

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 12th, 2024 – 7 pm

Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of May 8th, 2024
5. Public Comment
6. Committee Updates
 - 6.1. Executive Committee
 - 6.2. Awards Committee
 - 6.3. Building Committee
 - 6.4. Markers Committee
 - 6.5. Projects Committee
7. New Business
 - 7.1. MCMS Reports
8. Old Business
 - 8.1. Actionable Objectives Discussion: Develop and Implement a Collections Storage Plan
9. Public Comment
10. Board Comments
11. Adjournment

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, July 10th, 2024 @ 7 pm
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2024 MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES	2024 COMMITTEES
Chair Brian Egen, District 6 Vice Chair Jeremy Potter, District 1 Secretary Michael Humphries, District 8 Immediate Past Chair Hobby Nels Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka Trustee Thomas Heywood, District 2 Trustee Mary Strevel, District 3 Trustee L William Conner, District 4 Trustee Michelle LaVoy, District 5 Trustee Anne Noland, District 7 Trustee Nick Guthrie, District 9	Executive Committee Chair: Brian Egen Members: Jeremy Potter, Michael Humphries, Hobby Nels, Andrew Clark, and JJ Przewozniak Awards Committee Chair: Michelle LaVoy Members:, Thomas Heywood, Anne Noland, Mary Strevel, and Andrew Clark Markers Committee Chair: Jeremy Potter Members: Brian Egen, Nicholas Guthrie, Michael Humphries, Lynn Reaume, and Andrew Clark Projects Committee Chair: Michael Humphries Members: Bill Conner, Brian Egen, and Andrew Clark

Mission Statement of the Monroe County Museum System

At the Monroe County Museum, we fuel and cultivate our visitors' curiosity through the exploration of Monroe County's rich and varied stories, joining together to unearth meaning and illuminate relevant connections between the past, present, and future.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM
BOARD of TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES
May 8th, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
at the Monroe County Museum, 126 South Monroe Street, Monroe

Present: Brian Egen, Chairman	Michael Humphries, Secretary	William Conner, Member
Nick Guthrie, Member	Tom Heywood, Member	Michelle LaVoy, Member
Richard Micka, Emeritus	Hobby Nels, Past Chairman	
Anne Noland, Member	Mary Strevel, Member	

Excused: Jeremy Potter, Vice-Chairman

Museum Staff: Director Clark J.J. Przewozniak, Deputy Director Lynn Reaume, County Historian

Guest: Jeanne Micka, Sawyer Homestead

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., roll was called, and there was a quorum.

Approval of the Agenda: motion was made to accept the agenda by T. Heywood, seconded by H. Nels, and passed.

Approval of Minutes of April 10th, 2024 Meeting: M. Humphries made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as published, seconded by N. Guthrie, and passed.

Public Comment #1: none

Committee Updates: Executive: Chairman Egen said the group has not met.

Spirit of Service Awards Committee: Chairperson LaVoy said they have the applications in-hand, and will meet possibly after this meeting.

Building Committee: Chairman Egen said the group had not met. Director Clark said there were two respondents, both not local, though there was a local interest. There is no budget yet for the feasibility study, possibly costing \$70,000, though a lower sum was suggested by a local company. Such a study will define the logistics & specifications for a museum building addition. Though not yet stipulated, approx. 8,000- 12,000 square feet would be a target. This addition would be 'purpose-built' and have multiple uses for the space. Director Clark will talk with M. Bosanac to discuss a commitment of funds and recommendations.

Historical Markers Committee: See Director's report for update. It is expected that 12 more markers will be sent in June to Sewah Foundry for repainting.

Projects Grant Committee: Chairman M. Humphries said there were a request of \$70,000 for the total \$60,000 award grant. He noted that the Monroe County Historical Society (MCHS) is seeking an extension to their past grant award. There was a motion made to support an extension by W. Conner, seconded by T. Heywood, but with discussion, the motion was withdrawn by both parties and talk went on. There was discussion about the status of the award and society.

