

**Rahr-West Art Museum**  
**Board of Director Minutes**

January 20, 2021

Present: Diana Bolander, Carrie Estrella, Amy Fricke-Weigel, Candice Giesen, Katherine Halla, Courtney Hansen, Phil Hoff, Erin LaBonte, Larry Shimon, Greg Vadney, Patricia Zimmerman, HaLeigh Zipperer

Absent: Amy Gehrig, R.J. Skrepenski, Dolly Stokes,

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Fricke-Weigel at 12:04pm.

2. Public Input

None

3. Minutes – President

Motion was made by Giesen, seconded by Halla, and unanimously approved by the board to accept the December minutes as written.

4. Review of Financial Accounts

No questions

5. President Report- Fricke-Weigel

a. Education Committee—Vadney

Did not meet in January, but did meet after the December Board meeting. The discussed the 2021 schedule and instructors were asked to come up with a “regular” schedule for 2021. Summer schedule and programming will be developed. Virtual and kit-based art was discussed. Would like to create long term virtual art classes. Would also like to develop adult based in person and virtual classes, as there is a void in this area in our community.

b. Membership/Marketing Committee

Did not meet.

c. Public Arts Committee—Vadney

Met January 12. Discussed Art Forward schedule and 2021 projects. Identifying 15 potential utility boxes to paint. Would like one in each of the 10 districts, plus additional in the downtown area. Potentially looking to engage high school art teachers to build relationships. Also looking to MPU to potentially provide funding for supplies and will submit a proposal to Room Tax to provide artist fees and funding for the outdoor exhibit of Really Big Prints. The committee would also like to develop an app as an index for public arts in the city. Bolander is currently putting together a grant proposal for the Wisconsin Arts Board to help fund app development and other public arts educational opportunities.

d. Development Committee—Fricke-Weigel

Committee met January 18. They discussed the elevator project, front yard project, and Sputnikfest. A grant was received from the West Foundation to fund the front yard project. Work is scheduled to begin in spring and finish tentatively in July. They also discussed the sculpture project. They discussed having a consultant for future renovation work for restructuring and creating a campaign. Sputnikfest was also discussed. Board members were asked to join the committee. They would like to have an art run/walk going past the murals in downtown.

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Halla had expressed concern about hiring a consultant for the future renovation work of the mansion. She feels that having a consultant with architectural knowledge is important. Fricke-Weigel stated that the proposed consultant has worked on several similar projects and are looking to her for experience, vision and an outside eye. She also stated that it is important that any potential work must be beneficial to the museum, finances, and the community. Vadney stated that the Wisconsin Historical Society will be involved in any changes made, but that the facilitator would provide guidance and facilitate meetings with the Board and staff, as well as conduct a needs assessment and set up focus groups.

- e. Strategic Plan Implementation—Fricke-Weigel  
The proposed strategic plan was sent to Board members prior to the meeting. There was concern that there was not enough time for Board members to review for a vote at this meeting. Board members were asked to review the plan for vote at the February meeting.
  - f. Board Members for 2021—Fricke-Weigel  
Fricke-Weigel reminded all that there will be several openings on the Board in 2021 due to term limitations. Any interested candidates should apply through the online form on the City of Manitowoc website. Also, Board members were asked to put the word out for new members. Would like to have a plan by the March meeting.
6. Rahr-West Friends Committee Report—Halla  
Friends met in January. They are anxious to be more involved, as there have been no events. New officers were elected: Tina Schram, Chair; Sandra Egbert, Vice Chair; Joanne Thompson will remain as secretary. Mary Jo Stangel is writing an Art Forward Article about the Friends exhibit “For the Love of Eggs”, which several members of the group have been organizing. They put together 100 holiday gift bags, most of which have been distributed. They are thinking about ideas for the Art of Conversation, if and when having events in person is possible. They would also be happy to help promote and celebrate the elevator and landscape projects. LaBonte mentioned that she has had the opportunity to watch several high-profile speakers during virtual events and suggested that the museum consider holding a virtual event with a more popular speaker. Hosting an event virtually would save on costs, as the Rahr would not have to pay travel expenses. There is also potential to have a larger audience base.
7. Collection Report—Bolander  
Committee met January 19, but had very low attendance. Hindman Auctions came to look at the rugs that were deaccessioned and documents are being finalized. It is estimated that \$4,000-\$5,000 should be received from the sale of the rugs. Those funds will be used for collections or future accessions. The intern funded by the NEH grant has been working about three days per week. Collections conservation supplies were received last week Bolander and Kahn are currently working on reorganization. A cleaning and pest management plan is being developed and should be ready for Board approval in February. Bolander is working on the 2021 NEH grant.
8. Foundation Report—Fricke-Weigel  
Next meeting will be held January 26. The financial accounts were reviewed. The new Rahr-West sign is in the process of being installed. Funding for this project was provided by the Foundation.
9. Director’s Report—Vadney  
Hoping to reopen the week of January 25. Will look at 14-day Covid figures after Board meeting to decide. Upon reopening, would return to regular hours, but no rentals or classes.

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Bolander is currently working on installing exhibits. New acquisitions will be in the lounge and permanent collection in the mansion. The Friends are putting together an exhibit “For the Love of Eggs”, scheduled to open in early March. The Portrait of Manitowoc Project will be installed at the end of February. Board members are encouraged to submit their self-portraits for the project, if they haven’t already.

There are two livestream events coming up. Vadney will do a presentation on the Rahr Parlor furniture on January 27 and Liesl Tetwuide of the Kohler Foundation will do a presentation about Judith Roth and the Kohler Foundation on February 24.

There are several construction projects underway for 2021. Vadney shared the most recent drawings for the elevator project. These designs showed a “green wall” which will consist of terrace planters on a vertical grid. Looking on connecting with West of the Lake on this project. The existing wall between the mansion and fire escape will remain intact. Vadney asked the Board for conditional approval of the designs. There may be some aesthetic changes, but the design will largely remain unchanged.

A motion for conditional approval of the presented elevator plans was made by Hanson, seconded by Estrella, and unanimously approved.

There were some unforeseen fees for the architectural work of the elevator project. The Community Development grant does not cover architectural fees. The Foundation paid initial costs for 2020 in the amount of \$10,098. Vadney mentioned that there are several restricted accounts held by the museum for building purposes. He proposed that the remaining architectural fees (approx. \$46,000) be paid through the following reserve accounts:

John E. Julian Grant--\$5,000  
Building Addition--\$8,000  
Membership--\$33,000

A motion to approve utilizing the proposed funds for architectural fees was made by Zipperer, seconded by Giesen, and unanimously approved by the Board.

The new exterior Rahr-West sign is being installed January 20. Vadney will be meeting with Greenworks to go over the landscape design plan for the front yard and an update should be available at the February Board meeting. Staff met with A.C.E. for final discussions on the front office renovation. This will be scheduled once a fabrication timeline for the materials and casework has been established.

10. Old Business

Fricke-Weigel mentioned that the Board’s meeting for Vadney’s annual evaluation has been postponed due to Covid.

11. Adjourn

A motion was made by Zimmerman, seconded by Giesen, and unanimously approved by the Board to adjourn at 1:03pm.

Submitted by Melissa Franz, Administrative Support Specialist