

Minutes of the Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee – Final Special Meeting

March 27, 2024 – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

Members present: Steve Matz (chair), HannaLore Hein (secretary), Jim Fazio, Hope Benedict, Steve Kuskie, Dr. Cheryl O'Brien

Guests Present: Suzy Avey (committee appointment pending), Lyn Moore (ISHS Grants Specialist)

Chairman Matz called the meeting to order via Zoom at 1:40 pm on March 27, 2024. Matz asked that we suspend Roberts Rules of Order to facilitate a quicker meeting, and no one objected. Matz then initiated a round of introductions for new members to introduce themselves to the committee and explain their interest in Lewis & Clark History. Everyone briefly introduced themselves and explained their professional background and location across the state, and those serving on the committee noted their years of invaluable service. At the end of the introductions, Matz acknowledged that Steve Evans (committee appointment pending) was unable to attend but would be able to do so in the future, pending his appointment on the committee, but that he may need assistance working with modern technology for the virtual meetings.

Historical Moment: HannaLore Hein provided a captivating historical moment, delving into Jean Baptiste Charbonneau's (JBC) life and legacy and explaining the trajectory of commemoration of his grave site outside the Jordan Valley in Oregon. She spoke about JBC's varied adventures and how he has managed cross-cultural exchanges throughout his lifetime. The discussion on commemorations was included in light of the forthcoming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. The committee had no questions or comments about the historical moment, indicating their deep engagement and interest in the topic.

Minutes: Matz asked for approval of the minutes from the meeting held in Salmon, Idaho, on October 5, 2023. The Committee voted by raise of hands to approve the minutes without discussion.

Committee Appointments: HannaLore Hein reported on the status of committee appointments for Suzy Avey and Steve Evans. The Governor's office had just placed the ISHS District 5 Trustee, and HannaLore estimated that the placement of the pending members would be forthcoming but acknowledged the patience and commitment of these individuals, recognizing that it would likely still take some time. Steve Kuskie, whose appointment took more than a year, concurred.

Financial Report: Lyn Moore, ISHS Grants Specialist, provided the financial report and the status of the 2023 grants. Nez Perce County Historical Society submitted a final invoice at the

end of December 2024, which brought the total expenditures for that grant to \$12,437.40, leaving them with a remaining balance of \$2,387.60. Additionally, the Sacajawea Center did not fully expend the grant for their kid's camp, leaving roughly \$1,500.00. Together, that left a balance for the year of \$3,889.20. Moore noted that the committee's grant balance (minus the 2023 and 2024 awards was \$98,132.00; however, this figure didn't include license plate revenue for July 2023-present. Moore anticipated this revenue to equate to roughly \$25,000, meaning that the actual fund balance as of March 2024 would be approximately \$125,000.00. Matz also asked if the proposed change to the license plate legislation, changing how often Idahoans needed to renew their plates, would affect the committee's revenue. Hein noted that at the meeting, the Idaho Senate hadn't yet taken action on the bill, so its future impact was still unclear. Following this discussion, Fazio said the proposed legislation could positively affect revenue. Hein ended this discussion with an update on currently issued Sacajawea plates, 1,688.

Grant Reports: Matz asked for a discussion on the 2023 grant reports and noted that the final reports, which he shared via email, all showed good words from the grantees.

Committee's Future: Matz explained to the new committee members the history of conversations regarding the committee's future and that our efforts to increase membership had been successful with Dr. O'Brien's appointment and Avey and Evans's pending appointments. He reiterated that if we had not met this objective by the Spring 2024 meeting, the current committee would move forward with discussions to sunset the committee and have ISHS manage the distribution of license plate funds per the committee's final recommendation.

