

Iola Historical Society

Board Meeting Minutes, August 31, 2020

Board members Cliff, Lee, Tom, Bonny, Sharon and John present. Cliff called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.

Sharon had a couple photos from Barb Kobs that were being thrown out, but there was no interest by the board in saving them for the historical society.

Cliff mentioned three people showed up at the final Saturday open house. He estimates about 30 total visitors for the year, with a high count of 6 one week. He did not consider it that bad of year considering all the issues with the covid-19 virus keeping many people from travelling very much.

The July meeting minutes were discussed. Lee had one correction. In the paragraph on the Thor Helgeson portrait, he was a great-grandparent of one of Lee's cousins instead of Lee himself. Bonny made a motion to accept the July meeting minutes as corrected, Lee second ... motion passed.

Tom gave the Treasurer's report. Cash accounts have not changed much. \$288 is owed for moving the flatcar to the depot. No event income this year, but we did have some book sales. Number of members slightly ahead of last year, with two more business members. Cliff mentioned an extra charge for our security system now that we went to Per Mar. The previous company used one system to handle two locations, but now we need a separate system for each location. The hope is that the number of false alarms will be reduced. Tom did mention a false alarm at the firehouse the previous Friday, and Cliff said to keep him informed. Expenses in general have been flat, while the endowment fund is down with the overall stock market. For the project accounts, Lee suggested the speeder display money be added to the caboose and flatcar fund since the speeder was removed. Lee asked about the difference between the marketing and the video marketing projects, and Tom said that the video marketing was for the planned aerial photos and website work. Lee suggested that the unused funds be cleaned up, and Tom indicated that they will be reviewed when the board meets to set next year's budget. Cliff asked how Tom handles the historical marker account, and Tom said it is not a specific project and that it is in the income statement instead. Cliff expects another donation from the Kenny Buttolph estate, somewhere around \$3,500 or \$3,600. Lee motioned to accept the report, Bonny second ... motion passed.

Sharon asked if there was any interest in a notebook with the WWII service notes of Neil Kascher. The board will think about it. She also asked if there was any interest in an 1888 schoolbook from Floyd Kolden. It is written in Norwegian. Again, the board will consider.

John presented four wall hangings he received from the Assisted Living staff after the recent historical marker dedication for the Iola Hospital and Iola Cancer Sanitarium on August 19. They had been displayed in the Iola nursing home that was shut down earlier this year. The board was not interested in two of the four, so John will return them. The board decided to keep a 1974 aerial photo of the Village of Iola and a drawing of the old hospital. John will get a donation form completed for the two items. John then showed a small box of stones that were collected from the recent work on the Hwy 49N bridge. He wanted the keystone from the stone arch on the west side of the bridge, but it was buried in the rubble from the demolition work. Cliff suggests using the stones around the base of the planned historical marker for the bridge next year. The final item John brought was a peace pole he received earlier in the day from Betty at the village hall. It was a Girl Scout project from several years ago that someone found while cleaning out their attic, so they dropped it off at the Village Hall to see if anyone was interested in keeping it. Cliff envisions a future display of youth activities around Iola, so it will be saved for that possible use. John will get a donation form filled out for it.

Lee reported that Charlie Wasrud was ok with moving a pile of lumber over to the unused gas building on the east side of our property.

Lee mentioned that tonight's meeting is in the museum instead of the machine shed because he plans to use the internet for tonight's presentation. After the presentation, he asks that the members tour the garage storage area of the museum to see what is in there and to think of ideas on how to better use the space. There is a lot of stuff stored there that needs to be gone through.

Norman Mortenson was due to demonstrate the newly acquired player piano that their family donated, but he will do that at the meeting in September instead.

Cliff asked the board to consider dates for the budget meeting and the Christmas Party. Tom suggested the second week of October for the budget meeting, and the board agreed to 10 am Wednesday October 7 in the museum boardroom. For the Christmas party, it will be 5pm Monday December 7.

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John asked the board if it would be ok for the Lake District to use the machine shed for its late October meeting, and there was no objection.

Lee motioned to adjourn, Bonny second ... meeting adjourned at 6:27 pm.

Membership Meeting Minutes, August 31, 2020

Cliff opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:35pm. Eleven people were present.

Sue Halverson motioned to accept the July meeting minutes as corrected, Donna Hooker second, passed

Tom F. gave the financial report, covering the same items as in the board meeting. He mentioned the budget meeting for 2021 would be on October 7. Greg L. pointed out that the totals did not add up for other income in the restricted accounts. Tom had caught it and corrected it, but did not update the copies. Greg motioned to accept, Sharon second ... motion approved.

Cliff talked about the following,

- The board accepted two wall hangings from the old Iola nursing home, a 1974 aerial photo of the Village of Iola and a drawing of the old Iola hospital.
- Monday December 7 will be the day of our Christmas Party, starting at either 5:00 or 5:30pm.
- The Iola Lake District plans to use the machine shed for its meeting on Tuesday October 27, from 6:30 to approximately 8:00pm.

