



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

Tuesday, November 25, 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 October 21, 2025
5. Public Comment
6. Markers Committee
7. Projects Fund Committee
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

December 10, 2025 @ 6 pm
Monroe County Museum
126 South Monroe Street
Monroe, Michigan 48161

2025 Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees

(All terms expire December 31, 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: Tuesday, October 21, 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	Present
Thomas Heywood	District 2	Present
Michelle LaVoy, Vice Chair	District 5	Present
Barbara Roe	District 1	Present
Sue Wagers	District 3	Present
L. William Conner, Jr.	District 4	Excused
Anne Noland	District 7	Present

Museum System Staff

Andrew Clark, Director

JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director

Robert Lutey, Lead Historian

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Egen, and roll call was taken by Secretary Humphries. Nick Guthrie made a motion to approve the agenda, which was supported by M. Humphries, and passed unanimously. M. Humphries made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 23rd meeting. It was supported by Michelle LaVoy and passed unanimously.

1st Public Comment: None

Markers Committee Update: The update began with a discussion regarding the approval of text for the Berlin Charter Township Historical Society's new historical marker. N. Guthrie asked Sue Wagers if there is a preferred version of the text. She responded in the affirmative and added that version 1 is a refinement of version 2. B. Egen asked if the first line of version 1 should be indented and other trustees agreed with him. M. Humphries stated that, at a minimum, indentation should be consistent on any given sign. B. Egen then pointed out that a period needed to be added into version 2. He also questioned the use of the word "monetarily." The

word “funds” was suggested as a replacement. M. LaVoy took issue with the first sentence of the second paragraph of version 2. S. Wagers encouraged the group to choose side A version 1, because it was the further refined version. B. Egen also preferred version 1. Andy Clark commended S. Wagers and her team for keeping the text on both versions short and added that he preferred version 2. Discussion ensued regarding the merits of each version. It was agreed upon to remove the words “creatively” and “underneath” from version 2. JJ Przewozniak suggested going in for a rewrite. M. LaVoy made a motion to table the discussion, and was supported by Anne Noland. It passed unanimously with the exception of B. Egen and S. Wagers, who opposed it. B. Egen explained that the group will have to come back again later and approve the text. M. LaVoy explained that she had made the previous motion without fully understanding. She offered to make another motion to strike the table, but later declined to make any further changes. M. Humphries made a motion to accept the topics of both sides A and B as presented and to give museum staff final editing approval of the topics, removing the need to bring it back before the board. It was supported by M. LaVoy. Some other editing points were brought up for side B by various trustees. B. Egen suggested adding the date of the construction of Interstate 75. S. Wagers said that the relevant dates are not exactly known. Discussion ensued regarding the need to include “exit 26” and the potential that exit 26 may change during the next sixty years. Discussion continued regarding minor grammatical and flow changes. B. Egen reiterated the motion on the floor. It passed unanimously. M. LaVoy asked the board to notify trustees before future wordsmithing sessions in order to be better prepared. A. Noland agreed.

N. Guthrie issued a quick committee update, saying that A. Clark had submitted a list of the marker removals.

Projects Fund Committee Update: M. Humphries said that there are no updates.

Awards Committee Update: M. LaVoy said she will be sending out an email to committee members.

New Business: M. Humphries made a motion to accept the department reports as written. It was supported by Thomas Heywood. It was never voted upon.

N. Guthrie made a motion to approve the accessions. The motion was supported by M. LaVoy and passed unanimously.

The board by consensus recognized that there were no deaccessions.

Old Business: M. Humphries said that the Monroe County Historical Society asked for an extension on its Johnson-Phinney project grant originally made in 2022. The society sent the committee two quotes for work on the project, both of which far exceeded the amount of the grant. The committee recommended that the board approve the extension and ask that the society’s contractor send the committee the invoice directly at the project’s completion. M. Humphries made a motion to further extend the 2022 grant made to the Monroe County

Historical Society for the Johnson-Phinney house painting project in the amount of \$20,000. The extension period would not exceed one year and no further extensions would be considered. The society should forward to the committee an invoice for \$20,000 directly from the contractor for payment. This motion was seconded by N. Guthrie and passed unanimously.

