

Meeting Minutes
BOARD OF MUSEUMS AND HISTORY
MUSEUM STORE COMMITTEE
January 22, 2019: 1:30pm

Location
Division of Museum and History
412 E. Musser St., Ste. 2
Carson City, NV 89701

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bryan Allison, Chairman *
Doris Dwyer, PhD.
Seth Schorr *

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF PRESENT

Peter Barton, Division of Museums and History, Administrator
Carrie Edlefsen, Division of Museums and History, Administrative Services Officer
Lauri Brown, Division of Museums and History, Administrative Assistant
Myron Freedman, Nevada State Museum, Carson City, Museum Director
Catherine Magee, PhD., Nevada Historical Society, Museum Director *
Mary Beth Timm, Lost City Museum, Museum Director *
Randall Hees, Nevada State Railroad Museum, Boulder City, Museum Director *
Janie Shakespear, Lost City Museum, Administrative Assistant *
Maureen McDonough, Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas, Administrative Assistant *

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

No public in attendance.

* via teleconference

Allison: I think, Peter, you had everybody who's on the call. So let me call to order this meeting of the Board of Museums and History Museum Store Committee. Thanks, everybody for joining us. Let's go ahead, I guess--the meeting was properly posted?

Brown: It was.

Allison: And can we have roll call?

Brown: Absolutely. Bryan Allison.

Allison: Here.

Brown: Doris Dwyer.

Dwyer: Here.

Brown: Seth Schorr, excused.

Allison: Okay.

Brown: Okay.

Allison: We don't have Seth but we'll see if he joins.

Brown: But we have a quorum.

Allison: We do have a quorum, good. Okay. Uh, public comment is welcome and we'll come to that at the end of the meeting. But feel free, as we go through, to let yourself be known. Two notes. One, make sure and always identify yourself before you make a comment. And two, don't put us on hold. Sometimes putting us on hold can lead to hold music and we have to stop the call and start over.

So Peter, did you have any other housekeeping or other items you want to mention before we start?

Barton: I do not, Bryan, other than you may want to just read that public comment notice into the record.

Allison: Oh, okay. I'm still learning. I've become accustomed to just watching Bob do it. Public comment is welcome by the Committee. A period of public comment will be allowed after discussion of each action item on the agenda but before voting on the item. And for time considerations, a period for public comment by each speaker may be limited to three minutes at the discretion of the Chair and speakers are urged to avoid repetition of comments made by previous speakers. No action may be taken on any matter brought up under public comment until that matter has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken.

Barton: Perfect.

Allison: All right. So we'll start with number five, which is review and discuss results of the museum store staff survey. I sent this out last Tuesday. I apologize, I probably should've given more time for people to respond, given the holiday. As I communicated to Myron earlier today, I'm keeping that survey open, so if there are folks who would like to still contribute, we definitely want to hear from them. This isn't--I don't view this as a single meeting and we're done. I view this as a process. So if there are more people who would like to

participate--I know some of the museums didn't get a chance to, which is fine. We'll revisit because I think we'll probably have another meeting before the Board meets in March. But Peter sent out the survey this morning. My big takeaway, and then I'd like to hear from everybody else, it looks like in general, the point of sales system received good marks. I think any system, having worked in IT for a long time, you're always gonna have kind of people on both sides. So the fact that we came down the middle, I think that's really nice to see.

And there's always the need for more training that we hear about from about half of the people, little more than half. Again, that seems pretty consistent with what I've experience in my working life. Did anybody have any other takeaways or things they'd like to add on the point of sale, while we're on that topic?

Dwyer: This is on a five-point scale, right? This is Doris.

Allison: It is.

Dwyer: Okay.

Allison: It was a star scale of one to five stars.

Dwyer: Okay. That's not too bad. Yeah.

Allison: We averaged at 3.7, which again, I think is--that's positive.

Dwyer: It's not too bad, yeah.