Matz then opened up the discussion about the general status of the committee and its future. After a lengthy silence, Hein asked if he or anyone else had plans to identify a future committee chair (to follow Matz's forthcoming resignation after the spring 2024 meeting). Matz asked that we hold off on discussing the chair until later in the agenda but insinuated that there was a plan for that transition. Hein summarized that the committee did a lot of work to regrant funds to three or four organizations annually and wondered if the continuation of the committee, despite having increased membership, was worth the effort being put forth by its members. Kuskie concurred and noted that despite the work being part of his official duties, it was "a big bite" and that it looked like filling the role of the chair especially was a lot of work. Fazio reiterated that the committee's work is essential, especially trail preservation work and advocacy for preservation, and is worth continuing. He expected that we could replace the chair and then market and announce to various stakeholders that the committee exists and "remind them that we're here and what we do, what our charge is, that we want to be involved in any activities related to the trail." Benedict supported Fazio's position but acknowledged that the committee's membership had changed. Folks like Bob Russel and Keith Petersen are no longer involved, and a lack of leadership for the committee will be an obstacle to overcome. She reiterated that grant oversight could be done by ISHS more efficiently, especially if the committee granted the agency guidelines to follow. Avey noted that she would support the

committee's opinion, but that L&C history is significant to her and that, as an organization, the Sacajawea Center has struggled to find funding for its mission because it's not a big player in the field. Few organizations specifically support L&C content or projects. Dr. O'Brien commented only that she was "listening and learning" but didn't have an opinion on this topic of discussion.

Steve Matz briefly described how the committee functioned historically when he joined. Members split their time between being on the trail, working with partners for preservation, and regranting funds. The committee also provided oversight of the trail for the Governor. He discussed historic projects the committee funded, which he mentioned might not have happened without the committee's support and funding. To balance the work and stay focused, members agreed to develop an annual work plan a few years ago, which included outreach tasks. However, when COVID hit, it made it very hard for the committee to execute that annual plan approach. He also reiterated that it takes committee members considerable time to do this work.

With this overview, Matz again asked the committee their preference on a future path, including options to sunset the committee instead of ISHS administering the license plate funds. He asked for a motion from members to vote on this approach or for others to suggest alternatives.

Kuskie asked if there was a plan to replace Matz as chair because, without a chair, continuing the committee would be incredibly challenging. Kuskie noted that he has spoken with his supervisor about taking on this role but did not have the support to sign on as chair, as he has competing priorities and heightened responsibility in his daily job at Parks & Rec. As part of the general discussion, Avey suggested that the committee divide and conquer some of the work to lighten the load on the chair role. Matz was unsure that would work since the committee needed to vote on the grants. Fazio suggested we lighten the number of grants awarded to reduce the workload, even though the historical society manages most of the grant administration post-award (which he greatly appreciates). Hein mentioned that the committee needed a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary to operate according to its bylaws. Hein stepped up as secretary following Anne Schorzman's resignation. So, following Matz's resignation, the committee would need a chair and vice chair.

In discussing the committee's future, Matz lamented that postponing the decision to take some action would impact the 2025 calendar year grant cycle, which would not be ideal, so Matz reiterated the need to find a solution now and not leave the committee without a chair.

Avey again asked if the chair's regranting administration responsibilities could be split amongst members. Dr. O'Brien asked for a list of shared responsibilities amongst all committee members vs. what ISHS does. Matz provided a quick shortlist of chair responsibilities, which included running the meetings, setting them up, etc. If a meeting were to happen in person, the committee members located at the site of the meeting would assist the chair in local

arrangements. The chair also sends and receives all correspondence and is the point of contact for the committee. The chair also works with the secretary to ensure the minutes are done, posted, etc.; the same is true for agendas and notices, and the work in coordinating and corresponding with the actual grantees. Matz noted that the position's responsibilities, including coordinating and liaising, can be a lot.

Fazio brought up points made at the October 2023 meeting and the members' agreements, which included building the committee's membership (which we had done successfully despite delayed official appointments). Fazio offered to serve as vice chair if it meant that the committee would continue to exist. He asked if anyone on the call was willing to set up as chair. Dr. O'Brien asked if shifting the committee's workload to a different time (i.e., shifting when the grant cycle started) would assist Kuskie in stepping up as chair. Kuskie again mentioned that it didn't align with his job responsibilities, and he didn't want to sign up for something he knew he couldn't execute well. He opined that given the lack of a chair, the "writing was on the wall," we needed to move forward with a plan to sunset. Hein concurred but noted that none of the members wanted to be the ones to make the motion to end the committee. Fazio offered to chair temporarily until new members could get up to speed if it meant the committee could continue. Dr. O'Brien opined it would be tough for new members to step up as chairs.

