

Friends of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum
MONTHLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 16, 2024 @ 10 a.m.
NMFRHM – Education Classroom

PRESENT: Directors Sandy Kostelecky (treasurer), Steve Loring (president), Jean Olson (secretary), Russell Tether; Museum Director Heather Reed; Museum Governing Board Liaison Jerry Schickedanz, Marketing Specialist Amanda Collier (arrived 11:10 a.m.)

ABSENT: Director Stan Morgan.

Also present: Friends members Bob Distlehorst, Suzanne Maddox; Museum Deputy Director Naomi Terry.

Loring called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. A quorum was present.

The agenda for this meeting was approved by consensus of the Board.

Kostelecky moved, Tether seconded, to approve minutes of the March 12, 2024, meeting. Passed.

Loring reported the donated electric golf cart arrived and was transferred to the Museum's possession. It is being used for tours. People who have driven it are giving favorable reports.

Loring met with the Ft. Selden site manager. Fort Selden is in the process of establishing a Friends organization. They compared notes on each site's goals and how the two entities can work together. Friends of the Farm and Ranch will share information with them as well as with the Friend organization of the J. Paul Taylor historic site in Mesilla.

Friends members have been sent a couple of communications on new membership levels. Loring, Kostelecky and Olson have volunteered to hold additional office hours to facilitate payments and communication with members. Loring said he discussed the new levels and how to charge for them with the Museum front desk staff. Kostelecky reported that Museum Graphic Designer Connie Anaya will print a large sign to be put in the lobby, directing people to the Friends office for membership information.

Loring reported information about joining the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, including benefits and costs (\$200 annually, plus a one-time \$60 administrative fee upon joining). Kostelecky expressed her support for moving ahead with membership. Olson moved, Kostelecky seconded, authorizing the organization to join the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. Passed.

Regarding the Vice President and Director-at-Large vacancies on the Board of Directors, Loring said he has talked with Bob Barnes and James “Mac” McGuire about serving out the terms of those positions. The Vice President’s term runs to September 2025, and he suggested having the Director-at-Large vacancy run to September 2024 in order to re-establish the three-one-year-four-the-next election cycle. Morgan has agreed to chair a nominating committee to canvass membership for recommendations, as required by the Bylaws. That communication will be disseminated as soon as possible.

Kostelecky reported balances of \$19,866 in the Programmatic Account and \$13,592 in the Operations Account. Of the Operations total, \$5,700 is from vendors who have signed up for the 2025 ROCKS! event and may only be spent on ROCKS! expenses. Friends received \$4,744 profit from 2024 ROCKS! Approximately \$500 of the Operations Account originating from proceeds from plant sales and a donation from Tether is designated for the Greenhouse Fund. The goal for the Greenhouse is to become self-sustaining and go on to contribute financially to the organization.

Accountant Craig McQueen continues to make progress with reconciling activity in the Operations Account in Quick Books Online. He and Kostelecky will be working on Programmatic Account to get data current through the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The Las Cruces Craft & Farmers Market is scheduled for the April 20 with a full slate of volunteers. Because both Kostelecky and Liz Higgins will be out of town for the May 18 Farmers Market, the Friends will not have a booth. Olson has volunteered to attend the 20- to 30-minute orientation so if this situation arises again, a trained volunteer will be able to supervise the booth, as required by Market regulations.

Kostelecky suggested that as a general policy, the Treasurer must be notified of all donations to the Friends that require IRS compliance acknowledgement. Additionally, donations to specific projects should be acknowledged with a personal written thank you to the donor on behalf of the Friends, generated by the person responsible for that project.

The Friends membership in the North American Reciprocal Museum Association is in effect until February 2025.

Maddox asked if the Greenhouse Fund is a separate account or a subaccount within the larger Operations account and expressed concern whether it is legal to allocate donations for specific projects, based on her experience with another non-profit organization. Kostelecky explained it is a subaccount within Operations and using funds from that subaccount for expenses not related to the Greenhouse is a decision of the Board. Kostelecky compared this to how expenses for different Museum projects are accounted for in the Programmatic Account.

