



*Wyoming State Historical Society*

**Executive Committee Meeting  
June 6, 2022 – Via ZOOM**

Executive Committee:

Present	Name	Office	Present	Name	Office
X	Leslie Waggener	President	X	Cheryl O'Brien	NW Rep
X	Jane Gebhart	2nd V. Pres. AL	X	Cindy Brown	Secretary AL
X	Sandy Holyoak	Treasurer NE	X	Alena Wagner	SE Rep
X	Jonita Sommers	SW Rep	X	Vickie Zimmer	1st VP, AL
	Bud Alley	Out-of-State	X	Linda Fabian	Exec. Secretary

Others: Charlene Busk, Pinky Ellis, Lynn Houze, Mike Jording, Rodney Knudson, Martin Lammers, Jennifer Messer, Tom Rea, John Waggener, Robert Waggener

**Call to Order:** Leslie Waggener called the meeting to order. She mentioned that Bud Alley has been appointed the newest executive committee member to replace John Shields as the out-of-state representative. John resigned, because he has moved back into the state. Bud will serve out John's term on the committee.

**Minutes Approval:** Cheryl O'Brien mentioned that her name was not included in the previous meeting minutes, even though she attended. **Sandy Holyoak made a motion to approve the executive committee minutes as amended, second by Vickie Zimmer. Motion carried.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Sandy Holyoak reported that both the income and expenses are on track. The expected income is \$73,123.49, and the expenses are at \$74,387.53. Sandy foresees that the Society will end the year with a balanced budget. There is currently approximately \$74,000 in the checking account and some cds are scheduled to mature shortly. The Society is financially sound, but the impact of the higher consumer price index (inflation) should be taken into account. **Sandy recommended considering raises for Linda Fabian and the bookkeeper. Linda answered that the finance committee will be meeting on June 7 to review the situation. She will be bringing their ideas to the next meeting. Alena Wagner made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted, second by Jane Gebhart. Motion carried.**

**Hilltop Bank Report:** Jennifer Rohrer submitted a written report

**President's Report:** Leslie Waggener reported that work has continued on adding the Chapter resources and online resources tabs to the Society's web site. The Society received a \$7,500 grant from the Wyoming Humanities Council to update the site. The release of the new web pages will probably occur in January. Charlene has been charged with editing the content, so Steve can just load it.

A membership task force was created including Cheryl O'Brien, Mike Jording, Heidi McCullough and Jessica Flock. Leslie thanked them for their willingness to serve on the task force and their work so far. The task force will be taking a hard look at the Society's declining membership numbers and make suggestions. This will be discussed further under new business.

Leslie mentioned that for her the July History News column, she would like to include thoughts on the state of the Historical Society. She asked for feedback, and will be sending an email with questions. She would like the responses by Wednesday, June 8. Leslie is planning to use her August column to discuss problematic issues and how the Society members can assist with the solutions.

**Foundation Report:** John Waggener reported that on behalf of the Foundation, he wanted to thank Charlene, their treasurer. She does the lion's share of the work. As of April 1, the Foundation has \$543,000. They will be meeting later to discuss the fall membership drive. The Foundation regularly receives large donations ranging from \$10,000 to in excess of \$30,000. Personal thank you notes are sent to each of them, but the Foundation is considering other ways to go beyond this ordinary measure. Alena commented that many donors do not wish to be recognized. Charlene agreed that many do not want a grand gesture made.

Charlene reported that the spring fundraising work has resulted in \$12,754 donations so far; with \$7,611 being bookmarked for the Foundation, \$816 for the Homsher fund, \$2,406 for History Day, and \$1,921 for WyoHistory.org. 79 donations were received. The Jenson Mineral Trust income is down from \$140 to \$150 per month to approximately \$60 per month. The Foundation board members join with Charlene to help send out personal thank you notes to all donors, followed by an official tax letter from Charlene

**Executive Secretary Report:** Linda Fabian reported that nothing new or out of the ordinary has happened. She has been working with the committees and is looking forward to a good Annual Meeting with a lot of input and recommendations. The Lincoln County Chapter voted not to host this year's Annual Meeting, due to poor timing. Linda approached the Platte County Chapter, who has graciously agreed to step in and host the 2022 Annual Meeting in Wheatland.