Matz then took the discussion back to other points on the agenda and suggested tabling the discussion to put a cap on the grant totals until the next meeting. Hein disagreed and suggested that we needed to decide on grant changes if we wanted them implemented for the next grant cycle, which usually opens in the summer. Moore noted that the grant timeline could shift back a few months but would cut into the project period for those selected. Hein suggested an alternate meeting before June to discuss the grant program changes. Fazio concurred. Hein also noted at the future meeting that the discussion might need to include a strategy for spending the funds (i.e., paying it all quickly or pacing it so the fund never runs dry). Hein suggested including this conversation as part of next year's work plan development under Fazio's leadership if he stepped up as interim chair. Fazio also suggested that we skip a grant cycle, which Hein disagreed with. She noted that skipping a grant cycle would create more obstacles to getting funding out again, and it would be more prudent to sunset now if that is the direction the committee wants to follow. Matz and Moore agreed with Hein on this point. Moore reiterated that despite a change to the program, we would need to honor the MOUs with the Weipie and Sacajawea centers. Fazio asked about the workload involved with announcing the new grant cycles, which Matz said was manageable, but if we change the program, it will take some work (i.e., changing the application language, info on the website, etc.). The committee agreed that while no concrete changes to the grant cycle were on the agenda for discussion today, other than capping limits, moving this discussion to June was more prudent from a time standpoint. Kuskie moved to table this part of our discussion until June at a meeting under Fazio's leadership.

Matz, hoping to move the meeting along, asked via a show of hands who wished to vote to sunset the committee. This straw poll was more to gauge everyone's position than as a formal action. Hein, Benedict, and Kuskie raised their hands to sunset. Dr. O'Brien abstained, and Fazio did not raise his hand. With this pulse taken, Matz then asked the committee members to offer a motion to amend the formal vote regarding the committee's future as noted in the agenda. As stated in the agenda, the item up for a vote read: "Sunset committee instead of ISHS Administration of license plate fund." Matz noted that voting to sunset did not impact Fazio's previous decision to take over as chair.

Hein amended the motion to include the following language: that ISHS administer the funds based on a recommendation from current committee members.

Matz then called for an official vote on the amended motion. Hein, Kuskie, and Benedict voted in favor, Dr. O'Brien abstained, and Fazio voted against the motion. Matz emphasized that with this vote, we would still need to vet the committee's authority to sunset in alignment with legislation and executive action. Hope reiterated that the amended motion intended to keep the funds set aside for L&C projects and would not be mixed with the ISHS's community enhancement grants.

Following the vote, Dr. O'Brien raised concerns over the committee's loss of its greater mission, which included working with stakeholders along the trail. She questioned who would take over that piece of the work. Matz opined that the work Dr. O'Brien described would be "where it's federally legislated at least for federal lands, and that is with the state historic preservation office (SHPO)." Following this clarification, Dr. O'Brien maintained her abstention but expressed concern that the long-term committee members wanted to move towards sunsetting.

Hein offered a solution to implementing the two decisions thus far, acknowledging that Fazio had offered to serve as chair and that the committee wanted to sunset by setting a long-term implementation plan for sunsetting over several years. The benefit here would allow stakeholders and partners to plan for the disbanding of the committee, and we could be thoughtful in drafting a solid recommendation for grant management to ISHS while also providing sufficient time to ensure we have the legal authority to sunset. It would also mean we wouldn't have to make any immediate changes to the grant program for this year. Fazio then retracted his offer to serve as chair if the role would be to implement a sunsetting and dismantling of the committee. Avey also believed this route was viable, and then, if, throughout that multi-year runway, the committee was engaged more and doing good work, then we could reverse the decision to sunset. She even offered to help organize the committee for this dual approach.

Matz then asked for a motion to confirm Fazio as chair to manage the future sunsetting of the committee, as all previous mentions of this option had been discussed only. As Matz proposed a motion to appoint Fazio as chair, he withdrew his offer to serve in this capacity, citing hesitation in providing leadership to sunset the committee. As part of this conversation, Hein

requested that Matz remain on the committee, perhaps not as chair, but as a regular at large member to assist with the decisions necessary to sunset. Following Fazio's retraction, Matz requested that the committee agree to meet again to decide and plan to implement the committee's sunsetting. Matz agreed to send out some dates for a June meeting and work with Hein, Avey, and anyone interested in confirming solid plans for discussion.

The committee thanked and applauded Matz for his leadership during this challenging transition period.

Matz then adjourned the meeting at 2:40 pm.