Reed reported that a volunteer lunch was being held at noon on April 16th to show appreciation to Museum volunteers; she invited all attending the Friends meeting to attend. Reminding the Board of the special funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Secretary to develop new exhibits across DCA, she reported on the visit of Museum Concepts, an exhibit planning company, and Dave Bucy, a planning consultant affiliated with the National Association of Interpretation (NAI), in March. The Museum will receive Museum Concepts' proposal this week and the Museum Concepts team will return in May.

The Blessing of the Fields is on Friday, May 17, starting at 10 a.m., and lasting one to two hours; the Museum welcomes volunteers who can help with the event. The Ranches to Rockets exhibit, taken down in March, will be displayed at the State History Museum in Santa Fe. The Museum will receive artifacts from the J. Paul Taylor House for storage while work is done on that historic site in preparation for opening to the public.

The DCA Division Director meeting will be held at the Farm & Ranch Museum May 1-3 and the Museum Governing Board will meet on May 2. An NMSU Public History class visited last week and spent three hours with Museum staff.

Six of 18 Museum positions are vacant, including the Administrative Assistant (incumbent Lori Holguin has been promoted to the position vacated when Randi Schmitt retired); the PR specialist; the education coordinator; the event and volunteer coordinator; the registrar; and a curator. Reed described the State's hiring process, pointing out it can take months to fill a position. Kostelecky asked if Museum Experience Supervisor Desirie Lara will continue to be responsible for volunteers. Reed responded

that that is the plan, but the Museum may have to juggle responsibilities, depending on State funding. A Workforce Solutions employee started recently and will help with visitor reception desk and administrative duties.

Tether reported that the spring cleaning of the gardens went well, despite not many people showing up. He praised those who did and worked very well and hard to produce the results on display in the gardens in front of the Museum. He said the Greenhouse is doing very well and he has found it interesting to see who gardening brings in as volunteers, including many new people who seem very dedicated. A few things to be addressed, including a persistent rodent who likes to nibble on plants. Loring thanked Tether and Michelle Biehl-Tether, as well as volunteers for their work on this project. Tether mentioned participation of the High Hopes Garden Club and said that Landscape Architect Jeff Anderson will work on a long-term design. Plantings for the front gardens are being grown in the Greenhouse.

Pochynok said the membership process is going well with positive feedback. From January through March, she processed 29 memberships (12 new and 17 renewals). Since April 1, she has received five, all renewals. She is working on the in-kind volunteer hours report. Maddox asked how many of the people were buying memberships through 2025 to take advantage of the discount being offered. Pochynok said the majority are doing that. Members who used PayPal without the discount have agreed to consider the price difference as a donation.

Loring initiated discussion of a proposal to enlarge Board size, saying seven seems small to accomplish the projects Friends are envisioning. A larger Board would add diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds to complement expertise areas currently offered by Board members. Such a change will require changing the Bylaws, with accompanying requirements for notification of the membership of a special meeting to consider the proposal and a quorum in attendance, defined in the Bylaws as 25 members or 10 percent of members in good standing, whichever is the lesser. He asked Olson to prepare a draft of the proposed changes. In response to Maddox's question what size is being considered, Loring said he will suggest growing the Board from seven to 11 or 13 Board members. Schickedanz asked about notification requirements, and Olson explained notification is distributed via email and by USPS to those members who have requested communications but have not provided email addresses, as well as being posted on the Friends office door. She reminded that while public entity meeting requirements do not govern the Friends, which is not a public organization, the group follows guidelines from

the State Attorney General closely, with the organization's Bylaws being the final authority for notifications procedures.

Loring distributed a proposed committee structure (attached hereto) that he drew up based on the strategic planning retreat and conversations with Friends Member Sandy Duncan. Asterisked committees would require the chair to be a Board member. He asked for comments, suggestions, and observations. Maddox observed that based on the 14 committees listed, a larger board is needed. Loring said a goal is to get members other than Board members actively involved in the committees and their work.

