

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
October 2017 – December 2017

1. Reaccreditation:

- a. The Besser Museum Board of Trustees received the AAM Reaccreditation Report and their decision to table the Besser Museum's accreditation based on several concerns cited in the report. Since that report, I have spoken with Besser Museum staff, some Besser Museum Board members, with other museum professionals in the MMA network, and the AAM contact person about the concerns cited and steps necessary steps needed. The following are the major concerns cited and my recommendations.
- b. **MAJOR CONCERNS: Collections Stewardship**
 - i. Improvement to storage areas: Collections are not stored in conditions that meet standards
 - ii. Environmental monitoring and controls: humidity and temperature gauges being used are the types normally used in homes, not museums.
 - iii. Cataloging: Although museum has Past Perfect software for managing collections, objects are inventoried and managed through an Excel Spreadsheet. The Excel spreadsheet includes minimal information.
 - iv. Legally, ethically and effectively manages, documents collections: Temporary Custody Receipts and Loan Agreements are not always adequately filled out and signed.

I propose the Besser Museum invest in the hiring of professional museum consultant, Phil Deloria to help assess needs and develop action plan to submit to AMM Accreditation Commission. Phil comes highly recommended by the Harbor Springs Historical Society Museum's Executive Director, Mary Cummunings. Phil has also provided consultation to the Petoskey Historical Society. As noted in his resume, Phil has an extensive career and experience with museum. Please see Phil's attached proposal and resume. I propose the Besser Museum use funds from the Capital Campaign and apply for a MCACA Professional Development Grant due January 15, 2017.

- c. **Museum Software Programs for Cataloging Artifacts:** The Besser Museum currently has Past Perfect software, which was purchased and installed during Janet Smoak's employment. Currently, the museum has only been using the PastPerfect software program for its membership log. I have contacted several museums around Michigan to see what museum software program they are using to catalogue their collections. Many museum's that are similar, and some much larger than the Besser, are using the Past Perfect software, including the Denno's Museum. Several of these museums are using Past Perfect Version 5. I also contact past Besser Museum Executive Director and Collections Manager, Janet Smoak about the Besser Museum's past practices for cataloging. The museum Janet is currently at in Washington state is using Past Perfect 5. After some research into the features of Past Perfect 5, I directed Danyael to research and submit a quote for Past Perfect 5 at <http://museumsoftware.com/pp5.html>.

I proposed the Besser Museum invest in purchasing Past Perfect Version 5. We will also need to invest in having Past Perfect merge the Excel Spreadsheet into the new Past Perfect Version 5 software for multiple users for \$2,818.00 plus \$432 annually. Past Perfect also offers training, online training, and videos. I propose the Besser Museum uses funds from the Besser Museum Endowment Fund, which has a spendable funds of \$49,000.

2. Facilities:

- a. Facilities Manager, is collecting bids from Pest Control companies. (sited in AAM review)
- b. As recommended by the visiting AAM team, (along with other museum professionals) the Besser Museum should invest in DATA LOGGERS with built-in temperature and relative humidity sensors and place them in the museum's storage and exhibit areas. These electronic devices monitor environments.
- c. **I propose the Besser Museum invest \$5,072 in purchasing**
36 - HOBO Data Loggers at \$125 each
HOBOware Pro CD or USB drive Software (cable included) \$99.00
USB Cable \$10.00
HOBO U-Shuttle (Data offload-base station) \$281.00
Batteries \$12.00
HOBO MX 2301 Data Logger (for outside) \$170.00
- d. Matt is talking with Air-N-Energy about HVAC capabilities to monitor humidity and temperate in zones throughout the building. (sited in AAM review)

3. Annual Appeal Donations:

- a. The Besser Museum has received \$5,590.00 from 62 donors to date.
- b. The Museum also received an anonymous donation of \$10,000 to support a part time janitor position for 2018.
- c. The Besser Museum raised \$8,830 during the CFNEM GIVING TUESDAY event. This fundraiser will focus on building our digital library in the planetarium and purchase Habitat Earth and other presentations.