A. Clark gave an update on the museum expansion. He said that the committee met with Kohler to walk through some updated designs. They are moving into the next phase of the project, which is to get quotes. Clark mentioned that the current designs are not finalized. He addressed some of the changes that were made from the previous designs. B. Egen added that the committee asked Kohler to add some more windows on the third floor in order to bring in more light. A. Clark said that the committee should find out what options they can afford to have in the building at the next meeting.

2nd Public Comment: Chris Kull mentioned that she worked at the museum when it did not have air conditioning, and would not want to go back to those times. She also suggested another revision to the text of the Strong historical marker.

Board Comments: A. Noland mentioned that the apples at Octobernight went over well, particularly amongst guests with food allergies. She added that her husband's Boy Scout troop properly retired numerous bags of flags which were collected from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and from other organizations. Lastly, Noland said that she took part in the unveiling of a grave marker for Sarah E. Lane at Woodland Cemetery. Lane was the first and only female lighthouse keeper at Mission Point Lighthouse in Traverse City.

S. Wagers complimented the museum's programs, specifically mentioning Shadowed Sips. She also invited the group to the Berlin Charter Township Historical Society's program "Farming in the Victorian Era" which will take place on November 10 at the South Rockwood Community Center.

M. LaVoy said she appreciated the kindness of Octobernight volunteers and staff. She highlighted the importance of the program as a family event and how impactful it was for the community.

Hobby Nels noted that he feels confident with how the museum expansion work is coming along. He added that Kohler has been very accepting of the board's input. He assured the group that a lot of effort has been put into the project.

T. Heywood complimented B. Egen and A. Clark with regard to their leadership on the building expansion project.

Richard Micka asked staff which historical markers were installed on September 16th. Markers were installed at the Johnson-Phinney House and at the Custer farmhouse on North Custer Road that day. Micka also asked for details about the Yesterways Erie Edition, which will take place at the museum on Saturdays and Sundays from 11-3. Lastly, he complimented staff

members for Octobernight and asked if the museum will be working with the Monroe County Historical Society in an upcoming program. A. Clark responded that the museum has plans on sponsoring the program.

Barbara Roe said it is exciting to see some pictures of the museum expansion.

M. Humphries said that Kohler has been very easy to work with. He also mentioned that Octobernight was great and he is looking forward to next year.

N. Guthrie complimented the staff for museum events. He also congratulated Robert Lutey on his promotion. Lastly, he noted that he is excited with the progress that has been made on the building project.

JJ Przewozniak thanked the board for their involvement with Octobernight.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM.

These minutes were prepared by Robert Lutey on October 31, 2025.

MONROE COUNTY MUSEUM SYSTEM

Department Report

Submitted by Andrew Clark, Director

with contributions from

JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director and Robert Lutey, Lead Historian

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Operating Hours

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 Scheduled Closures

November 27-28, Thanksgiving

December 24-25, Christmas

December 31, New Year's Eve

January 1, 2026, New Year's Day

Upcoming Events

November 21 through December 30

Christmas with the Monroe County Museum

Monroe County Museum

Free and open to the public.

November 21 through December 28

YesterWays: Holiday Edition

Pomanders and Froebel Stars

Monroe County Museum

11 am to 3 pm

Free and open to the public.

December 3, 10, and 17

Ghosts of Christmas Past
Reading of *A Christmas Carol*
Nocturnal Monroe
7 pm
Free and open to the public.

December 6

Cocoa with the Conductor
Reading of classic Christmas stories and Hot Cocoa
Monroe County Museum
1 pm to 4 pm
Free and open to the public.

December 14

Chestnut Roast at the Vintage Market
Monroe County Fairgrounds
10 am to 4 pm
Fee for the event; Chestnut Roast is free and open to the public.

Maintenance and Operations*Museum and Archives*

The RRCA continues building exterior improvements which requires the irregular use of our parking lot.

Roof repairs were made on the County Museum in mid-November.

Territorial Park

Loop Trail construction work continues; new poles are supposed to be set this week..
Site has been winterized.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum

Site has been winterized.

St Antoine's Historic Site Memorial

Nothing to report.

