



Cass County Historical Commission

Officers: Chair – Bernie Williamson, Vice Chair – Darren Bettinger, Secretary/Treasurer – Jane Bergman, Members-at-Large: Amy Davidhizer, Dianna McGrew, Ann File, Jean Schultz, Nate Robinson, Allen Butchbaker

MEETING AGENDA

CASS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING
60525 Decatur Road
Cassopolis, Michigan 49031

April 13, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order – *Chair, Bernie Williamson*
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of the Agenda
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. March 9, 2023 - Regular Meeting
- V. Financial Report
- VI. Bills
- VII. Report from the Chair*
- VIII. Old Business
 - a. Continued Discussion – Collaborative Meeting
- IX. New Business
- X. Committee Reports
 - 1. Current/New Committees
 - 2. Outreach
 - a. Newton House
- XI. Privileges of the Floor
- XI. Public Comment
- XII. Adjournment

****ZOOM invitation will be e-mailed to Commission Members and supporters currently on the e-mail list. Anyone not on the e-mail list can request the link by contacting Bernie Williamson at 269-445-9100, or by e-mailing CCHistoricalCommission@gmail.com.**

CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING ~ THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernie Williamson at 5:34 p.m.

Board Members present: Bernie Williamson, Allen Butchbaker, Darren Bettinger, Annie File, Nate Robinson.

Board Members not present: Jane Bergman, Amy Davidhizar, Dianna McGrew, Jean Schultz.

Also present: No Guests.

Approval of the Agenda:

A motion was made by Bettinger to approve the agenda, seconded by Robinson. During discussion, Allen Butchbaker requested an amendment to include discussion of a memorial tribute to long-time CCHC member Abigail Schten following her passing in February.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended by Bettinger. Seconded by Robinson. Unanimous in favor.

Approval of the Minutes:

A motion was made by Robinson to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2023, meeting. Seconded by Bettinger. Unanimous in favor.

Financial Report:

Chair Bernie Williamson noted that the financial reports had been e-mailed to Commission members. Of particular note was a credit of \$8,500 from the County to the CCHC fund. There was some discussion regarding the belief that the amount should have been \$9,000. Williamson will follow-up to clarify whether a change was made to the amount to be allotted, and if so, why.

A motion was made by Bettinger to accept the Financial Report as presented. Second by Robinson. No further discussion. Unanimous in favor.

Bills:

A motion was made by File to approve payment of the March bills. Second by Butchbaker. No discussion.

In favor: Butchbaker, Bettinger, File, Robinson, Williamson. None opposed.

Report from the Chair: None.

Old Business:

- a. Continued discussion of amendments to the By-laws.

Williamson explained that an issue was raised by Jackie Taylor regarding the proposed “consecutive absence” clause change from three to four. Since the Board of Commissioners established a policy allowing for three consecutive absences, our effort to increase that to four could result in the BOC deciding NOT to approve the amended By-laws. There was some discussion as to whether we would want to proceed with the vote and ask for the BOC to either allow an exception, amend their own policy, or create a separate policy for situations where Board members are likely to miss up to four consecutive meetings.

Members decided NOT to amend the number of absences from three to four, and to proceed with the vote.

Motion by Robinson to approve the amendments to the By-laws (minus the change to the absence clause). Second by Butchbaker. No further discussion.

In favor: Bettinger, File, Robinson, Williamson, Butchbaker. None opposed.

- b. Continued discussion of projects, goals, priorities.

Conversation revolved around the proposed collaborative meeting of history-related organizations within the county, in an effort to identify not only the individual entities, but also to highlight individual efforts – and more importantly, areas in which we share interests and might be able to help each other.

Since coordinating the effort will take time, it was agreed that we should tentatively target Saturday, May 20th as the date of the event. If we anticipate a small group (numbering 30 people or fewer), Holden Green has agreed to provide space at no cost – but any equipment that might be needed for presentations will have to be brought in. Larger groups would need to find a different venue. Williamson had previously mentioned using the Council on Aging presentation room, but conversations will continue, and other locations can be considered.

New Business:

- a. Abigail Schten -- Allen Butchbaker explained that Abigail Schten passed away in February, and in view of her years of service and commitment to not only Newton House, but to many other historic preservation/education efforts, he proposed adding her name to the Memorial Rock located at Newton House. Darren Bettinger suggested that the Historical Society carry the cost of adding her name to the rock, and perhaps the Historical Commission could fund a Memorial Brick (at a cost of \$50) to be included in the new walkway.

Motion by Bettinger to issue a check in the amount of \$50 to the Historical Society for the purpose of purchasing a Memorial Brick. Second by Butchbaker. No further discussion.

In favor: File, Robinson, Williamson, Butchbaker, Bettinger. None opposed.

Committee Reports:

1. Current/New Committees – No reports.
2. Outreach
 - a. Newton House – Nate Robinson reported that following Ms. Schten's passing, her son-in-law Ron McAdam offered to give the CCHC a chairlift from her home. After some discussion, it was unclear as to whether the chairlift could be installed at Newton House, and at what cost. Neither could it be determined whether the chairlift could be used at another historic property. Since funds are limited, but the Commission values the donation, it was requested that the chairlift be given to the Historical Society, which can receive donations with fewer restrictions. The hope will be to secure the donation while we collectively determine where it can best be used.

In addition, Robinson explained that he found a viable ramp that we might want to consider for use at the back entrance to Newton House. The ramp he saw had a cost of about \$1000, and could satisfy efforts to make the house more accessible. The Commission is asked to consider whether we can/should pursue a purchase of this type.

Robinson also explained that he received an alarm notification early one morning, and it was determined that it was due to a low battery in the alarm. Further discussion resulted in a suggestion that cameras be purchased to allow easier investigation of such notifications, while also providing added security. Since Newton House has both phone and broadband service, wi-fi cameras could be used to monitor activity inside and outside of the house at any time. This would be especially useful during times when access is difficult and/or inconvenient. Bernie Williamson will investigate options and pricing for consideration by the Commission.

Williamson will also contact MEC to determine the phone number assigned to Newton House, and subsequently, a way to program a voicemail message into the phone.

Privileges of the Floor: Allen Butchbaker reminded everyone that he will be conducting a public presentation on Wakelee on Wednesday, March 22nd at 6:00 p.m. at the Marcellus Library.

Public Comment: None

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Bernie Williamson