



**Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting**

Tuesday, 23 September 2025 @ 7 pm
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 13 August 2025
5. Public Comment
6. Markers Committee
7. Projects Fund Committee
 1. Monroe County Historical Society request
8. Awards Committee
9. New Business
 1. Monroe County Museum System Department Report
 2. Acceptance of Accessions - **Action Needed**
 3. Approval of Deaccessions - **Action Needed**
10. Old Business
 1. Museum Expansion Update
11. Public Comment
12. Board Comments
13. Adjournment

Next Meeting

TBA // Call of the Chair
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2025 Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

(All terms expire 31 December 2026)

Officers	Trustees
Chair Brian Egen, County District 6	Trustee Emeritus Richard Micka
Vice Chair Michelle Lavoy, County District 5	Trustee Barbara Roe, County District 1
Secretary Michael Humphries, County District 8	Trustee Thomas Heywood, County District 2
Immediate Past Chair Hobby Nels	Trustee Sue Wagers, County District 3
	Trustee L William Conner, County District 4
	Trustee Anne Noland, County District 7
	Trustee Nick Guthrie, County District 9

2025 Board of Trustees Committees

(Appointed annually by the board chair)

Executive Committee	<i>Board:</i> Brian Egen (Chair), Michelle Lavoy, Michael Humphries, Hobby Nels <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark, JJ Przewozniak
Awards Committee	<i>Board:</i> Michelle Lavoy, Anne Noland, Sue Wagers <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark
Markers Committee	<i>Board:</i> Nick Guthrie (Chair), Brian Egen, Michael Humphries, Barbara Roe <i>Staff:</i> Andrew Clark, JJ Przewozniak
Projects Committee	<i>Board:</i> Michael Humphries (Chair), Bill Conner, Brian Egen, Nick Guthrie <i>Staff:</i> 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 reach 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: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 // 7:00 PM
Held at the Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street, Monroe, MI 48161

Attendance:

Brian Egen, Chair	District 6	Present
Richard Micka, Trustee Emeritus		Present
Mike Humphries, Secretary	District 8	Present
Hobby Nels, Immediate Past Chair		Present
Nick Guthrie	District 9	Excused
Thomas Heywood	District 2	Excused
Michelle LaVoy, Vice Chair	District 5	Present
Barbara Roe	District 1	Present
Sue Wagers	District 3	Present
L. William Conner, Jr.	District 4	Present
Anne Noland	District 7	Present

Museum System Staff

Andrew Clark, Director

JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director

Robert Lutey, County Historian (Acting)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM, and roll call was taken by Secretary Humphries. Sue Wagers made a motion to approve the agenda, which was supported by Mike Humphries, and passed unanimously.

Approval of 5/20/25 Meeting Minutes: Barbara Roe noted that the name “Loretta Dunham” was misspelled as “Loretta Durham” on page 2. B. Roe added that she had abstained from voting during the G.S.M.C. grant vote. A motion was made by L. William Conner, Jr. to approve the minutes with corrections, which was supported by Hobby Nels and passed unanimously.

Approval of 7/9/25 Meeting Minutes: W. Conner asked that the square footage numbers for the expansion of the archives be added to the record. A motion then made by H. Nels to approve the minutes with corrections, which was supported by M. Humphries and passed unanimously.

1st Public Comment: None

Markers Committee Update: Andrew Clark mentioned upcoming marker installs and added that the committee is looking to plan a meeting in the near future. S. Wagers asked if the lead time for markers remains approximately 6-8 months, to which A. Clark responded in the affirmative. B. Egen added that much of that delay has to do with the foundry and how busy they are.

Projects Committee Update: M. Humphries stated that the city of Monroe provided an explanation regarding its extension application. They said that there were trees that needed to be removed, at an expense of \$14,700. M. Humphries added that he believed that the city's excuse was good, and made a motion to approve the requested Woodland Cemetery project extension to August of 2026. The motion was supported by W. Conner. M. LaVoy asked if they have a timeline. A. Clark noted that he was only aware of the extension. Discussion ensued regarding the application process and how to minimize the number of extension requests. W. Conner suggested having a meeting with the city to emphasize the importance of preparedness. M. LaVoy added that she wants the city of Monroe to treat the MCMS board like they would treat any other organization. Brian Egen emphasized the importance of the board to both foster a spirit of collaboration while also being a good steward of the money.

A voice vote was taken, with M. LaVoy abstaining. It passed unanimously.

Awards Committee Update: M. LaVoy noted that her fellow committee members are eager to help with the upcoming Spirit of Service event, and she appreciates it. She stated that the awards are currently in production and that the invitations will be sent electronically. The tent and chairs are ready and museum staff will take care of the sound system. A photographer has been lined up. LaVoy said that Nocturnal will be approached again for drinks and GFS may be used for food. S. Wagers asked if there will be any additional advertisement for the event and A. Clark responded that there will be advertisement through the museum's mailing list and through social media. M. Humphries suggested asking the Monroe County Reporters to share it on Facebook.