Allison: Okay. Moving on. We had a question about story inventory and pricing. Everybody seemed to think our pricing is good, which is nice. And then I kind of just included the comments. There were--everybody offered comments on each of the questions, which w--is very appreciative or appreciated. And the things that I saw come up again--and we've heard these in our board meetings, as well, is the need for unique merchandise, you know, always work on displays. And then some issues around kind of inventory control, purchasing inventory, having enough inventory in place so that we don't run out of inventory based on budget cycles. Did anybody have any comments--I'm hoping that people from the museums jump in here--on other issues or thoughts around those issues that were brought up by the comments? Guess not.

Dwyer: Well, I have a--this is Doris. I have a question 'cause I just, you know, I didn't get the printouts until I got here, so I'm still looking at them. So does each page represent a different museum or not?

Allison: No. Each--

Dwyer: It helps if I--we know what museum--

Allison: I'm sorry. My formatting may be wasn't great on this presentation.

Dwyer: Yeah, I mean, it helps if we know what museum they're referring to. Unless these are supposed to be--

Allison: Each one has a--there's a question in blue and then there were seven replies to our survey--

Dwyer: Okay. From everywhere?

Allison: --each one of these is a--a response from an individual at--

Dwyer: Okay.

Allison: --one of the museums.

Dwyer: So usually, I can tell which one they're referring to but not always.

Allison: Yes.

Dwyer: Okay.

Allison: Yeah, most of them, I think, are pretty self-evident who's who.

Dwyer: Yeah, okay.

Allison: And some identified themselves.

Dwyer: Yeah, some of them did. A few, yeah.

Allison: But there are some consistent--again, it seemed like the consistent trend that I saw was when we talk about the type of merchandise offered in the stores, people look to us for unique things, which sounds obvious but a lot of gift stores I know I've seen in museums throw anything they think will sell, which as I understand it, that's not what we want to do as a museum system. We want to try to support the mission. Did someone just join?

Schorr: Hi, Seth here. Sorry I'm late, guys.

Allison: That's okay, Seth. Have the record show Seth has joined our meeting. Seth, we're just going over the survey. I don't know if you had a chance to look at that, it went out this morning.

Schorr: I will open it up and, no, sorry, I haven't looked at it yet.

Allison: That's okay. We're kind of talking about the comments that came back from the survey participants and most of them were, again, around the need for types of merchandise, the types of displays and there were some specific observations about flow at some of the locations. And then ideas around how to--a need for better understanding on how to make sure the merchandise was ordered in advance so that we aren't running into issues where we're running out of inventory because of budgetary cycles.

I guess my question is, you know, this is good information, it's good to know but I'd like to hear how can this--you know, just a little bit of history. I've been on this committee I think for a couple of years. I believe Seth has been on this committee for a couple years but Pete Dubet did such a great job running it, we never had a meeting. So our role as a committee was never clearly defined, in my mind and I'm kind of trying to stir something up here so that I can find out how we can provide the most value.

Obviously, you know, we're not on the ground in these locations. People do an amazing job. You know, if you look at the profit and loss statements, pretty much all of the stores, with the exception of Carson City, are making money. Maybe not a lot of money but they're making money. What can we provide, as a committee, given our backgrounds and given our interest, that would be useful to bring back to the Board that would be useful to bring back to the museums? Come on, Myron, I know you want to say something.

Freedman: Myron Freedman, for the record. I believe we are profitable this year, the Carson City store.

Edlefsen: What's there is there, those are actual monthly figures.

Allison: Well, yeah, 19--

Edlefsen: Carrie Edlefsen.

Allison: --I was looking at--I'm sorry.

Dwyer: Yeah, 14 (inaudible).

Allison: What can we do as a committee to, I mean, I did a survey, we got some information but what--how can we help?

Freedman: Myron again. I think, you know, one area, just like with the membership committee, is using the website to be able to, you know, have a retail component online I think would be huge. What I'm thinking--and not just for our museum but certainly for the Historical Society, you know, which doesn't have a lot of foot traffic. So I think that would be one area to look carefully at.

Dwyer: This is Doris. I just have a question for Myron. Should we assume--should I assume that the fact that there were no responses from your museum meant that things are okay and that they're satisfied?