**Old Business:** No old business was brought up.

**New Business:**

**Membership Task Force:** Cheryl O'Brien reported that the task force first met on May 14. They are looking for ways to improve the Society's declining membership numbers. The

objective due date is September 2. The task force reviewed and discussed ideas from chapters, and shared their specific concerns. They determined there is a need to check for potential partners. The task force would like to ask questions to the Society first to help narrow its focus, including what is the value of being a member; the responsibility to coordinate with other chapters and organizations; is there a changing role with other organizations; and should the Society change its organization structure and dues. The task force will be meeting during the Trek, with members following up on specific issues. Mike will be reviewing other state historical societies in the region and their due structures. Jessica will explore adding an Instagram account. Linda and Leslie have been invited to attend the meeting. Mike commented that the grass looks a lot greener in other states, but he still thinks the grass is pretty green in Wyoming. Cindy answered that it is hard to compare other states' historical societies with Wyoming, because a lot of them are state agencies. Linda agreed and mentioned that they also collect documents and artifacts.

### **Chapter Reports:**

**Fort Bridger Historical Association:** Martin Lammers reported that Fort Bridger State Historic Site is now well into its summer season, which is the busiest time of year. The association is working with visitors, in addition to the state on projects. They are now helping organize the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. They are planning and arranging projects for the upcoming rendezvous. The situation is normal. They will be picking up the archaeology work again after a hiatus for a couple of years.

**Crook County Chapter:** Rodney Knudson reported that he would like to write a column for the Sundance Times on some historical issues. He may want to speak to Tom on how to proceed. The Chapter has some membership number issues; perhaps a regular column in the newspaper will help. Leslie responded that it is a great idea, and Linda encouraged them to hold regularly scheduled meetings. Rodney replied that the Chapter meets monthly. **Leslie suggested that if the Chapter needs assistance planning programs, Linda has a speaker list which can be used.** If the presenter is unavailable to meet in person, perhaps they can use Zoom.

**Park County Chapter:** Lynn Houze reported that the Park County Chapter has adjourned for the summer. The last meeting was in May. They may possibly hold a trek this summer. Jeremy Johnston is doing quite well. The Chapter's membership numbers are stable, they usually only lose members if they move away.

**Sweetwater County Chapter:** Jennifer Messer reported that sometime this summer, work will occur on recruiting board members. **The speaker list will be helpful.** Leslie encouraged Jennifer, mentioning that the executive committee is here to help.

**Natrona County Chapter:** Alena Wagner reported that the Natrona County Chapter has a trek planned for July 9. They will be traveling to Converse County and visiting a ranch near Glenrock. More details will be available later. Their last meeting was in May, with a lot of people turning out. **Linda asked Alena to provide the details regarding the trek by June 15. Leslie encouraged those attending to let Linda know about upcoming events for publishing**

**in History News. Tom would like the same information for use in the Wyohistory.org newsletter.**

**Campbell County Chapter:** Charlene Busk reported that the Campbell County Chapter is facing some challenges getting going again. Other competing events keep showing up at the same time. They are looking at a trek, around July 9, to a sheep ranch and the woolen mill in Buffalo. **She was also encouraged to provide the details to Linda for History News and to Tom.**

**Weston County Chapter:** Mike Jording reported that the Weston County Chapter had an opportunity to cooperate with the Anna Miller Museum, becoming part of living history days. Elementary school students were invited for tours and there were six stations on oil development, pictographs in Whoop Up Canyon, and a few others with experts in their fields. Members acted as guides on the tours. Their next meeting will be in September. Mike commented that he has attended some Crook County Chapter programs and they are very good. Rodney responded that the Crook County Library provides excellent programming for the Crook County Chapter. It's a great example of how the chapters can cooperate with other organizations in their area.

## **Committee Reports**

**Awards Committee:** Jane Gebhart reported that the awards boxes have started their round robin circulation among committee members. There were a lot more activities nominated than usual. The number of books is down by three, with only two fiction books. There have not been a lot of newsletters nominated and a couple of online items. Three student entries have been received from Wheatland, Cody and Newcastle. Alena suggested that coming out of covid has most likely impacted the awards nominations. A lot of the libraries were closed and people could not travel to conduct research. Leslie agreed and mentioned that the American Heritage Center was closed for a full year.

The committee will be meeting July 14 or 15 in Casper to judge the nominations and also discuss cleaning up some things in the awards manual. She encouraged those sending in nominations to type their forms, because penmanship on the handwritten forms can be difficult to read.