Loring raised outreach activities to the rest of the State, saying the Friends want to communicate to the entire State that this Museum is where the stories of agricultural tradition, including counties around the State, are preserved. The Wonders on Wheels (WOW) van is traveling around the state and Friends will be able to piggyback on several of its stops. In his attendance in the Museum Concepts and training by the NAI trainer, he focused on how to get the Museum's message out, including in museum design. A key question is, what is it we want people to know about the museum? Loring suggested emphasizing the fundamental role agriculture plays in our way of life and how the story of agriculture – soil, water, etc. – is important everywhere in New Mexico. The next question, he said, is, what does the Friends do and what opportunities exist through the Friends to help tell this story? Loring said he is putting together a draft of a presentation that can serve as the outline for presentations at civic organizations and in social media. A goal is to expand the demographics of people who participate in Museum activities and advocate for the Museum with the Legislature and in other forums.

Kostelecky said she will attend the NMSU Agriculture Field Day in Farmington and asked Pochynok to identify Friends members from that area.

Marketing Specialist Collier suggested changing meeting times to include different demographic groups.

Loring suggested that in recruiting members, emphasis be on why they are giving rather than on what they receive. Pochynok said she has received positive feedback from members on what is going on at the Museum. Tether said he was surprised at how few in a school tour group reported they had been at the Museum before. Olson acknowledged the importance of expanding the demographic base of the organization but stressed that it can't be at the expense of the demographic group that currently

keeps the organization functioning. Pochynok said she hears frequent complaints at her kids' school Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings about the scarcity of events in Las Cruces for kids during the summer. Collier pointed out the importance of tapping into PTO groups, home schooling groups, and mom groups. Olson suggested a conversation with marketing and outreach people at the Branigan Library and City Science Museum to see where and how they're disseminating information about their programs. The importance of follow-up on school tours so information gets back to the parents was mentioned. Collier said it is possible to do some targeted marketing at a minimal cost on social media for groups looking for things for kids to do in the summer. Reed mentioned a survey she participated from the Arbor Day organization that was obviously designed to create warm, fuzzy feelings about trees as she responded to the survey questions.

Kostelecky asked that materials be put together to take to Agriculture Field Days, Chamber of Commerce distribution, etc. Collier said that a sponsorship packet should be created.

Tether announced that the date of the Culture Series presentation by Lori Dahlstrom needs to be changed. Olson reminded him that the June 12th date has already been published in the Museum calendar and several other places. Tether said he is unable to attend on the 12th; Olson and Loring volunteered to take responsibility for helping Lori Dahlstrom from Silver Assets on the evening of the presentation.

Tether asked if it is possible to get WiFi on the South 20. South 20 Supervisor Greg Ball suggested having the Friends Square available for pony ride payments, ensuring those funds go directly to the Friends. Tether hopes to have plant sales at a time that coincides with pony rides and will need a way to accept non-cash payments. Reed said she would check on getting a booster to the Greenhouse. Loring suggested this be included in the walk-through for the capital projects.

Kostelecky noted the Friends wall display outside the Friends office is almost complete. After installation of a shelf, brochures and information on upcoming events will be available. She thanked everyone who helped put that together, with special thanks to Connie Anaya.

Loring announced the next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 21, at 10 a.m.

Collier reported that Olson had put together a schematic with photos of the layout for 2024 Museum ROCKS!, which will facilitate assigning booth locations for ROCKS! 2025. She is receiving queries from vendors about the 2025 event. She will create a page dedicated to ROCKS! information within the Friends website. She said she prefers not to let new vendor select spots but is very willing to work with returning vendors to reserve spots. Kostelecky asked if a timeline with tasks such as requesting security services and volunteers from outside organizations will be created. Collier said she will prepare a production schedule that will be available on the Friends shared drive.

Collier asked that she be given at least two weeks' notice before an event in order to get it posted on social media in a timely manner. She asked the Board and Friends members to help her by suggesting post content for social media, including information about day-to-day activities at the Museum, and articles and other events of interest.

Maddox asked if a speaker has been announced for the May Get to Know Your Museum Coffee. Olson said that had not yet been determined. (Note: May's Museum staff presenter will be Yoli Martinez, Customer Service Representative; Thursday, May 16, at 10 a.m. in the Education Classroom.)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Olson, Director
Secretary to the Board

Appendix: Proposed committee organization (chart)