Freedman: Well, as Bryan said--this is Myron for the record. You said you sent this out last week, I think you said, Bryan, so--

Allison: Yeah.

Freedman: --I didn't get a copy of it, so I wasn't sure what--when I saw that the meeting was happening, then I gave Bryan a call. And Sharma's out today and tomorrow, so I'm not sure why she didn't respond. I'll find out.

Dwyer: Okay, okay. So it's just a question of timeliness.

Allison: Yeah, and, Doris, I want to make clear, I did send it last Tuesday but with the holiday and work schedules and everything, I don't think we should read anything into it.

Dwyer: Oh, okay. Well, I was just asking because I'm--

Allison: Oh, yeah, no, it's a good point.

Dwyer: --hoping that just meant satisfaction. But that's why you're leaving it open, for--

Allison: Correct.

Dwyer: Okay. Great.

Allison: And once I have some more data, I'll have Peter send that out.

Dwyer: Okay. Okay.

Freedman: And Myron again for the record. Even though, you know, we are doing well this year, a lot of it is because of one product and that's the medallion. So you take that away, you know, we're still struggling with being able to market, you know, the rest of our inventory. So, you know, we're all interested in finding the magic bullets here that increase sales for sure.

And I read some of the comments about native, you know, Nevada-made products, Native American products. I think those vendors do sell well. I know some of our jewelry does pretty well, so finding more of those and maybe sharing some of them, maybe that's something to look at, as well.

Maureen: This is Maureen in Las Vegas.

Allison: Yes.

Maureen: I'm trying to think of an answer to your question about what the Board can do but I feel like I don't have enough information about the Board to know what you could do. Some of the things that are, I would say, like, big picture, Charmaine and I once talked about going in together on a large purchase of t-shirts and selling them. You know, if there was a way to make it work so that we could buy in bulk and then divide the cost up or however, some way that we could work that out where we were paying less for an item. The buying power of seven museums.

Allison: Sure. Getting some economies of scale.

Maureen: Yeah, and some way to work that out. Another question that I have is we don't have an advertising budget, it's all kind of word of mouth and Facebook and that kind of thing. And we have some response to that but most of the people that are involved in those things are already members and already come to the museum. And we're looking for ways to spread that out further. How do we reach out? I don't have a background in media or marketing or anything like that, so it's all get on the internet and see what other people are doing. And so I feel like, you know, your question about efficiency, that I spend a lot of time reinventing a wheel that's already been invented and I just don't know who to ask or where to go or--and I don't know if there's guidance on the Board, if there are people that are involved in that, that these contacts start here. You know, or is it just get on and see what other people are doing?

Allison: Thank you for--I think we're trying to figure that out ourselves and I know that, you know, I have a background in that, Seth has a background in that, Doris has a lot of ideas about this and a background in it. So I think my goal, and anybody jump in, is to provide you with that kind of support to come up with ideas that we can then bring to the Board and act as advocates to try to help. And, you know, however that works. So, yeah, this kind of information is really helpful for us, I think, to help get some thoughts around how we can help out.

How about Lost City, you guys have any comments?

Janie: Yes. We are thinking in terms of local Nevada-made products or Native American products, something that kind of limits us at our rural location. So for us to be able to go out into the community or into other communities to purchase those materials would be huge. And it would diversify our product 'cause it seems like--it's hard to get the vendors to come to us to show us what they're selling and it's hard to get new contacts, if we have the same people coming all the time. But if staff were able to travel outwards and try to seek new contacts, we might have a better product in the store.

Allison: And having power probably helps.

Janie: Yes (inaudible).

Allison: I couldn't believe that. I saw your notice yesterday, then I saw the newspaper today. You guys didn't have power for 14 hours.

Dwyer: I have a comment.

Janie: (Inaudible) it is working fine, everyone.