Chairman Humphries made a motion for a letter to be sent to their board requiring a detailed list and timeline for proposed progress, since it hadn't advanced. This was seconded by N. Guthrie and was approved, with no abstention.

New Business: Staff Reports: T. Heywood made a motion to accept the reports as presented, seconded by M. Strevel, and approved.

Old Business: Director Clark spoke to the topic 'conflict of interest' and spoke of several resources to read from Museum publications about these standards. It is hoped to clarify the county statement with museum specific language; plus the museum will have its own statement. There will be future discussions. Motion was made to consider this topic by N. Guthrie, seconded by M. LaVoy and it was passed unanimously.

Public Comment #2: none.

Board Comments: R. Micka announced a Labor History event Thursday evening.

A.Noland said the event on the 'River Raisin Legacy Project' was very enjoyable.

Director Clark said regarding Third Street storage building that the county will paint the outside wall near the near house.

Chairman Egen spoke on the 'River Raisin Legacy Project' event and said it was well attended and was the culmination of a team effort, both public and private.

With no other business to discuss, motion was made by M. Humphries to adjourn, seconded by H. Nels and the meeting was concluded at 8:05 p.m.

The next Trustee meeting is Wednesday, June 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.

Lynn W. Reaume
Acting recording secretary
6 June 2024

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Director's Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

Wednesday, 12 June 2024

Organizational Operations

County Museum

Hours of operation are Sundays through Saturdays, 10 am to 5 pm.

County Archives

Research is by appointment and via phone, mail, and email.

Territorial Park

Now open for 2024 season through Labor Day weekend. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm.

Vietnam Veterans Museum

Now open for 2024 season through Labor Day weekend. Fridays, 10 am to 4 pm.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

The Monroe County Museum System will be closed Thursday, 4 July for the Independence Day holiday in accordance with the County of Monroe's holiday calendar.

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

New first floor photocopier has finally been delivered and installed.

A contractor has been lined up to address the ongoing issues with the front doors. The start date is to be announced.

Territorial Park

Several site enhancements have taken place around Papermill School:

All of the windows broken by the spray of gravel have been repaired and reinstalled. Staff placed planters and flowers in front of the doorway to the school to, hopefully, deter another incident.

As part of countywide concrete program, a new walkway was poured between the school and preexisting concrete pad. A new concrete pad was created for the three seasons portable toilet.

A new portable AC unit was installed in the school to provide a small degree of refuge in the event of extreme summer heat for visitors and staff. A new mini fridge was installed to ensure that there is always ample cold drinking water onsite for visitors and staff. Additional picnic tables have been ordered and are expected to be in place within the next couple weeks. One will be for down by the creek and one will be in a secluded location to provide a shaded spot for staff during their breaks.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Opening on 24 May did not go as planned. We suspected something wasn't exactly right as it appeared that sometime in the winter sand and debris had come up through the floor drains in both bathrooms. When the plumbing contractor came in to dewinterize the bathrooms, a pool of black ooze emerged from the drains whenever the toilets were flushed. As the contractor wasn't equipped to clear the pipes, another plumber with the what we thought was going to be the right equipment came to clear them. After scoping and finding debris and blockages and wastewater pumping into a pit that it shouldn't be, another separate contractor was brought in to jet the lines. During this work it was discovered that there was a grease blockage which they then broke down. While grease isn't normally - or ever - emptied into the bathrooms at the Vietnam Veterans Museum we suspect the culprit may be our next-door neighbor, Wendy's. Anyways, after about three weeks of bringing in plumbers, the museum finally opened for seasonal operations on Friday, 7 June.

While babysitting the plumber, I discovered that about a half dozen needles and the remains of a crack pipe had been secreted between a small pile of bricks in front of the tool shed that the veterans use to store the odds and ends that they use for the upkeep of the memorial. I called central dispatch and a sheriff's deputy cleaned it up and said that he'd put in a request to increase patrols out there. As I've been out at the site for more than a decade now, this was the first instance of this kind of drug paraphernalia being found around the museum and bathroom buildings that I can recall. For the moment I'm just considering it an isolated incident but we're monitoring the area regularly as a precaution. If there is an uptick with this sort of debris, I think a reevaluation of our role at the site is in order.

