

Waterbury Historical Society Jan. 18, 2023 Meeting via Zoom

Present: Cheryl Casey, Skip Flanders, Joe Camaratta, Bill Woodruff, Anne Imhoff, Jane Willard, Mike Maloney, Jan Gendreau, Laura Parette,

Meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM

Motion was made by Joe and seconded by Bill to approve the November minutes.

There was discussion on items mentioned therein. Jane passed on that Paul would like to keep receiving board meeting minutes to assist in his position as webmaster.

Otherwise, the motion to approve the November minutes was passed.

Program Committee

Skip will be presenting a couple of options for upcoming programs. He would like to remake his presentation of “Along the Tracks” about local industries using the railroad line.

Another would be about the murder of Alice Meaker. It would dwell more on her life than her murder. There was a lot of support for that last suggestion.

Ideas for summer programs include working with the fire dept. on something about the Seth Warner fire engine from the mid 1800s and have it at the Rusty Parker Park for the annual meeting. There was discussion of the Bryan family offer to host the summer program at their place, but no one knew where the communication stood on that. (Jill has checked emails from the past three years and has not found any relating to the Bryan offer.) Other programs possible about the history of the Putnam State Forest, the Vermont State Hospital, our water and sewer systems, the dam, and the CCC camp site walking tours. Anne noted there will be a ceremony by the state for new CCC signage which could be a tie-in.

Next program should be in April, date to be determined.

Outreach Education Committee

The senior center wouldn't provide transportation to the Joseph Smith Singalong, so they had their own at the senior center. The Snowflake Bentley program was presented for school kids on Jan. 12th. Though many members were last-minute subs, very positive connection. (The program will also go to the senior center in Feb.) Wyatt is enthusiastic about collaborating with WHS.

Also wants to connect the kids with the senior center in a joint venture.

Opportunities for cooperative efforts seem to be opening up community wide.

Exhibit rotation

Discussion about what to do with the Snowflake Bentley exhibit. Make it permanent? Add an actual slide? Do we have enough security to display the slides themselves? Should the collection be with Jericho, even though Peter Dean asked they be part of ours? Evaluate the value of the slides? Insurance possible through the VT League of Cities and Towns?

Bill will check. Mike will research how to protect the slides from light damage if they are displayed.

More discussion on the security camera situation. Bill wasn't aware that the cameras haven't been working for months. He'll check them next week to see if there's something he can do. Who will monitor them?

One-page handout

Cheryl sent everyone her version of the handout to the board. Laura will look it over and offer comments by next Monday.

A/D Committee

Mike explained how he is directing the committee to inventory rather than catalog until the boxes of donations that have not been gone through are recorded. The next step will be to make decisions on keeping, passing to other towns, or getting rid of items, many of which have no donation information. Progress has been made with the Van Esen collection. Mike has met with possible volunteers and he's working on ways they could help further our work. He's also working on a guide for cataloging that all can follow for consistency. Anne suggested that Skip's help is needed for photo identification so a date to meet with Mike and the committee will be arranged.

Cataloging

Once Mike's guide is ready, he'll train Sandy for ongoing cataloging. Jane pointed out that we need a monthly report from Sandy. Mike gave an update of what she's told him she's doing; preparing for catalog changes, but keeping notes rather than entering info. Though she reports her hours, etc. to the town, WHS does not get a copy. The board is officially asking that she does give these monthly reports to us. If Cheryl gets Sandy's time sheets before they go to the town, she can approve them before Sandy's paid. Cheryl will talk to Michelle Ryan in accounting.

The Madness of a Seduced Woman

Mike is asking whether the board wants to accept the donation of original State Hospital records about those buried in the hospital cemetery that were used in writing the book immediately or ask the person keeping them to hold on to them for a while more. Skip reiterated how important and useful they would be to have in our collection due to the importance of the hospital in Waterbury's history. The state archives has most of the hospital records that were saved after the last flood. Mike will have a conversation with Debra Black explaining our situation, find out how big the collection is, what exactly it contains, and report next month.

New exhibit idea

Jane would like to use the Steele Room for more exhibiting space ongoing. She would like to see the Van Esen business calendars displayed there, perhaps in place of Sarah-Lee Terrat's mural pieces. There could be write-ups on the businesses. This would entail investing in display frames for that space with creative direction. She also suggested a display cabinet for the Steele Room made by Ben Keaton. Capital Campaign funds could be used with the Select Board's approval. Laura suggested talking to Whitney at Axel's on good systems. Bill commented that there really isn't space enough in the Steele Room for a display case, but hanging pieces would get plenty of

viewing. We might also display in the library on a rotating basis. Cheryl asked Jane and Laura to get the ball rolling on the project.

Woodard Exhibit

Presently at the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Anne will talk to George about bringing it to the Steele Room, along with his talk showing his movie.

Items of concern in collection

Dr. Janes' medicine bottles may have chemical residue that could be dangerous. Cheryl and Mike believe "best practices" make cleaning them thoroughly a priority.

The skull in our display case appears to be genuine and was said to be an "Indian skull," according to an old label. A human skull should not be displayed and any native American remains should be returned to their tribe. How to identify it as such will be a challenge. Linda Kaiser cataloged the skull, so Mike will try contacting her.

Media

Laura Parette is taking over from Cheryl as newsletter editor. She also offers anything graphic/design the society may need.

Cheryl is always looking for social media content that we can help generate. She needs more! She was wondering about numbers visiting our website, so wanted to ask Paul. [Jill has access to emails from Google, so she can start reporting. In Dec., 176 users visited our website.]

Ghost Walk

Jan is thinking about an immigration theme. Still a relevant issue. Lots of board support for the idea. She's looking for stories about people in Holy Cross cemetery to present.

Joe had to leave before presenting the financial report and there was no time left for new business. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47.

Next meeting will be Feb.15 from 5-6:30 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted January 22, 2023 by Jill Chase, temporary scribe