Lee mentioned that we were meeting in the museum tonight because he needed to use the internet for his presentation. After the presentation, he would like members to look at the stuff in the garage area. One of the items stored there is a printing press, and George Cuhaj has volunteered to get it working. Plan is to print up some railroad-style tickets to give out for the school tours of our facilities.

Greg would like a schedule of our planned events in 2021 for his promotional work with the chamber. Cliff will assume more of a normal year, then send the dates to Greg. Greg mentioned that the Lions Club is still deciding on whether or not to hold the Iola Santa Parade in December. They would like to, and there would be four or five members from the former Lioness Club that would help. If the parade is held, we would probably still host something in the machine shed, but no children on Santa's lap. A decision on whether or not to hold the Iola Winter Carnival in February is to be made soon.

Greg and Cliff talked about the historical marker program. The next marker dedication will be Thursday November 5 for the Helvetia Town Hall. Other markers coming up include one for Clifford Thompson outside the Crystal Café; one for the Hwy 49N bridge over the S. Branch of the Little Wolf River near the Millstone (Tom will help gather more information), and a marker for the one room schoolhouse. There were 85 such schoolhouses in Waupaca Co. at one time, and Don Hansen may help with a presentation. He worked with Joan Paulson on their schoolhouse book.

Donna Hooker asked how many visitors showed up on Saturdays, and Cliff estimated 30. It was an abbreviated schedule of eight Saturdays, starting July 11 and ending August 29. Greg pointed out that the Hwy 49N detour is bringing more people down Depot St. and past the museum, even though the official detour is on a road to the south.

John talked about the donations of the two wall hangings and the peace pole.

6:59pm meeting adjourned.

Lee's presentation. He began by mentioning that Norman Mortenson's 57th wedding anniversary was today, which is why his demonstration of the player piano will be next month. The idea for tonight's presentation came while Lee was looking at the New Berlin Historical Society webpage. Like us, it is one of the more than 400 local affiliates of the state historical society. On the bottom of their webpage were interactive maps. While checking out icons for program ideas, Lee came across the Sanborn Map Co., which made very detailed maps of cities and towns in the 19th and 20th centuries that were used by fire insurance companies. Insurance companies stopped using the maps in the 1960's, but they still provide historical information on the formative years of many towns and cities. Lee found one such listing for Iola from 1911 that had three detailed maps. By using the internet, Lee was able to zoom in on the map details for his presentation. Sanborn is still in business, but their information is now copywrite protected and not as accessible as the older maps are.

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In November of 1911, Iola had a population of 1,000 people. The maps list fire department capabilities, businesses and the types of buildings and structures differentiated by different colors on the map. Some items from the first map that Lee discussed,

- The mill owned by Tom now is listed as a flourmill in 1911, was 2 ½ stories tall and had a basement. The railroad crossed the river and the road by the mill, went past the mill and ended by Cliff's former house on Island Dr. Cliff remembers that there was still sawdust on that site when they built there.
- The Iola Starch & Potato Co. is listed on the map, and that was turned into a pickle factory. Lee found an article in the April 9, 1909 Iola Herald that the starch manufacturing was going to end in favor of making pickles, as cucumbers were easy to grow and pickling them was more profitable. Lee found an ad in the April 15, 1909 newspaper from the pickle company seeking 75 acres or more of cucumbers needed. An article from 1921 said the pickle plant was still doing well.
- Bestul Mfg. Co. is listed. They were known for making a special type of clothes-drying reel. Bob Strand wrote an article about the company. It was built in 1910 after Severin Bestul got a patent for his models that ranged from 250 to 1,000 feet of line. Shares in the company were sold for \$100 each. Other communities tried to have the factory built in their locations, but it stayed in Iola. The reel had the ability to hang bedsheets higher, and what made it unique was the ability to stand in one location with a pile of clothes in a person's arm, hang the clothes to dry then rotate the reel to put on the next item. There are still a couple of the clothes-drying reels in Iola today. The company went out of business when the local market dried up, as it was too expensive to ship or deliver the products. The stock dropped to \$60 a share.

Lee did not spend as much time on the second and third maps, which contained a number of potato warehouses, icehouses, the creamery and several smaller businesses on Main St. and Water St. A bandstand was listed, and Lee remembered that it was moveable. Cliff mentioned that the old bandstand became a warming house at the Hogsback Ski Hill. Lee then went through several pictures of the mill, the clothes reel factory, the Lovdahl block factory on the north side of the river (1902), the rickety wooden bridge to the Lovdahl factory, the starch factory, the 'round house' (which did not actually have a turntable for the train, but was used for maintenance) and the pickle factory. The presentation ended around 8:00 pm.

Minutes recorded by Secretary – John Bertelson