New Business: M. LaVoy made a motion to accept the department reports as written. It was supported by M. Humphries and passed unanimously.

Regarding museum accessions, W. Conner asked about the Bulkley county history books accessioned as part of 2025.49. Robert Lutey responded that the books relate to Monroe County and that Bulkley was the last name of the author of the books. W. Conner also asked about the significance of the cell phone accessioned as a part of 2025.48. R. Lutey replied that it was used by a county resident for his business and that the museum currently does not have any cell phones in the collection. M. Humphries made a motion to accept the accessions and was seconded by M. LaVoy. It passed unanimously.

The board as a whole acknowledged by consensus that there were no deaccessions for this month.

Old Business: A. Clark stated that Kohler Architecture was selected to work on the final build plans. They have already begun work throughout the museum. A meeting has been set for August 29 for the executive committee members to meet with county representatives, the architects, and the contractors working with the architects. Kohler submitted a timeline that anticipates the completion of the addition in 2027. B. Egen added that construction should ideally begin in March of 2026.

W. Conner asked how the board will be involved with the process of building the addition. A. Clark responded that the board will have a role in the decision making. W. Conner expressed his agreement with the selection of a local firm for the architect. A. Clark noted that he anticipates the need for a number of special board meetings between now and November in order to meet the needs of the building project. He also said that he or B. Egen will try to get into the habit of sending the full board regular building program updates. B. Egen emphasized the board's position as an advisory body and said that the board will exercise that role. He added that he and the board are adamant to be involved in the process. M. LaVoy echoed the importance of the board having a say. A. Clark encouraged the board to remind him to send regular emails updating the board. W. Conner said that email updates would be helpful.

2nd Public Comment: Jeanne Micka mentioned she has heard a lot of positive feedback about the museum at the thrift shop. She added that a young man came by one day looking to get involved. She encouraged him to come over to the Sawyer House and help pull weeds and he did. Micka also expressed her appreciation for the work done by museum staff.

Board Comments:

Anne Noland asked if the board was planning a meeting after the Spirit of Service event. A. Clark said that in the past the board typically tries not to have a meeting that week. The meeting is currently the call of the board chair. Noland added that she is available to assist during Octobernight. She also mentioned that she saw B. Egen at the River Raisin cleanup project.

S. Wagers asked if there is a plan to consolidate the various county-wide activities related to the America 250 celebration. She also invited the board to the Berlin Charter Township Historical Society's fall presentation on November 5th at the South Rockwood Library. JJ Przewozniak responded to her first question, saying that the museum is tentatively planning an event similar to For the Publick Good for the America 250 celebration. A. Clark added that the biggest challenge is trying to figure out if the museum will even be open during construction, which will likely be underway by summer of 2026. He said that an event at the Territorial Park would be ideal as it won't be impeded by construction and will also be a bit different than events put on by other museums. B. Egen noted that at the state level, the focus will be on both celebration and commemoration. S. Wagers pointed out that it would be useful to have a central location for all of the America 250 happenings occurring around the county. B. Egen responded that the state has a website which can be populated by communities. A. Clark said

that it may be good to involve the tourism bureau. B. Egen said that it may be useful to take existing Monroe County Museum programs and frame them as events for America 250.

R. Micka informed the group that the Monroe Outdoor Expo 2025 will take place on September 6 at the Frenchtown Community Center. He suggested that the museum might be interested in getting involved. He added that there is a new memorial set up to recognize local conservationists at the Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. An event will be held there on September 14 during the Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival.

M. Humphries said that he is excited about the building updates. He also complimented the programs at the Eby House during the Monroe County Fair.

M. LaVoy mentioned that she has been working on a youth voting sticker contest for the city. There is information regarding the sticker design contest at monroemi.gov. Children will be asked to design an "I Voted" sticker that will be used during the city's election this year. She asked for the board's help in spreading the word.

J. Przewozniak expressed his appreciation for the kind words said about the fair programming, and noted the involvement of volunteers and contractors. He also mentioned that he forgot to include in his report the completion of a new fence at the Territorial Park. He thanked the Programs Division and Mike Nelligan for their work on the project.

A. Clark invited the group to come to the Spirit of Service event on September 10. He added that he or JJ will be getting in touch with the board for Octobernight volunteering opportunities. It was brought up that Nocturnal may or may not be participating in this year's Octobernight.