Programs Division Report

Submitted by JJ Przewozniak, Deputy Director

Octobernight and an Eerie Series:

Thanks to all of the museum staff, volunteers, and contractors who through their diverse labors and talents made Octobernight really amazing once again. We were

graced with unseasonably warm weather which played a factor in the excellent attendance, and despite the neverending construction projects in our spookie-environs, visitor parking (a constant worry and challenge), was handled beautifully. Very special thanks and welcome to all of our new performers and volunteers! I'm proud to play a role in what has proven to be a community tradition that's not only stable, but growing. Congratulations to all.

Octobernight kicked off a month-ish-long run of seasonal museum activities, a repeat of the effective programs of last year. Victorian hair crafting at the YesterWays table, dramatic readings at Nocturnal Monroe, and the annual downtown trick-or-treat. A new addition this year, a speaker program entitled Gardens of Stone: the Revolution of the Rural Cemetery Movement had to be postponed.

A New Roof:

The week following Octobernight was a busy one indeed. It saw the culmination of months of planning to replace the aged, leaky roof on the barn. Monday, Oct 6 kicked off with cleaning out the barn, followed by stripping off the old roof deck. This task necessitated an articulated boom lift which was thoroughly enjoyed by yours truly. New cedar roof decking arrived on Tuesday, Oct 7, and a talented crew of roofers arrived the next day. Over the next two days we worked together, with the great help of Mike and the presenters. The job was straightforward with only one minor surprise waiting for us underneath the surface: a single horizontal timber prematurely rotted out due to water incursion. Luckily, its condition doesn't constitute an urgent concern, and can be replaced at a later date, thus allowing the roof job to proceed quickly on-schedule. Thanks to everyone's dedication, we now shan't think about replacing a barn roof for decades.

Just as a finely prepared dinner leaves many dirty pots and pans in its wake, Octobernight and the roof job left quite a bit of clean-up work for us. So, that was attended to in the weeks afterward.

Getting ready for Christmas:

I gleefully continued my tradition of tasking staff with wrapping prop Christmas presents on Halloween day. To some this may be an unforgivable offense to spookie-season, but I offer it here to show just how early preparations must commence in order to have all Christmas operations ready to execute by Hometown Holiday Tree Lighting, which coincidentally is several hours away at the time of this writing.

Miscellany:

- Special thanks to the volunteers and contractors who made Octobernight amazing. MCMS Trustees Brian Egen, Mike Humphries, Anne Noland, Sure Wagers, and Michelle LaVoy. Roy Adkins, Butch Uhl, Caleb, Kassi, and Henry Gilbert, Avery

Gillenkirk, Ellie Friedline, McKenna Ringle, Grace Buchanan, Cody Brown, Nick and Ted Blaha, Aden Kuhn, Bryan Valencia-Jiminez, Nick Kuhn, Jessica Anspaugh, Geoff & Owen Hoerauf, Donna Cherba, Bill LaVoy, Sydni Wallace, Craig Fisher, Ozzie Andrews, Emily Rose, Sabrina Miller, Jade Ashekerra, Amanda Dominguez, Julie Esch, Katie Lovely, Angie Lai, and Amber Wisniewski. Finally, special thanks to Nocturnal Monroe for having us back for Shadowed Sips: Dramatic Readings of Historic Halloween.

- Very special thanks to our friends from Gladwin who generously helped with the roof job: Harvey, Elmer, Mervin, and Raymond.
- Participation in OBOC continues.
- Participation in the building expansion project also continues, and intensifies.
- A room off the museum loading dock was cleared of old education supplies. The contents were reviewed, purged, condensed, and reorganized in preparation for the building expansion.
- It was decided late in the month to postpone the upcoming Leatherworking 201 class with Brett Walker, scheduled for November 7 & 8, due to lack of reservations. Brett continues to work with his community of students and we look forward to hosting more workshops in the future as we're able.

Collections Division Report

Submitted by Robert Lutey, Lead Historian

Research requests/contacts: 95

Phone: 22

Mail: 5 (18 obits)

Email: 47

In-person: 21

Rachel, Dana, and I assisted with Octobernight. Other than the tight parking situation, it seems like it was a big success. Everyone coming back to their cars after the event had something positive to say.

I attended the Michigan Museums Association conference in Lansing from October 13 through October 15. It was a very positive experience which gave me the opportunity to interact with fellow museum professionals and to learn quite a bit of useful information. I also was able to visit various museums, which I always find to be helpful for generating exhibit ideas and display techniques.

Rachel attended the GSMC November monthly meeting on November 1.

