

**ILLINOIS STATE MUSEUM
BOARD MEETING
November 13, 2024, 1:00 p.m.**

**Research and Collections Center
1011 East Ash, Springfield IL**

Attending: Officers: Chair Jonah Rice and Vice Chair Sara Phalen; **Board Members:** Leverne Backstrom, John Barker, Wanza Davis, Mike Murphy, and Director Natalie Phelps Finnie; **Illinois State Museum Staff:** Jenn Edginton, Meghan Lindstrom, Brooke Morgan, Logan Pappenfort, and Bob Sill; **Department of Natural Resources Staff:** Jeff Nevins and George Sisk; **Illinois State Museum Society Staff:** Vice Chair Candice Trees and Jamila Wicks.

I. Welcome

Chair Jonah Rice called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Meghan Lindstrom called the roll and a quorum was present.

III. Approval of the Minutes of October 1, 2024

The Minutes from the October 1, 2024 meeting were presented for approval. Sara Phalen moved to approve the Minutes, Director Natalie Phelps Finnie seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. New Business

Director's Report

ISM Updates

Jenn Edginton reminded the Board that the Illinois State Museum (ISM) location in Springfield had been closed on August 1 due to the plumbing project. She reported that the project was currently ahead of schedule and most of the public sections of the Museum were opened on November 4. The Lower Level remained closed along with part of the second floor. The internal bathrooms will be opened to the public as construction allows, with the first floor rest rooms projected to be completed and opened to the public at the end of November.

Jenn reported that the Secretary of State had designated a small parking lot just off the Capitol Complex for exclusive use by Museum visitors.

Jenn reported that Museum staff have reached over 19 thousand total visitors since the shift to *On the Road* programming on August 1. Staff plan to continue the outreach programs and are exploring options to expand outside of

Springfield. Mike Murphy commended staff for the successful outreach and outside events and supported continuing the programming even after the plumbing project is completed.

Jenn provided an update on the Beardstown High School Spanish Club partnership. Museum staff continue to re-evaluate what a Museum can be, how to tell youth marginalized stories, and how that can best be done at the Illinois State Museum. Plans are developing to create a permanent exhibit at ISM in *At Home in the Heartland* and a pop-up exhibit that can be displayed in Beardstown. Jenn, Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) Jose Burgos, and Beardstown teacher Mrs. Montoya are planning to present to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) about this project in the late spring.

Jenn reported that staff are hard at work updating all policies, procedures, and plans in preparation for the reaccreditation process through AAM. Logan Pappenfort and Brooke Morgan are also working on a Tribal Relations plan, although it is not required for reaccreditation. Jonah inquired how the Board could be involved in the reaccreditation process. Jenn provided a simple timeline of the expected steps of reaccreditation, including site visits and meeting with stake holders between July and September. She clarified that the ISM was seeking reaccreditation for only the four current ISM sites, not including State Historic Sites.

Visioning activity

Jenn explained the information gathering process used to prepare for the next strategic plan. Contributions came from staff, the Illinois State Museum Society (ISMS), DNR leadership, the public through an online survey, and one-one-one meetings with Board members.

Jenn invited the Board to participate in a visioning activity to imagine how ISM can improve and grow within the next five years. Many suggestions were offered including ways to expand a statewide presence, ensure rural histories particularly agriculture and labor are preserved, identify potential partnerships including those outside of the state such as the Equal Justice Initiative, and that particular care and intention be utilized to share the recent histories and resiliency of Native peoples.

Jenn thanked the Board for their input and affirmed that a draft of the new strategic plan would be prepared by the next Board meeting.

Deaccession request

Brooke Morgan presented 18 boxes of mussel shells and animal bones for deaccession. The specimens were originally collected at Angel Mounds in Indiana by Dr. Glen Black, who sent them to Dr. Paul Parmalee at ISM for analysis in 1959. Correspondence shows some materials were sent back to Indiana in 1960 but the rest remained in the ISM's collection. If deaccessioned, Brooke proposed that the boxes be sent to the Indiana University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, which houses the Angel Mounds collection and associated documentation. Brooke had contacted staff at the Indiana University Museum and they are prepared to accept a transfer.

Sara asked what records the ISM would keep of the collection. Brooke explained that all records would be retained and digital copies would be sent to the receiving institution. Brooke would also include a printed copy of all her email correspondence concerning the deaccession and transfer of the collection along with receipt forms confirming transfer was completed.

Jonah asked for a roll call vote to approve the deaccession request. The roll was called and the deaccession request was approved unanimously.

DNR Report

Director Finnie provided the DNR report. She shared a very brief overview of the creation of the department and the many duties it has accumulated through the years. One hurdle she has encountered is that many people in Illinois do not always understand the wide breadth of duties and services that the department provides. More visible and well-known duties include maintaining state parks and sites, staffing Conservation Police, and regulating licenses for outdoor recreation but there are many less visible duties including dam and levee permitting, Lake Michigan water allocation for the city of Chicago, employing regional wildlife and plant biologists, maintaining mines and mining regulations throughout the state, and many more.

Director Finnie confirmed she had received Chris Pappan's resignation from the Board. She affirmed the department's commitment to Tribal Relations and said her office is actively searching for Native people to fill the Board's two vacancies.

Director Finnie thanked the Board for their unanimous vote at the last meeting to support Jenn as the permanent director for the Museum. She sent the request to the Governor's Office and anticipates it will be finalized by the

next week with a public announcement soon after.

Director Finnie reported that her office was currently busy planning out the next budget and had identified around 15 potential legislative changes that would benefit the department. Those proposed legislative changes were sent to the Governor's Office for review and she anticipates they will soon hear back if any will changes will be considered in the spring.

ISMS Report

Jamila Wicks introduced Candice Trees, the new vice chair of the ISMS Board. Candice confirmed the Society had hired Jamila as the Executive Director last spring. She reported that the Society had held their Annual Member Meeting the previous week. The new officers and Board members were introduced to the membership at the meeting. Candice also reported that the Society would start the strategic planning process in 2025. They intend to identify long and short term goals going out 3 to 5 years. Candice stated that the Society was on solid financial ground and that Mike Wiant is also working to update the Society's bylaws in 2025.

V. Old Business

Jonah asked for old business.

Leverne asked for the status of the mandatory annual trainings. Meghan confirmed she would email out the trainings to Board members again.

VI. Public Comment

None present.

VII. Adjournment

Jonah asked for a motion to adjourn. Mike moved to adjourn, John Barker seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.