The visible homeless issue continues at Heck Park. It doesn't appear that anyone is using the pavilion behind the museum as an encampment this year but the gazebo has been regularly occupied by an older man who migrates around the park during the day.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Exhibits

A few artifacts have been moved into the south lobby cases.

Awards Program

Committee report will be given during the meeting.

Building Program

A very significant amount of progress has been made regarding the feasibility study.

Following last month's meeting, I had the opportunity to meet with both of the firms that had submitted RFPs to see what could be done to pare down the costs but still get us what we needed for a practical feasibility study but at a bit of a lower price point. I met NeumannSmith at their offices in Southfield and PLY+ came to Monroe. Both firms were clearly capable to provide us with what we need to get to the next steps in the process. I met with county administration and reported back on my meetings. County administration and I then had a follow-up meeting with PLY+ and they submitted a plan that knocked more than \$25,000 off of the initial proposal and county administration accepted it.

While composing my report for this month on Monday morning, PLY+ staff were on-site to begin their first day of work on the project. Based on their current timeline, the feasibility study should be wrapped up prior to Labor Day weekend.

Markers Program

I have nothing to provide at this time other than my initial delivery plan is behind schedule. I'm hoping to get refocused, distribute notices, and pull markers with staff over the next couple weeks and then deliver the markers prior to Sewah Studios going on their Independence Day break in early July.

Historical Projects Fund

Nothing to report at this time other than this year's applications are currently under review.

Personnel Updates

Nicholas Mester has been hired and has been brought on as a regular, part-time presenter.

Hodge Podge

Mike Trapp, executive director of the RRCA, is retiring. There will be a reception for him on Friday, 14 June from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you're interested in attending, you can RSVP at 313.410.8781.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Deputy Director's Report

Tuesday, May 6, through Saturday, June 8, 2024

Submitted by Jeffrey J. (JJ) Przewozniak

On Saturday, May 18, I was a speaker at the fourth annual French Heritage Corridor conference, held this year at the RRNBP. My presentation topic was *Land Practices in New France*, with a focus on the River Raisin Settlement. The following day, as a part of the conference, attendees were invited to RRTP for a day of living history, generously supported by our corps of volunteers. For our participation, the MCMS was recognized as a sponsor of the conference.

Saturday, May 18 was the DMBN's *Chalk the Walk* event, for which our walk was sufficiently and delightfully chalked.

Following a period of R & D, Mike constructed a replica 1850s dry sink for use at the Eby house. After acquiring some hardware and a couple coats of paint, it will live at Eby awaiting a baptism by fire during fair week.

Outreach & Field Trips:

- On Tuesday, May 14, I celebrated the 40th anniversary of my birth by attending the Lake Erie Water Festival with Jill and PB, where they delivered multiple presentations of *Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade* throughout the day.
- On Tuesday, May 21, we hosted a group of students and teachers from St. Mary's at the museum.
- Between Tuesday, May 28 and Thursday, May 30, we hosted the 3rd grade students of Douglas Elementary (Garden City) at RRTP. Roughly 210 students plus teachers and chaperones experienced hands-on history of early 1800s life via activity stations around the farm, which included aquatic mammals, butter making, historic agriculture, and a healthy dose of period games and exploring around the farmstead.
- On Friday, May 31, the 5th graders of Trinity Lutheran came for a visit to RRTP for a similar experience. This time, the students got to experience the joy of planting their very own row of potatoes!

Territorial Park:

- On Tuesday, June 4, the RRTP structures received the annual treatment for stinging insects.