I picked up a typewriter and two telephones from our conservator, Mark Gervasi. He is now working on another set of typewriters and telephones from the collection. Mark will also be working on Dr. Long's gas-o-meter (currently on display) in the near future.

I began preparing the loan paperwork to send out to our lenders and borrowers. Ideally, everything should be taken care of by the end of the year.

Dana processed a donation of framed photographs (2025.72).

Director Clark, M. Nelligan, D. Ter Mors and I pulled eight historical markers for refurbishment on October 24. These markers were all found in the city of Monroe.

I spent a good chunk of time this month processing a large donation of photographs (2025.68), identifying as many as I could. Some highlights include a photo of dynamite being used on a frozen River Raisin, an interior photograph of the 1930 Dundee High School and some excellent images of St. Joseph Church in Maybee.

I returned the smoke machines which were used during Octoburnight to 4Wall in New Hudson on 10/6.

Research requests have continued to be handled by Rachel and myself. Topics of interest included building research, probate records, Bluebush Cemetery (London Twp.), Thomas W. Custer, and photographers.

Work has continued on general filing, organizing, obituary related tasks and more.

Building Program

This will be covered in section 10.1.

Markers Program

Trustee Wagers and I met with Stephanie Hawkins of the Berlin Charter Township Historical Society to finalize the text for the new *John Strong Jr./South Rockwood Evangelical Church* historical marker. The new marker order should go in this week or sometime next week.

Robert and I delivered the eight historical markers enumerated in last month's report for refurbishment to the foundry. We also picked up the newly (re)cast *The Railroad Well/Gertrude Crampton* historical marker. Mike and Robert installed it at the marker's old location between the Ida Fire Department and Ida Branch Library on November 19, in time for Christmas in Ida. (For those of you that don't recall or weren't here for it, the marker was sheared in two during the removal of Christmas decorations on a particularly cold day.)

The marker text was correct, the colors were correct, and the emblem was correct. However, it wasn't properly formatted (it was centered instead of justified). The error occurred between the paperwork that was submitted and the typesetting department. The typesetting department was using an older setup order that requested centered text and the request to go back to justified text was accidentally overlooked in the process. The issue now appears to be resolved for any future markers. I've been trading calls with them and I'm awaiting confirmation but it appears that they may be recasting the marker for us with justified text at no cost. I will keep you posted if that occurs.

Historical Projects Fund

Nothing to report.

Awards Program

Nothing to report.

Personnel Updates

There are no personnel updates.

Hodge Podge

The City of Monroe continues to host monthly meetings to coordinate the commemoration of America250. We have a fairly good idea of MCMS programming ideas for 2026 but the uncertainty of an operational calendar for the Monroe County Museum due to pending construction looms over us. (It's not impossible that construction will begin sometime next summer in close proximity of the 250th.) Due to this complication, the primary focus for programming will be at Territorial Park and other locations throughout the county.

Downtown Monroe was once again packed with people for Hometown Holiday Lights on November 21. The interest in our chestnut roasting demonstration was perhaps the highest I can recall seeing. As always, our Victorian Christmas strollers were a part of innumerable photographs and visitation at the museum was quite impressive.

Monroe County Museum System

Collections Division

Accessions Report

October 2025

Accession Number	Donor	Item(s)
2025.65	Sheri Janssen	Photograph of Consolidated Paper Co. parade float, ca. 1920
2025.66	Zachary Garman	MHS varsity jacket, Cantrick School hat, and Monroe County Fair baseball tournament hat
2025.67	Michael E. Van Wasshova	3 binders containing information on the Monroe chapter of the French Canadian Heritage Society
2025.68	Judy Carr	Notepad from The Monroe Foundry & Furnace Co., advertisement for Monroe Beverage Co., day book for Ottawa Lake business, record book from Monroe Twp. School District, over 250 b/w photos
2025.69	David Doss	Photograph of an injured man who had assisted Monroe County sheriffs during the Newton Steel Strike
2025.70	Anne Spaulding	Little Brown Bear book signed by Elizabeth McWebb
2025.71	Laurie Schultz	1950 Monroe city engineering map
2025.72	North Monroe Street Church	Eleven framed photographs of the city of Monroe

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

Monroe County Museum System

Collections Division

Deaccessions Report

October 2025

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