Dwyer: Could I ask a question about that, Lost City? This is Doris Dwyer. What is the obstacle keeping you from going out to the vendors? Is it personnel, is it, like, not having made a cover for people who would be out? Or is it a reason--or because it's out of state and is there some barrier to that because it's out of state? I mean, what--

Janie: I think it's a combination of all the above. We have some vendors that we work with in Utah, which, for us, is really close. It's, like, 45 minutes to get into Utah. But because of our state vehicle, we would have to have some sort of arrangement. And perhaps I'm just so new I haven't done the background research to find out, like, what kind of money we would have available to do this or what logistics are involved. But we would want to be able to take our state vehicle into Utah or be able to drive into Las Vegas for a conference where they have vendors that come in, or other opportunities that we might be able to go in and research what kinds of things they have and come back out. But we're going to have a strategic planning meeting for our museum store on January 30, so in terms of timing for us, this is really good for us to kind of get some ground work on what we should be focusing on and what the Board kind of has a vision for, for our museum stores. Are we going to try to kind of have those uniform products and have, like, a state-wide brand that we're all selling together or are we still going to continue to have our individual missions and our individual products that we're selling? Or is it going to be a combination?

Allison: I think that's a really good question and I don't pretend to have an answer. I'd like to hear what folks think, based on their experience, whether it's in the state or whether it's from where you were before. What do you think about this? I mean, the idea of some unifying items--somebody mentioned some of the state tourism items. I like that but I also understand that each location has such unique history and items that would relate to what's being explored in that location that it seems hard to kind of unify beyond that. But I'd like to hear what other people think.

Hees: This is Randy from Boulder City.

Allison: (Inaudible).

Randy: I like the idea but that would have one thing, and I wasn't here for this period, but at the Sesquicentennial, there was material that all the stores were expected to sell but that material did not have a profit margin appropriate. In-fact, there was actually apparently one item that the suggested retail was actually less than the cost. So if we're going to do some merchandise, we have to make sure that we're maintaining our profit margin.

Allison: Sure.

Freedman: Myron Freedman for the record. One thing we might consider doing is having all of the stores conduct a survey with their customers, asking are there things that they thought they would find in the store, that they wished to find in the store either because they think it's connected to a particular region and they might've expected to find more Native American items, who knows. But get an understanding of what the customers' expectations were when they came in. And that might provide a little bit of guidance for the kinds of materials to stock.

Dwyer: This is Doris Dwyer. You know, as you mentioned in your comment, Lost City, it would be really important to be communicating with the other store managers. I mean, do you have periodic teleconferences or is that not technically possible everywhere? Or what is--what communication do you currently have with each other?

Freedman: Myron Freedman. I know that Charm talks fairly regularly with the manager at the railroad museum in Carson City and we have done some joint promotions.

Janie: This is Janie with Lost City. The POS systems, you know, with the training and all learning the POS systems, I think a lot of us store managers, we've had a lot of contact in that area.

Dwyer: Okay.

Janie: But as product, you know, a lot of our, I mean, I personally like the museums being unique and different. Some of the products being, you know, the same at all the museums I think would be great but I really like when people walk in our museum and they feel like, wow, I haven't seen this anywhere else.

Dwyer: So are teleconferences technically possible everywhere or not?

Barton: Mm-hmm.

Dwyer: Or all the museums can do that?

Barton: Sure.

Dwyer: Okay.

Barton: Yeah, this is Peter Barton for the record. And I know Pete Dubet did a couple of those outreach teleconferences a few years ago where he had the store managers come together and talk. He was headed down that path for sure.

Allison: Okay. That's a good one to know about that.

Freedman: Myron Freedman for the record. Carrie, is there anything to be said about the budgetary goals, that the store budget plays into the overall budget for the division?

Edlefsen: Carrie Edlefsen for the record. As far as budgetary goals, each museum director has an opportunity to review and look at what has been recommended. The biggest problem with that, though, is it's hard to anticipate that the store will exceed anything that they've done historically. And if they historically have been on a downward trend, you don't want to over-anticipate any other revenues. If it's known that there's a program that will be coming up through the year, such as was done with the Sesquicentennial, it's okay, you know, it works to anticipate that there will be an increase in sales, which there were. The problem with a lot of the stores sales, you know, half--half of the museum stores have personnel liability. Personnel liability eats up the majority of the store budget and the store has to support itself.