4. 2017 -2018 Budget & Audit: SLK is working on our audit.

- a. There are a few grant opportunities through CFNEM and MCACA that I hope to pursue. Due dates are January 15th. The Professional Development Grant would be for a museum consult. The Program grant will be for a special Planetarium – Science & Art program. The CFNEM grant would be for planetarium programming.
- b. I am interviewing other CPA firms for bids for the museum's bookkeeping.

5. Native American Exhibit Project:

- a. Richard and Roger Cook donated an additional \$15,000 as a match to the Besser Foundations \$30,000 for the Native American gallery project. The Besser Foundation will consider the \$15,000 match, plus the \$11,000 from the first Cook donation that has been budgeted for the Exhibit Design as a match towards the \$30,000.
- b. To date, \$6,000 of the original budget from the \$25,000 Richard and Roger Cook Fund at the Community Foundation for the Native American Exhibit project has been spent. The Board approved the following budget for the \$25,000 donation.
 - \$6,000 Research: Local Historian/Genealogist/Subject Matters Expert
 - \$8,000 Preliminary Interview Capture/Subject
 - \$11,000 Exhibit Design (Project Planning/Design Quote/Budget)
- c. Anne Belanger and is working with Brian Belanger to develop a story line for Preliminary Interview Capture.

6. Art:

- a. **Painted Lady** in Rogers City is working on framing the Hoi Lebadang collection for exhibit in January 2018. The cost is approximately \$3,000. The Best Foot art exhibit netted \$1,631. Bob Smith requested the spendable funds from the Candace Smith endowment, in the amount of \$3,5000, be used for either the framing of the art, and/or, the new planetarium presentation.
- b. **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.
- c. **Fine Art Committee:** The committee will be expanded in 2018 with the addition of Northeast Michigan Artists Guild members, along with other community members with art backgrounds.

7. Planetarium:

- a. Three shows have been added to the new winter planetarium schedule. The schedule posted on our website.
- b. Habitat Earth: Living in a Connected Word has been purchased. This presentation cost \$7,500 for a 10 years license. Tad will start playing this program this spring.
 - i. The Besser Museum had ordered a Christmas program, but the quality of the presentation was extremely poor and was exchanged for Habitat Earth. Funding for this program was covered by \$4,000 from the Harry Johnson Fund and \$3,5000 from the Candace Smith Fund. However, we raised \$8,830 during Giving Tuesday to help build our digital library and purchase Habitat Earth, so the Smith Fund will be used to frame the fine art.

8. Exhibits:

- a. Collections and Exhibits Manager, Danyael Dorr has set the 2018 exhibit schedule. There will be a series of art exhibits throughout the year.

- i. Hoi Lebadang will go up in the Wilson Gallery in January and run through September.
 - ii. Winter Blues non-juried art exhibit will open Feb. 13th.
 - iii. A Collection of Baskets from our permanent collection, featuring Edith Bondie will be on exhibit in Feb – April.
 - iv. Local photographer, Ted Fines will have an exhibit this year.
- b. Good Design Group is working on conceptual designs for the Great Lakes Fisheries Exhibit, the Native American Gallery and the redesign of gallery space within the museum.

9. Marketing:

- a. During the audit, it was discovered that there is \$5,297 in the temporary restricted fund for the past two or three years. That account has not been utilized and they auditor suggest we make a plan to spend down that inactive accountant. **I propose we use those funds to increase this year's marketing budget to promote the museum and the new planetarium into a wider market.**
- b. The Besser Museum continues to market once a month in region wide newspapers.
- c. The Besser Museum appears on Talk of the Town once a month.
- d. Diane Speer at the Alpena News does a great job covering the Besser Museum in her Lifestyle column.
- e. Facebook continues to be a main marketing tool for the Besser Museum.

10. 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.
- c. The Museum is hosting several school groups for our Season of Light exhibit.

11. 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.

12. Miscellaneous:

- a. **Guest Services, Cindy Ranshaw**, is working on developing a new volunteer program/docent training program. We hope to launch this program early 2018.
- b. **Employee Handbook:** 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.