B. Egen said that the For the Public Good event went well, despite a thunderstorm in the afternoon. He also complimented programming at the Eby House. Egen added that a community input was going to be held at the Arthur Lesow Community Center on August 14. He announced that the city's river cleanup event was record breaking with 346 people signed in. Lastly, he mentioned that a new book, *Radical of Radicals*, was recently released with Egen himself writing the preface. The proceeds of the book will go to a monument project in Maryland.

M. Humphries made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by M. LaVoy and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

These minutes were prepared by Robert Lutey on August 25, 2025.



Monroe County Museum System
126 S. Monroe Street
Monroe MI 48161

September 22, 2025

Dear Board of Directors,

The Monroe County Historical Society would like to formally request reconsideration of the grant in the amount of \$20,000, which was awarded to the society in 2022, for the restoration of the Johnson-Phinney building. This grant is extremely important in covering part of the cost of stripping the old paint down to the bare wood of this nearly 200-year-old Federal-style home of Colonel Oliver Johnson.

In accordance with the original grant verbiage, we have already fully restored the front porch. We are well on the way to stripping the paint on two sides of the house and starting on the third side as we speak. The stripping is being performed by a licensed lead paint contractor and in accordance with the City of Monroe. We have ordered new banding trim wood, which was made to our specifications by Amish craftsmen in Ohio. We fully expect the restoration and painting of the building to be completed by November 2025.

There were several road blocks that occurred from 2022-2024 that hindered the timeline of the original project. There were personnel changes as well as failure of the initial vendor to provide actual costs that were approved and agreeable to our board members. In the Spring of 2025, we regrouped and put the job out to bid again and received three competitive quotes. We are very happy with the progress to this point and fully expect to have new gutters and the 48 new shutters installed this year as well.

We look forward to partnering with the Monroe County Museum System in order to preserve the Johnson-Phinney house for future generations to use, enjoy and appreciate. We are proud to maintain this jewel and share with the City of Monroe's residents, which we hope will appreciate the esteemed historical value for years to come.

Sincerely,
The Monroe County Historical Society

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Department Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

with contributions from

JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director and Robert Lutey, Lead Historian

Tuesday, 23 September 2025

Organizational Operations

County Museum

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

County Archives

Mondays and Tuesdays: By Appointment

Wednesdays: 10 am to 4.30 pm

Thursdays: 1 pm to 4.30 pm

Fridays: 1 pm to 4.30 pm

Territorial Park

Historic buildings closed for the season; grounds open.

Vietnam Veterans Museum

Museum closed for the season; memorial open.

St Antoine's Historic Site

Grounds are open year round.

Upcoming Closures

3 October, Octovernight Prep

4 October Octovernight Prep

11 November, Veterans Day

27-28 November, Thanksgiving

24-25 December, Christmas

31 December, New Year's Eve

Upcoming Events

Saturdays and Sundays in September and October

YesterWays:Eerie Edition

3-4 October

Octovernight

Territorial Park, 6 pm to 10 pm

8, 15, 22, and 29 October

Shadowed Sips

Nocturnal, 7 pm

21 November

Hometown Holiday Lights

Monroe County Museum and Loranger Square

21 November through 30 December

Christmas with the Monroe County Museum

Monroe County Museum

Maintenance and Operations

Museum and Archives

The RRCA is beginning their building exterior improvements in the near future which will require the use of our lot for an extended period of time.

Territorial Park

Loop Trail construction work continues at and around the park. One of the major improvements for the park that is a by-product of the project is that the Papermill School entry has been paved with asphalt. With the exception of new traffic and crosswalk signals, all major work around the site should be completed. Work on the entirety of the project is slated to be finished by mid-November. The path is already seeing active use.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Nothing to report.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Programs

Submitted by JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director

Territorial Park:

- On Friday, August 9, some minor cosmetic work was done to the wooden footbridge.
- In the middle of the month, two logs were processed into firewood/kindling, and our assorted lumber piles were tidied up/processed.
- On Wednesday, August 13, I had some minor electrical work done at the Papermill School.
- Thursday, August 14 witnessed a welcome surprise visit to TPRR by a homeschool group of 70+.
- On Thursday, August 28, we hosted Tales by Twilight at TPRR. Though rain tried to dampen the fun, the event was a success, complete with s'mores, ice cream, and a night of dynamic performances of campfire stories by the presenters.
- The end of August signaled the end of the 1817 living history season at TPRR. Thanks to all the staff, volunteers, and friends for all the support.

Outreach:

- On Tuesday, August 5, the programs division visited the Knabusch Math & Science Center to present Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade as part of SMCC's 2025 Survivor Camp.
- Though fate prevented us from directly participating in the annual River Raisin cleanup event on Saturday, August 9, I'm happy to report that our pop-up exhibit King of the Fishes made an appearance at the gathering of 360 people. Thanks to Chairman Egen for coordinating.
- On Tuesday, August 12, the programs division visited Sterling Elementary for 3 presentations of Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade.
- On Wednesday, August 13, MCES Summer Camp visited the County Museum for Aquatic Mammals of the Fur Trade and some fun scavenger hunts afterward.