**Charlene suggested creating a fillable form. Leslie will send a fillable pdf form, or perhaps Steve can create an online form.**

**Collections Committee:** No report was submitted.

**Constitution, Bylaws & Resolutions Committee:** Sandy Holyoak reported that the committee recommends the termination of the collections committee. Mike commented that he was on the executive committee at the time the collections committee was created. There were a lot of incoming donation requests. At the time, it felt like a good idea to have a committee set up, because the Wyoming State Historical Society does not have an archive. Part of the work involved gathering information and making decisions on where the donations should go. It also gave the Society an opportunity to interact with other organizations. There is also value in having a group make the decisions, instead of a single individual. Linda responded that the

online statement indicating that the Society does not collect items has alleviated most of the situation. The only biggest issue was the anonymous donation of the Indian headdress. She worked with Tom and the collections committee to make sure it was handled appropriately. If she receives an email mentioning donating an item, she forwards it to the State Archives, State Museum or American Heritage Center. Otherwise, if it would be of local interest, she refers it locally. She spoke to the collections committee chair, who agrees with the idea of terminating the committee. The recommendation will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

**Finance Committee:** Sandy Holyoak reported that the budget is on track. There is approximately \$70,000 in the checking account. A \$50,000 cd will be maturing in July, with a \$10,024 cd maturing in January. The committee will need to consider how the inflation rate will affect the operation of the Society, especially if staff members are given raises. The current inflation rate is at 7%. **Linda will begin discussing the maturing cds with Hilltop Bank.**

**Historic Preservation Committee:** Jonita Sommers reported that the Historic Preservation Committee met on May 20 via Google Meets. There was one nomination for each award. The Maurine Carley Award will go to the Craig Chevrolet Garage in Newcastle. The Outstanding Preservation Project Award will go to Barbara Townsend and the Atlantic City Cemeteries project. A suggested change to the awards manual is that applications should have the signature of a chapter officer, local nominating committee member, or authorized member of the executive committee; just like the rest of the Society's awards. The suggestion was sent to Jane for inclusion in the awards manual. As a side note, a relative in Alaska is working on an environmentally related master's degree. For a law class, Wyohistory.org sources were assigned.

**Legislative Committee:** Cindy Brown reported that it is the slow season for legislative bill work, so she took a closer look at the legislative committee activities. The judicial committee in particular is working on a technical cleanup of the bill involving the general authority of the county commissioners to dissolve county-created boards and commissions. They are including a section that county commissioners do not have authority to dissolve archaeological, geological and historical museums. It is adding the amendment which passed last session, but was left out of the final bill. Jonita confirmed that her brother Albert is working with the judicial committee on fixing the bill.

The Travel, Recreation, Wildlife & Cultural Resources committee meeting included testimony from various groups regarding the positive impact of the Cultural Trust Fund. Cindy noticed that Tom testified on behalf of the Historical Society and Wyohistory.org. Some of the legislators were very pleased to meet Tom and expressed great appreciation for his work with Wyohistory.org. They will also be receiving updates on the potential establishment of the Sunrise State Archaeological Site. A representative from the Film Incentive Task Force out of the Office of Tourism also testified. But it mainly involved the impact to the state's economy if big budget films are shot in Wyoming. **Linda commented that there are only two legislators who are members of the Historical Society. She will be sending them all a complimentary issue of Annals with a brochure.**

**Management & Oversight Committee:** Mike Jording reported that the committee met about two weeks ago. They reviewed the salaries for the executive secretary and bookkeeper. They do

not consider the graphics staff under their jurisdiction, because that position is paid for by state pass through funding. **The committee recommended that the finance committee proceed with a cost of living increase for the executive secretary and bookkeeper. Also if the opportunity is available, they recommend the finance committee look at salary increases for the Annals publication workers. If it exceeds the pass through grant, perhaps the Society would have to take on the responsibility to cover those salary increases. Mike will forward an email with the official recommendations to Sandy.**

In regards to strategic planning, Mike explained that both South Dakota and North Dakota Historical Societies function under state government. Their annual budgets are huge, but they still have a dues structure. He does not have any specific recommendations at this time. But it is good that Wyohistory.org is part of the Historical Society and vice versa. WyoHistory.org is on par with the other states, the Society is fortunate to be part of Tom's effort. The Utah State Historical Society and Montana State Historical Society are also under state auspices. Their agency names include the phrase "State Historical Society."

Robert Waggener made a suggestion, commenting that he lived in Sheridan for many years and they wanted to revitalize the Ducks Unlimited local chapter. One of the key pieces to their work was having an organization executive director, who visited Sheridan a number of times and helped get to get them going and eventually became one of the most successful chapters. The executive director worked hard to try and revitalize their chapters. There are a few active chapters, but a number of them are struggling or defunct. Robert added that it provides food for thought, for organizations big or small two things are important. A solid executive secretary is needed, but they also require an executive director. He feels that it would really help the Society's work in revitalizing chapters, fundraising, decisions of the board, energizing and engaging volunteers, legislative support and working for state support. The executive director could go to the counties to help revitalize the chapters and encourage collaborating vs. competing. He suggested that it could be funded, if each chapter added 20 new members with a small donation.