Barton: Yeah, one of the things--Peter Barton--historically, that we've found, is that if a store doesn't have gross sales of 100,000 a year, it basically can't support personnel costs for a fulltime manager, at least. And thus, we did away with personnel costs or we did away with the store manager position in Las Vegas in 2009 or '10. And we did the same at the Historical Society, where we've tried to de-burden the personnel costs from stores wherever the sales just couldn't justify the cost of a fulltime person. And that's had its own drawbacks, of course, when you don't have a fulltime person. And we're having someone who's a general funded position that's supporting the trust fund. We're on pretty thin ice from an audit perspective and we have to be cognizant of that.

Freedman: Myron Freedman for the record. But as a budgetary goal then for the retail aspect of the museum, since really you're trying to--we're trying to break even then, at least. So the role of the store then is really to add an experience to coming to the museum. I mean, that's the role of the store then. It isn't necessarily a profit leader in the scheme of things.

Edlefsen: No. Carrie Edlefsen for the record. No. It's not ever been a real profit leader. You know, in building the stores' budgets, I work on trying to use the keystone pricing model and it works. It fluctuates here and there but, you know, basically, those who aren't familiar with it is that for your cost of goods expenditure, double that will be your revenue. In using that, many times many

of the museum stores will not make a profit but that relies primarily on the fact of the mandatory liability of the personnel costs. It does become a burden and personnel costs do go up, so far, year after year. That means that the store has got to be able to sell more to be able to maintain the ability to cover its own costs.

So, you know, I'm not the retail person, per se, I'm just the budget person. And as we have seen with your budget this year, when things are looking up and it looks like you're going to exceed revenues, we can go in and make adjustments to increase the budget. When things look down and the cash flow is not there, we have to maintain the liabilities of the expenditures, the costs that we have to pay, like personnel, like assessments, those costs that have to come out no matter what the profit is. When that happens and their sales are not as strong as they should be, it happens that they do get throttled, I guess, for a lack of a better word, because there is no cash flow. It's like a real business. If there is no cash, they can't really make a sale or they can't really buy more stuff.

Allison: Right.

Freedman: Okay.

Edlefsen: If that makes sense.

Freedman: Yeah, it makes perfect sense. Myron for the record, again. So Bryan, any thoughts then on what the Board is looking for? I think that was a question you had early on in this conversation. When I think about the fact that we're really just trying to break even, is there a perception that there's a lot more to be done with the retail aspect of the museums on the Board's part?

Allison: I can't speak for the whole Board and I'd like Seth and Doris to give their thoughts. I've always considered these--I can't remember exactly how you said it, Myron, but as adding to the experience while breaking even. From my perspective, that is a good place to be and if we figure out a way to make additional revenue above and beyond that, that's where we want to go toward. But it seems like the inconsistency in some of the issues that we've had, which Carrie just explained about budgeting and liabilities, which then affect the inventory, you know, it becomes this kind of chicken and egg thing. That's something that we want to get away from. So if we can get a cushion, then we can perhaps get into a position where we don't have that affecting people, then we can get to a place where we maybe can make some money.

Schorr: This is Seth Schorr for the record. I apologize if I mention something that's already been discussed. But, you know, a lot of what this conversation reminds me of in my business world is some of, you know, the hotels I've run have literally been too small to sustain a gift shop. But there are, you know, amenities that the hotel guests need, you know, we feel like we're leaving

money on the table because you would think that there are souvenirs attached (inaudible) a very similar conversation where we would've been happy just to have us break even on operation and provide the amenities. And the solution that we found were really two. One was just to outsource the whole thing and I don't know if that's an option to have literally lease the space to somebody else who can sell whatever product they want. And then, of course, we would make sure they include, you know, certain souvenir items so that we can, you know, guide them. Or vending machines have taken on a completely new technology and a lot of limited-service hotels are using vending machines to sell items you would never believe could be bought in a vending machine. I'm sure everybody sees Best Buy vending machines in airports. And this idea of, you know, completely replacing the human element is an option, at least, that I've dealt with in the, you know, private sector.

