

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Minutes of the Meeting – May 7, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. There were approximately 25 people in attendance. President Paul Johnson noted that once again Doris Grover had generously donated fudge for the raffle to support our fundraising efforts. Since we wanted to allow the evening's speaker, Dana Lee, the Eliot Town Manager, to be able to go home earlier, we began with his presentation, which is summarized below following the business meeting notes. The business portion of the meeting began at 7:55 p.m.

Secretary's Report - The minutes of the April meeting were read and accepted with one correction.

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Pam Ashley read the financial report as of April 30, 2018 which was approved. As of end-month the Building Fund total was \$40,316.18 and the checking account balance was \$14,018.12. Income came from bank interest, the fudge raffle, dues, and the dinner fundraiser. Expenses were for rent, electricity, printing flyers, supplies, insurance renewal, post office box, and use of church hall for the dinner.

Membership - Sylvia Moynahan announced that the membership data was compiled but could be reviewed one last time at the meeting for any last-minute corrections.

Programs – Carolyn Bogh announced that the June meeting will be all about wedding experiences of our members. She is working on a field trip for July, tentatively to Livermore to visit the Washburn-Norlands Living History Center. August is the annual picnic at Dead Duck Inn, which starts at 5 p.m. Folks are invited to bring their food for the grill and a dish to share.

Building – Paul Johnson reported that a work group from the high school came to the Grange on their community service day and 2 groups cleaned up the parking lot and walking trail. They also had time to tour the Grange, which they found quite interesting.

Education - Jan Cerabona announced that all the plans outlined last month for the 2nd graders' experiences came to fruition and went well. They will try to make it even better next year. Many came to the open house at the Schoolhouse, and Jan offered to provide coverage if we opened up the Schoolhouse once/month for the public for a few hours, as it is a very unique place. Since the Memorial Day parade would be nearby, we decided to open it from 11-2 on that day and the weekend days preceding it. She suggested having a craft activity there and brochures and leaving a donations basket there. She said that when it was last opened for the public they made \$117 in donations. Jan would be the organizer of the open houses. There was a show planned at the Elementary School on

May 15th starting at 6 p.m. and displays could be viewed at that time. We are grateful for Jan's willingness to monitor the summertime open houses at the Schoolhouse. Others are welcome to help with that coverage, too. If interested, they should call Jan beforehand.

Grants – Helen Goransson received some information from Rosanne Adams about grants available through the State to digitize artifacts for viewing on the state archives website. They thought that the collection of Edward Vetter's photos would be a good candidate, but needed to investigate further.

Collections – Julie Johnson reminded us that the beautiful Nightingale mural in our collection needs to be professionally mounted and we should think about where to best display it. Perhaps Eliot Elementary School might have a spot. We will discuss this in May.

Old Business – Kathy Runey summarized the work of the Board of Directors. We have a proposed lease to use if we move forward with the request to store the Shapleighs' archives. The lease protects everyone's interests and the rental would be \$300/year. According to the agreement, the Shapleighs would not have a key to the archives but would need to ask permission from a designated person from the Historical Society to have the building opened. We will also need a key to the building, so our agreement with the Grange organization would be to have them provide that to us. We are not ready to present this for approval as there are still more steps to take in the process. We will revisit this in September. The Board is also looking at the by-laws. Kathy also thanked Grant Hirst for help with the insurance policy which covers the two locations and officers' liability up to \$1 million. There is a rider to the policy that was proposed where, for an additional \$595/year, we are protected for malpractice, failure to act, and other related concerns. A decision on that additional insurance was tabled until next month.

Ruth Drake spoke about having a display case at the Fogg Library. Lydia Goodwin is amenable to having a permanent case at the library, preferably a tall one.

New Business – We discussed our presence at Eliot Festival Day and decided that we would have the Schoolhouse open that day and make sure this is well publicized. This will be our public exposure that day instead of having a booth.

Carolyn Bogh suggested having a borrowing policy for the books in the collection where books may be loaned for a month at a time. She offered to keep track of borrowers' sign-out cards. No action was taken on this idea.

Keith Searles suggested we try to contact a speaker he knows who is an expert on Latin American cultures whom he thinks would be good for one of our meetings.

We thanked Pam Ashley, Helen Sullivan and Cindy Lentz for the evening's refreshments. Next month's will be provided by Keith and Toni Searles.

Program

Dana Lee has been the Town Manager of Eliot for over four years. He described his professional journey to this point in his life. Originally from Falmouth, Maine, he joined the army, having grown up in a family where his father was a lieutenant colonel. Starting in the military helped him with tuition once he began to pursue higher education. He planned to go into social work but became involved in the city government of Auburn, Maine. At the age of 27 he became the Town Manager of Mechanics Falls, the youngest in the state to hold that post. It was a bit nerve-wracking as he only received a one-week orientation, but he survived that and stayed there for 16 years. Next stop was Poland, Maine. This was his first exposure to TIF financing and programs and he had to untangle that but the end results were fine. Next was Buckfield where he served as Interim Town Manager. Then he came to Eliot where he has spent a busy 4 years. So far during his tenure they have established a town charter and addressed many other town issues. At this point, besides the budget, the hot item is the TIF. After a number of votes and years of discussions, the current approach is to have the town vote to restructure the original design for the TIF so that it is more flexible and funds can be used for any number of economic development drivers which have been listed in a menu of ideas (more can be added by voters) and where the area where TIF funds can be spent has been slightly adjusted from the original one that was established some years ago. As Town Manager, he remains neutral and leaves the decisions to the voters. He regrets that in Eliot this has become such a divisive topic and there seems to be no consensus about the best use of the funds. He has seen in other towns and cities how TIF funds have helped communities and hopes that will happen here. He explained that the TIF structure is actually saving the town by sheltering a number of properties from taxes at the state and county level and without it our taxes would go up. Thanks to having a TIF program, we are saving money in taxes and banking funds to improve the town. He compared this to the goose that laid golden eggs and our town not knowing what to do with the goose and the eggs. He also commended the good work of the Aging in Place committee and paused to express his feelings about the gruesome boating accident that recently occurred and the difficult work of the town's first responders to the accident.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Goransson