Tom responded that they were nice thoughts, but the Society would need to raise large amounts of funding to pull it off. It requires a different level of financing than currently exists. **Leslie referred the idea to the finance committee and offered to be part of the meeting.**

**Nominating Committee:** Linda Fabian reported that the June newsletter will include biographical information regarding the candidates, Jessica Flock, Dave Marcum, Heidi McCullough, and Andrea Lewis. The ballot will be included in the July newsletter.

**Oral History:** Cindy Brown reported on the County Health Officer oral history project, which Doctors Mike Jording and Rob Monger have been working on. They have completed twenty interviews and plan to include the three additional county offices and possibly the Wyoming State Health Officer. Cindy is impressed with their work on the project. Cindy and Leslie have been providing support as needed.

**Projects Committee:** Vickie Zimmer reported that the committee met on March 18 via Zoom. They awarded \$2,457. The project on the story of coal in Gebo, Crosby, and Kirby was awarded

\$657. The project on the modernization of the college football stadiums, looking at the University of Wyoming was awarded \$1,300. And the Ranch Women of the Powder River Breaks project received \$500. The five other applications were denied. The one regarding documenting historic bridges was invited to reapply after more work is completed on the application. **Vickie sent some suggested rule changes to Linda.** Linda explained that the award money has already been sent out and information regarding the projects will be published in History News. **Tom requested a copy of the recipients' email addresses. Linda will provide the info to Tom.**

### **Publications Committee:**

**Annals:** Charlene Busk reported that the latest issue of Annals looks amazing and the publishing is back on schedule. The current issue is at the printers.

**History News:** The additional inserts in History News has really added to its value. They are a great example of cooperative work.

**Books:** The sales of Wyoming History through Art have been going well. There are less than half left. They ran a test copy of a Paulley print at the American Heritage Center and it turned out beautiful. The Society will make some money on the copies as well as the American Heritage Center. It is a win-win situation. **Linda mentioned that she will be working on getting thumbnails online and include a blurb in the newsletter.** Charlene is considering another project at this time.

**Calendar:** Linda Fabian stated that John Waggener and Vicki Schuster are working on the 2023 calendar. It may be out a little later this year, but will hopefully be ready soon. Charlene suggested that if any chapters have 2022 calendars still available, they could be donated. **Linda will be bringing some to the Trek for handing out and offered to send some to chapters if they are will to pay for postage. Donating them to other groups is a great way to get the Society's name out there.**

**Website Committee:** Tom Rea reported that the Society received \$7,500 in federal covid money from the Wyoming Humanities Council to work on the Society's web page. The grant should be back on track soon. The work will be completed by early 2023. It will be a major change/upgrade.

**WyoHistory.org:** Tom Rea submitted a written report including information regarding recent and upcoming content. In the last six months WyoHistory.org has received a \$10,000 donation from the Newell Sargent Foundation and will be receiving \$10,000 - \$11,000 in fees for service history work. The Newell Sargent Foundation has donated funds every year. Assistant Editor, Beck Hein is working on an oral history project with the Wyoming Symphony in Casper. The American Heritage Center has been providing support for the project. Tom is nearly out of the WyoHistory.org printed itineraries. **He will acquire bids and will need to reprint possibly 2,000 – 3,000. Linda responded that it should be referred to the finance committee for discussion. Charlene volunteered to proofread them if updates and corrections are needed.**

**Lynn suggested that Tom could bring some to the Trek for chapter use. Unfortunately, Tom is out of the ones which Lynn needs.**

**Wyoming History Day: Linda Fabian reported that she has received a list of the State History Day Contest winners. She will have it added to the Society's website.** Leslie commented that Cameron Green will serve as the State History Day Coordinator until the national contest is completed, and then will be leaving his post. The national contest is being held virtually this year. Jonita mentioned that the Sublette County Museum Board annually donates \$500 to each student to help defray the cost for the national competition. It was not great, that the money was still requested, even though the contest will be held virtually. Linda confirmed that the contest will be held virtually; but the students will still need to pay some money for the registration fee.

**Alena Wagner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Jonita Sommers. Motion carried.**

Submitted by:

*Cindy Brown* \_\_\_\_\_

Cindy Brown