

**MINUTES** of the public meeting of the Historic Preservation and Museum Advisory Board held **July 6, 2026**, at the Museum of Uintah County at 155 East Main, Vernal, Utah. The meeting commenced at 4:41 pm.

**Participants:** Lee Buschkowsky, Stephanie Tippets, Hannah Glass, Jessica Briggs, Sonja Norton

**Attendance:** Karen England, Lee Buschkowsky, Alycia Luke, Stephanie Tippets (virtually), Hannah Glass (by phone), Jessica Briggs, Karina Valencia, Lana Fullbright, Sonja Norton

## **1. Welcome**

## **2. Approval of Minutes from the June 1, 2026, meeting.**

- **Motion:** Stephanie Tippets made a motion to approve the minutes for June 1, 2026. Jessica Briggs seconded the motion. **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

## **3. Approval of Museum Scope and Strategic Plan**

The board held an extensive discussion regarding the museum's five-year strategic plan and scope.

- **Board vs. Museum Plan:** It was clarified that the museum's internal strategic plan is an informational document focusing on internal goals (such as curation) and does not require a formal board vote. However, the board discussed the necessity of developing its own broader strategic plan to support fundraising, grants, and county-wide initiatives.
- **Curation and Cataloging Backlog:** Lana Fullbright highlighted a critical, massive backlog of undocumented artifacts, notably a large influx from the Thorne and DeVed families received years ago.
- **Past Perfect Software Entry:** Cataloging a single object into the *Past Perfect* database requires extensive steps (photographing, condition reporting, identification, measuring, and metadata entry), taking up to two hours per item. Currently, a part-time employee dedicates roughly a quarter of her time to this task.
- **Institutional Knowledge Retention:** It was noted that capturing this data is highly time-sensitive due to the impending retirement of key personnel who hold vital institutional knowledge.
- **Consultant Proposal:** The board discussed allocating budget for next year to hire a museum consultant to streamline collection management and themes. Commissioner Norton requested comprehensive supporting data before the board presents any formal funding requests to the county.

#### 4. Approval of Museum Collections Management Policy

The board reviewed the updated Museum Collections Management Policy.

- **Motion:** Commissioner Sonja Norton made a motion to approve the Museum Collections Management Policy. Stephanie Tippets seconded the motion. **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

#### 5 & 8. Subcommittee Reports & Upcoming Visit Opportunities

- **Gibson/Soward House Site Visit:** Lee Buschkowsky proposed setting a date for board members to visit the historic Gibson/Soward House. Descendants of the family are scheduled to gather the week of August 4-6 and can provide historical context.
- **Log shed behind the Gibson/Soward House (referred to in the meeting as the Galloway Cabin):** Lana provided an update on a call she received regarding the shed. The family asked if they could donate it to the museum. Due to space constraints and the high cost of maintenance/relocation, the museum could not accept it. She suggested the owner contact the John Wesley Powell River History Museum in Green River, Utah, as they house Galloway's historic journals and have a stronger connection to river-running history.
- **Reynold's Family to borrow the Galloway:** The board briefly discussed the Reynolds family borrowing the Galloway cataraft boat for the opening of the Medical Center in Manila.
- **Date set:** The board will tour the Gibson/Soward house August 6, 2026 at 8:00 am

#### 6. Report on St. Paul's Episcopal Church project

- The project was not financially feasible. The grant money has been given back to the state. They were gracious enough to understand that the board is brand new. There is no black mark on the board's record.

#### 7. Status on filling vacant board positions

- There are currently no applicants; the board is still recruiting.

#### 9. Museum Updates

##### **WPA Paintings Search**

- Lana reported that the state is currently searching for historic Works Progress Administration (WPA) paintings that were originally created during the Depression era and then at some time were placed in the care of Uintah High School.

- Because these paintings are technically classified as federal property, the state is working to track them down. Lana has reached out to the school district for information but is waiting for a response due to the summer break.

#### **Museum Operations & Exhibits**

- The museum experienced lower sales and physical visitation (down by 293 visitors) over the past month, which is heavily attributed to intense summer heat and high gas prices slowing tourist spending.
- The traveling exhibit *"Bringing War Home"* from Utah State University will remain at the museum until the end of the month.
- The museum plans to tie community surveys into the upcoming high-profile Smithsonian exhibit to better gauge community interests.

#### **10. Establish a date/time for museum curation storage facility tour w/ board members**

- With the museum in its busy time and preparing for the Smithsonian exhibit, it was proposed to wait until November to do this.

#### **11. Other Board Business**

- The board discussed how to structure its internal leadership positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary) going forward. While staff currently handles major administrative and logging tasks, the board will consider how to legally structure these roles among active board members at the next regular meeting.

#### **11. Establish date/time/location of next board meeting**

- The next regular board meeting is scheduled for **September 14, 2026, at 4:30 PM.**

A motion was made to adjourn.

- **Motion:** Jessica Briggs
- **Second:** Sonja Norton

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:01 pm**