with a comprehensive template that is being revised to align with the Besser Museum by-laws. Jim Conboy added some suggestions. I am retyping the document due to formatting issues. This is helpful as I am finding errors and discrepancies. It is just finding the time to accomplish this task.

2. Fall Harvest Fossil Fest was a great success.

- a. Lafarge and Specification Stone Products sponsored at \$1,000 each.
- b. Marketing was wide spread. Lots of free marketing as part of the Lake Huron Discovery Tour.
- c. Over 670 people attended
- d. The revenue, including the \$500 from Founders Society pie sale totaled \$1,268.28.

3. Dark Sky Cruise: October 6th and 7th

- a. Besser Museum partnered with NOAA/TBNMS and hosted two Dark Sky Cruises during the Lake Huron Discovery Tour. The cruises only accommodated 60 people. Both cruises sold out quickly.
 - i. Friday's cruise was great fun, everyone enjoyed the event.
 - ii. Saturday's cruise was canceled due to gale force winds. 30 people attended the backup plan at the Besser Museum's planetarium.
 - iii. The Besser Museum will receive approximately \$700 per cruise depending on expenses.

4. Besser Foundation Annual Support:

- a. The Besser Museum requested three grants from the Besser Foundation: \$220,000 in operational support, \$30,000 for Collection Manager position, and an additional \$10,000 for employee compensation.
- b. The Museum also submitted a special project request of \$200,000 for the renovation of the Native American exhibit.
- c. The Besser Foundation consolidated the three grant requests into one grant for a total of \$260,000 for 2018.
- d. The Besser Foundation granted \$30,000 matching grant for Phase 1 of the Native American Exhibit renovation project. The conditions are as follows:
 - i. For Phase 1 a matching grant of up to \$30,000 was approved subject to your ability to find one to one matching funds, negotiating a contract with the outside design company and finally obtaining final approval of this Phase by Besser Foundation.

5. Native American Exhibit Project:

- a. Richard and Roger Cook set up a \$25,000 spendable fund at the Community Foundation for the Native American Exhibit project. The Board approved the following budget.
 - \$6,000 Research: Local Historian/Genealogist/Subject Matters Expert
 - \$8,000 Preliminary Interview Capture/Subject
 - \$11,000 Exhibit Design (Project Planning/Design Quote/Budget)
- b. To date, \$5,600 of the \$6,000 has been expended on research. Committee Chair, Anne Belanger is going through Matt McCormack's extensive research.
- c. Anne Belanger and I meet with Richard Cook to discuss the progress and the Besser Foundation matching grant. We have submitted a progress report and request for additional funds in the amount of \$30,000 as a match.

6. 2017 -2018 Budget:

- a. We are still considering the budget to see if there are any areas we can find extra funding for a janitor.
- b. The Besser Museum will be sending out an Annual Appeal letter in November. The Museum has not sent out an Annual Appeal for the last several years. One year was due to our 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign.
- c. The Besser Museum will be participating in the CFNEM GIVING TUESDAY event. Our campaign for this fundraiser will focus on building our digital library in the planetarium.

7. Facilities:

- a. Bruno Hirzel was contacted and agreed to paint the sign on the Maltz Bank.
- b. We received \$5,400 in donations for the Spratt Restoration fund. There is exterior work that needs to be done, and the wallpaper inside needs to be fixed or replaced. We will get bids for this work.
- c. Scott Stevens plans on having the railings up on the loading dock by November.
- d. Still investigating the possibility of contracting with someone to help with cleaning the museum, i.e. bathrooms, floors, etc.

8. Art:

- a. **Best Foot** non-juried art reception will be held Saturday, October 21st.
- b. People's Choice Award is going well. It is \$1.00 to vote for your favorite artists. All proceeds will go to framing the next fine art collection.
- c. Judy Dawley's second exhibit is open and will run through the end of September. Her second book is for sale in the gift store. Her books are also being sold at Augie and Peggy Matuzak's new art gallery on Second Ave.
- d. **Winter Blues: 2'x2'** non-juried art exhibit. We will start promoting this non-juried art exhibit at the opening reception on October 21st. The format will follow Best Foot, with \$20 per entry. The exhibit will open February 13th and run through April.

9. Planetarium:

- a. Tad attended the Great Lake Planetarium Conference in St. Louis, MO.
- b. Power backup equipment has not been installed yet. We need to get this done.

- c. Planetarium attendance continues to increase. August attendance was 439 people
- d. Tad and John Heath will be partnering with Dark Sky event at Rockport State Park in October.
- e. Dark Sky Cruise with NOAA/TBNMS was very successful.

10. Exhibits:

- a. Native American Exhibit project funded by the Cook Fund is ongoing.
 - i. The next few steps for the committee will be:
 1. Working with professional design firm for conceptual exhibit layout
 2. drafting a strategic plan to request RFPs from exhibit firms
 3. Continue to research families and relatives in from regional area
 4. Collect oral histories of families, relatives, and citizens who knew local native American families from the area.
 5. Audit footage capture during the LHDT for repurposing for this project.
- b. Season of Light Exhibit
 - i. Work has begun on the plans for Season of Light. The exhibit opening, or the Season of Light reception is set for Saturday, November 18th. We will need to apply for a liquor license and book JJs catering for this event.

11. Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit Committee:

Katherine V:

- a. Attending the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail Conference in LeLand October 12th and 13th.
- b. Tuffy has continues to make great progress on the Katherine V exhibit.

Chinook: Waiting to meet with Good Design Group to create the conceptual plan with the \$10,000 Great Lakes Trust Fund gran

12. Marketing:

- a. Marketing is ongoing. Marketing is reaching throughout Northern Michigan.

13. Education:

- a. Kat and Tad are running first Full Steam Ahead
- b. Evaluation and assessment tools are being created to capture important visitor experience data. We used a survey tool at Fall Harvest Fossil Fest. The data is being compiled.

14. Gift Store:

- a. New store products are always being researched. Besser Museum Christmas ornaments have been ordered. Gift Store sales are up again this month.
- b. Ideas to marketing the gift store for the holiday shopping season are being discussed.