- From June 6-8, Living history was temporarily suspended at RRTP due to an unexpected lot closure for concrete work around the schoolhouse and transformer.
- Work on the farm field was completed in mid-May, and shortly thereafter multiple varieties of squash were planted and spring wheat was sown. Regular watering has resulted in good germination.
- Throughout the month, all facets of work at RRTP greatly intensified in preparation for the multiple events throughout May and the start of summer operations on Memorial Day weekend. This includes but was not limited to: general cleaning & organizing, field and garden maintenance & planting, grounds work, presenter training, period clothing assembly, etc. I'm happy to report that the programs division rose to the challenge of a brisk and eventful May, allowing no stoppages in our mission to present a welcoming and beautiful 1817 working farm to our visitors for the 2024 season.
- Termites were discovered at RRTP near the barn around our stumps and lumber piles. No termite activity has been observed on the barn itself, and we've been burning the affected wood for the last couple days. Treatment will occur with all possible speed following an inspection by an exterminator next week.

Miscellany:

Many thanks to Geoff Hoerauf, Julie Esch, Vivian Johnson, and Theresa & Duncan Savage for volunteering their time and talents in support of living history at RRTP on Sunday, May 19.

Planning and coordination is underway for a special event at RRTP on Saturday, July 13, in honor of the establishment of Monroe County in 1817.

Planning and coordination is also underway for several building projects around the park, including the summer kitchen chimney, bridge, and barn floor, among others.

LOCAL HISTORY DIVISION Report
For May, 2024

We were open by appointment for 20 visitors, 5 walk-ins, and 24 GSMC members.

Topics included the obituaries, genealogy, French pear trees, Ilgenfritz & Greening Nurseries, Trading Post site, Ed's Service Station, Dandulin & Loranger, an address for a grandmother's house, and the old Christopher Bruckner stone house on North Custer.

Rachel processed 20 obits from 7 requests. She handled 3 phone call requests and 12 emails. When upstairs she continues to move and label the obituary drawers, plus answer requests and look up obits.

Robert had 10 outside calls and answered 9 emails. He continues processing the William Capaul collection images. He processed some FIC items including 0.40- 0.44, signs used at the Monroe Post Office.

Robert & I met with retired professional conservator Mark Gervasi who has worked for multiple museums and institutions, including the Henry Ford. We toured his studio and saw his work, including his personal art works. He will be working on some of our collection items and we hope to have great results. Stay tuned.

Accessions during May:

2024.18	Lynn Reaume: children's clothing, 2024 eclipse glasses, toys, unused COVID-19 test kits, misc.
2024.19	Dave Eby: award ribbons from Golden Harvest, and Monroe County Poultry Assoc. shows
2024.20	Barry Egen: wooden Towne Club pop crate
2024.21	Unknown mailing: Abstract for LaSalle property

Old Business Updates: I am waiting for Dr. Chenoweth to come back into his office so we can extend the loan on his work with our River Raisin Battlefield artifacts.

I have not heard any new news on our Smithsonian request to transfer of the painting 'Romance of Monroe.'

IT came over to connect our new larger bed scanner to the county network. It will be used with the laptop we have in Archives. We have a lot of use for it, especially for larger books, scrapbooks, documents, etc. Thanks to Andy for its purchase.

I am still (and will be for a while) processing the extensive Everett Payette Collection we received from the Monroe News/Gannett last year. I am moving files (yet again!) in the Archives storage room and in the reading area to make way for yet even more files as the Monroe Evening News photographs and topical files are being slowly incorporated. We have many 'pregnant' (as we call them) file boxes that just can't take another piece of paper and these are always being unburdened into another box, but that means more moving!

I had a great time with one of our recurring researchers, Dr. Jeffrey Boutain, botanist PhD. We talked a lot about the French pear trees, and shared extensive information on them and in general growing plants and the French, which also led to some other interesting topic. I greatly enjoy a shared give-and-take experience- he even grows giant pumpkins and squash and had photos. Maybe see him this year at the Harnica pumpkin weigh-off?

County Obituary page for April: 6,537 views from 758 users; all events 14,486
County Obituary page for May: 6,419 views from 692 users; all events 14,103.

Lynn W. Reaume, County Historian
6 June 2024