Miscellany:

- Following Fair week, the 1860 Eby House vignette was dismantled and stored.
- On Thursday, August 14, I went with Robert to transport a particularly weighty artifact to our conservator Mark. It wasn't as heavy as it was awkward.
- Leatherworking 101 with Brett Walker, originally scheduled for Saturday August 9, was postponed to Saturday, October 11 due to a health issue. Leatherworking 201, originally scheduled for Friday & Saturday August 15 & 16, was also postponed to November 7 & 8, due to insufficient registrations.
- On Wednesday, August 27, I attended an America250 planning committee meeting with Director Clark.
- Production began on some new period clothing for Octobernight: two very accurate c. 1813 hunting frocks as worn by R.M. Johnson's Mounted Militia during the Thames campaign. Special thanks to Chairman Egen for varied contributions to this intensive project, which incorporates a high degree of critical material details that are impossible to replicate without extensive hand-work and expertise.
- Thanks to Geoff Hoerauf for volunteering at TPRR on Saturday, August 23.

Collections and Archives

Submitted by Robert Lutey, Lead Historian

I spent a considerable amount of time this month working to remove the mold from the Monroe Evening Newsbooks which were exposed to water earlier this year. 69 books were able to be saved out of a total of 87. Considering the extent of the damage that was observed upon initial discovery, I consider this to be the best case scenario. The survivors will be brought back to the museum but will not be put back onto the shelves they came from.

Rachel and I were also very busy assisting researchers this month. Topics of interest included house research, prohibition, WW2, MHS Generations of Sound, early political records, Wahl Brewery and airfields. It should be noted that Rachel took on many of

the researchers this month which allowed me to spend more time on the above mold remediation project. Thank you, Rachel!

Director Clark, Jacob Perry (the county's IT Director) and I met with representatives from Preservica to continue the discussion regarding our future digital collections initiatives.

Deputy Director Przewozniak and I made a run to our conservator's studio in St. Clair Shores to pick up the artifacts he completed and drop off a bookkeeping machine (2025.56.1) for him to work on next. The completed items include Libbie Custer's doll cradle, Major Soleau's Civil War revolver and a 1912 Oliver typewriter.

The Collections Division has acquired a new canister vacuum for exclusive use on the collections. It has a HEPA filter and allows the user to adjust the level of suction power. The vacuum has already proven itself to be useful on the aforementioned newspaper books and will certainly help with artifact cleaning projects well into the future.

I assisted Director Clark, Mike Nelligan and Nicholas Mester during the installation of two more historical markers on August 15.

I also began reorganizing the books in our small collections by moving them from their small collection boxes into separate ones. This move will free up space in the original boxes and also prevents the heavy books from damaging fragile documents.

Work has continued on general filing, finding aid updating, obituary related tasks and more.

Building Program

This will be covered in section 10.1

Markers Program

On the 15th of August museum staff reinstalled the *St Paul's United Methodist Church* marker in Monroe and the *St Charles Church* marker in Newport. The 16th of September museum staff reinstalled the *Colonel Oliver Johnson's Home* marker and *The Custer Home* marker (likely our most reinstalled marker); both are in Monroe.

Historical Projects Fund

See September agenda item 7.1.

I intend to have the draft 2026 application to the committee before our next meeting.

Awards Program

Many thanks to everyone that attended the 2025 Spirit of Service Awards. It was likely the most well attended ceremony since 2018.

I intend to have the draft 2026 application to the committee before our next meeting.

Personnel Updates

Robert Lutey has been promoted to Lead Historian.

Monroe County Museum System

Collections Division

Accessions Report

August 2025

Accession Number	Donor	Item(s)
2025.54	Unknown (Drop-Off)	Rural directory of Monroe County and <i>Historic Monroe County</i> booklet
2025.55	Dundee Old Mill Museum	J.L.P. Gentil jewelry box, Egle & Kirschner ruler, Old Frenchtown Days buttons, Old Frenchtown Days costume guide
2025.56	River Raisin Centre for the Arts (RRCA)	A Burroughs bookkeeping machine with stand (likely used by Monroe Bank & Trust)
2025.57	Eileen Ham	Camp Fire Girls vests, caps, neckerchiefs, flashlight, book and assorted loose patches
2025.58	Laurie Schultz	Blank checks from the American Heritage Antique Mall

There were no non-accession transfers made in August of 2025.

Monroe County Museum System

Collections Division

Deaccessions Report

August 2025

Object Identification Number	Donor	Item(s)/Reason
None	None	None