

Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 10 am via Zoom

Present: Beth Sullivan, Jeanette Fregulia, Lynda Grande, and Mary Hernandez.
Staff: Jill Baker

The meeting was convened at 10:01 by Beth Sullivan.

Jeanette moved to approve the agenda; Mary seconded; agenda approved unanimously.

Discussions:

February board meeting agenda:

Jill presented the draft agenda for the February board meeting and explained the cautious approach to meeting-related expenditures given uncertainty about the federal budget that is up for approval in mid-March. For the February meeting, board members will be 'on their own for meals' with some recommendations for restaurant reservations in case they have the opportunity to join one another for dinner.

As board members arrive in Bozeman on Friday, they will be invited to tour the MSU American Indian Hall, followed by a short working session focused on strategic planning for 2025. The working session will focus on utilizing HM metrics to inform board involvement in fundraising and outreach. The session will begin with a review of ideas generated from past work sessions (in particular, the fundraising session held in Helena February 2024, and the guiding principles session held in Fort Benton September 2024).

In regard to the Saturday business meeting, there was discussion about how recent meetings have felt very rushed, as well as how to fit in an Executive session. Jill and Beth will draft an agenda for Saturday the 22nd, to provide for 30-minute segments for each committee and to schedule the Executive session after all other business.

Contingency plans for board meetings:

Beth recommended that there be board-approved contingency procedures for the possibility that board meetings might be impacted by weather or federal funding freezes. She recommended the following and the committee agreed.

In the case of inclement weather: Given that so much of the meeting logistics are dependent upon the presence of the Executive Director, if the ED cannot travel out of Missoula to the board meeting location due to bad weather, the board meeting will be moved to online format (at present, Zoom). Board meeting sessions that cannot be accommodated via online format, will be cancelled. Members will be notified as soon as possible via email and text about the change to online format. Hotel reservations and any hosted meals will be cancelled.

In the case of funding freeze or government shutdown: Given that credit card expenditures are held to an absolute minimum during a funding freeze, any regular board meeting occurring during a freeze will be moved to online format (at present, Zoom). Board meeting sessions that cannot be accommodated via online format, will be cancelled. Members will be notified as soon as possible via email and text about the change to online format. Hotel reservations and any hosted meals will be cancelled.

Updates from NEH and federal partners:

Jill relayed that no new changes had occurred on the national level since the events of last week. The Federation of State Humanities Councils has been working to keep councils updated on the latest developments. Until further information is forthcoming, HM remains focused on its mission, programs, and re-granting operations.

Questions were raised about how HM might need to respond in particular to the presidential executive order to purge “DEI” from operations. Concerns were briefly stated: concern that HM would need to review all policies and programs for “DEI” to protect our federal funding; concerns that, to do so, could be an abandonment of non-discrimination values. Beth stressed that HM would comply with federal guidelines as it has always done. Beth noted that the current strategic plan is expiring in this year; the strategic plan (and planning process) incorporated the creation of HM’s IDEA statement; the outcomes from that plan have been incredibly successful in extending HM’s reach to all 56 counties and will be reported in full at the Spring meeting. With the 2022-25 plan set to expire, the working session scheduled for February 21 will be an opportunity to address guiding principles and set some timely goals for 2025.

Martinsdale meeting on May 30-31:

Jill is working on the details and opportunities for the Martinsdale meeting, including housing, costs, and possible activities. More to come.