So not sure if either one of those have been discussed or even something that we would consider.

Allison: I think it's part of the discussion. IT has not been discussed as far as I know. Peter?

Barton: For the record, Peter Barton. No, we've not discussed those in any formal way. There's no preclusion to having a concessionaire operate on state property. That's within our statutory authority to do. So that's a possible way to go. I'm not sure that, again, we've got visitor volumes in most locations that would be attractive for a vendor to come in but we don't know until we explore that. If we wanted to go that route.

Schorr: Seth Schorr for the record. I mean, I'm just--yeah, just sort of planting a seed. You know, happy to maybe do a little research, you know, either for our next board meeting to see what type of vendors are out there. And what we may find is that, you know, the concessionaire is really more interested in, you know, selling ships and coffee and food but as a part of the concession, there is, you know, merchandise that they're selling as well. So, you know, I would like to do a little research to see if that's even an option. And the same thing with the vending machine. And the vending machine, there is a capital expense associated but you can, you know, finance or lease it, as well. So I'm happy to, you know, go through my files and see if I can't get some information that's relevant.

Freedman: Myron Freedman for the record. I was reading through some of the comments, and maybe some of the store managers are on the meeting to comment on the merchandising challenges that you have. Because that seems to be an issue, as well, whether or not you have the ability, do you feel like, to really present the store in a strong way.

Hees: This is Randy Hees in Boulder City for the record. We have the problem that our store is 196 square feet, in essentially a overgrown garden shed. Now, with the proposal for a new museum and possible funding in conservation bonds in this next legislative session. We have devised, in that architecture so far, a larger store, a better location but also, we were very careful to make sure that one person could both sell train tickets and could man the cash register in the store so we could reduce our labor costs. So, I mean, for us, right now, it's a terrible little, tiny store but it does okay, but it sells, you know, junky train toys because we are primarily a train ride rather than a museum. But there's something to go forward in the future with.

Allison: Okay. Anybody else?

Timm: Mary Beth Timm for the record. Our store is pretty nice. Our hardware though, I don't know when it was installed. I think it was the '80s or '90s when most of our display racks went up and they're just--they're wearing out and they're looking a little dingier, so that's something that we would want to kind of look into replacing, either piece by piece or all at once. Or I'm not sure exactly what we would even do with that. And I have a question, actually, for the other stores. Is anybody selling food or water in their stores? We aren't, currently.

Freedman: No, in Carson City.

Male: We do in Las Vegas, we sell water.

Katherine: This is Katherine, for the record, at the NHS, we don't sell food or water.

Dwyer: This is Doris Dwyer. Las Vegas, if you sell water, has there ever been an issue of, you know, are you allowed to take water with a cap into the exhibits?

Male: Sure.

Dwyer: So there's never been a problem with that? Okay. But food might be another issue. I mean, you're assuming maybe that they buy on the way out rather than the way in?

Male: Yeah, food's not allowed in the galleries.

Dwyer: Oh, yeah.

Male: The water is allowed to go into the gallery. We were told anything, as long as it's not sticky, so just--and that's all we allow is water to go in. And where we're situated, we have a pretty good viewpoint for catching people going in and we have security that walks around in the gallery. So we have a pretty good--we would like to sell little snacks if we could but we were told we couldn't because of the restriction from the blind center, that the blind center has to have that

concession. I don't know if that's still the case but if we could sell just little granola bars or something like that, we'd sell a ton of them. We have a big, big site and people end up at the store desperate for something, some kind of sustenance. Gets pretty hot in the summer.

Allison: Peter, is there a restriction? Oh, sorry, this is Bryan Allison.

Barton: A restriction. For the record, Peter Barton. I'd have to explore. The services for the blind does or did have a relationship with the state that they had first dibs on any concession services for food. I don't know if that's still the case. It's not something we've explored for quite some time. But other than, you know, when you introduce food in a museum environment, you invite pests. And--

Allison: Sure.

Barton: --pests and museums are a difficult thing to rationalize. So we've been pretty conservative about not allowing that in the museum proper. I don't know that there's any harm in going to Costco and buying a box of granola bars and marking them up double the price and putting them in a basket at the cash register and selling them. I don't even know that that would rise to the level of violating some statute that may be in place with state purchasing. But it's something we could look at. I mean, if that's something you want us to pursue, Maureen, we could take a look at it, at least doing something like that.

Male: Do you think, Peter, that that falls under something to fight over with the Springs?

Schorr: That was gonna be my next--Bryan.

Barton: You know, I don't think a granola bar, you know, if you were selling mini pizzas, we'd have a different conversation, I'm sure. But I just don't think the granola bar would be an issue. But I have a meeting with Chairman Carlton and the water district to discuss these issues February 6, I think, 6th or 7th here in Carson, so we can address that.

Male: Great.

Allison: Okay. Does anybody have anything else they'd like to add? I think we had some good discussion and I took some notes on this. Before we move to the next agenda item? Okay. Number six, museum store association staff participation and annual conference for possible action. So I don't remember this one.

Barton: You know what, and this is one I slipped in there, Bryan. This is Peter Barton.

Allison: Okay, good.

Barton: And I only put it in there because we have a tendency to be a little more reactive than we'd like and, you know, there is an annual Museum Store Association Conference. The division is a member of MSA. I don't know if any of the individual museums are but the conference this year is March 28 to April 1 and it's in San Diego. I don't think there's an opportunity to send anyone this year because, you know, we're well into the budget year, if it hasn't been planned. But I just wanted to get it out there and on the--in everyone's mind that, you know, if folks have a desire to go next year, I don't think we'd be in a position to send one person from every museum, but I could see the potential, depending on where the conference is, that, you know, one person north, one person south could go. From those who have gone, I've heard very positive reviews. I think we sent railroad last year, here in Carson City, and she was pretty positively moved and brought back some good ideas that she, in-fact, shared with others last year. So I don't know and as I sit here today, I don't know if anyone has this in their budget this year. I think not but as we will be getting into budgeting, the fiscal year 2020 budget, the 2020 budget, in the next few weeks, that folks ought to be thinking potentially about sending someone to the conference in 2020. I can't find anywhere online where it's planned for next year yet.

Edlefsen: Carrie Edlefsen for the record. I've found that sometimes with this particular conference, the information is not available at the time that the budgets are built. So for the museum directors who want to try to build an enhancement, it's perfectly okay to use the previous location and costs associated with that to build the enhancement or the budget concepts, so that we at least have a guideline or a baseline to go on for approval of the enhancement. Generally, I've seen it where it doesn't exceed the baseline too terribly bad. A lot of times, it ends up coming in underneath and so it would result in savings.

Freedman: Myron Freedman for the record. I have attended this conference and I found it very helpful. You know, of course, there's the marketplace where you get to see the products and then talk with the vendors about how to customize them but also, there were a lot of great merchandising workshops and things like that.

Barton: This is Peter Barton for the record again. And in addition to the Museum Store Association Conference, there's a couple of great gift shows. And Maureen, have you ever attended the Las Vegas gift show?

Maureen: I've been to a couple of them but Josie is my sort of half-time partner working in the store and I send her. She does the ordering for the store and so she's going to one actually next Thursday. And so I try to get her or at least one of us to go to every one of them that comes into town.

Barton: Okay.

Maureen: And she's gotten great contacts from vendors through that. Lots of unique and interesting merchandise.

Hees: This is Randy in Boulder City for the record. And both John Walker and I attended a gift show last October here in Las Vegas that was aimed at not specifically museum stores but very much at the tourist end of the market. And we did make some good contacts, a couple of which were actually Nevada state vendors, which was really helpful.

Barton: Good. And the other one--again, Peter Barton for the record--that I've always found and I think Charmaine went last year or the year before, is the Gatlinburg, Tennessee show that occurs in Late November every year is specifically geared not just for museums but for the type of attractions in which museums are certainly a part of.

Edlefsen: It's heritage stuff.

Barton: Yeah, it's more the heritage. It's the wooden crafts. But when the Altoona Railroad Museum--this is 25, 30 years ago now, we'd go and we'd spend 2-300,000 at that show every year and it was the bulk of our buying. They were the vendors that we really depended on. And so, you know, one person from the division to be able to go to that every year seems prudent, if it's possible, as well.

Allison: Okay. Well, I'm glad you brought it up, Peter, and put it on the agenda, even if there's not something for us to do right this--

Barton: Yeah, there isn't. I don't know why I put it--I guess I was trying to see--

Allison: But it's good to have it so that people are thinking. And as I was thinking what Maureen and Randy were talking about, their contacts, would any of those benefit Lost City?

Male: Very possibly. We can--

Allison: Maybe we should, just a suggestion, come up with a shared contact list of vendors. I'm always afraid to suggest anything that might somehow be run afoul of some state policy or something. But of these contacts or vendors, so that you could share your best practices. Since being in Las Vegas, you probably have access to a lot more shows and information.

Male: And I think that would be a good idea and I assume if they're state vendors, we can trade them back and forth all day long. And I could see how something that would work in Carson City in the Mint Museum might work well here in Las Vegas at Springs Preserve and similarly, Carson City Railroad items are going to very possibly work at our railroad museum.

Allison: Or they might just have different inventory or different items from a particular vendor. Okay. Anybody else have anything else on this item, on number six?

Dwyer: I just have a question. This is Doris Dwyer. For the Las Vegas gift shows, which are quite large ones, I understand, is there an expense involved to sending, I mean, do you have to pay to get, I mean, is there an expense involved in sending somebody local to something like that?

Maureen: This is Maureen. Usually a parking fee is about it.

Dwyer: Oh, okay. So that's real manageable.

Maureen: Or something.

Dwyer: What about Lost City, is that feasible for you guys?

Timm: This is Mary Beth Timm for the record. Yes, it is feasible for us to get to Las Vegas for a day trip, either using a state vehicle and getting a lunch reimbursement or using personal vehicles. We have two staff members currently that drive up from Las Vegas every day.

Dwyer: So it doesn't present a personnel problem? There's enough people left to cover the museum?

Timm: Correct. We should have--we have been--we're masterful, at this point, of covering for not enough staff.

Dwyer: I'll bet.

Barton: Hey, this morning's budget overview, they said there's going to be 565 and a half new FTEs as a result of this upcoming budget. A three percent increase in state workers and total numbers of state workers. And we actually got mentioned today in that context, so--

Allison: That's good.

Barton: --we'll see.

Male: I understand there's a lot of experienced federal workers who are looking for work, so--

Barton: Apparently, at least on short term assignments, yeah.

Allison: That's right. Okay. Moving on to Agenda Item Seven, discussion on next steps for the committee. I guess, I mean, we've gone over a lot of things today but it

sounds like following up on--Seth, you're going to follow up on some of the ideas that you presented.

Schorr: Yes, I will.

Allison: I like that idea, Peter, that you mentioned of more information sharing between the different museums. I mean, if--since it's probably easier for some of those to be arranged than a full-on meeting like this, and so however we can facilitate that, I think that is useful. And then I think we came up with some other ideas today that we talked about. I'll go over my notes after we finish. Should we set another meeting before our next Board meeting in March? Seth, Doris, what do you think?

Dwyer: Before the next Board meeting? I don't know if--

Allison: Another committee meeting before the Board meets. So should we have another committee meeting in February or do you want to just wait until the Board meeting in March?

Schorr: I think we're okay to wait.

Dwyer: Yeah, I think so, too.

Allison: Okay. I agree, I just wanted to ask. Okay. At this point, public comment and discussion. Public comment is welcome by the committee. As a time consideration, a period of comment by each speaker may be limited to three minutes at the discretion of the Chair. Speakers are urged to avoid repetition of comments made by previous speakers. Anybody have anything else to add? Okay. Thank you for all the input. Like I said, I'm gonna keep that survey open and I'll send out some more results if I get them in the next couple of days. Other than that, we are adjourned.

Barton: Thank you.

Dwyer: Okay. Thank you, Bryan.

Schorr: Thanks, everybody.

Allison: Okay, bye.