



Minnesota Genealogical Society

1185 N. Concord Street
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

<http://mngs.org>

MGS Board Meeting
1185 Concord Street North
Saturday, May 16, 2009

Present: Jay Fonkert, President
Terry Kita, First Vice President
David Suddarth, Secretary
Valerie Morrison, Treasurer
Robin PanLener, Past President
Bergetta Monroe, Director
John Schade, Library Committee Chair
Sandy Thalmann, Director
Sandy Stadtherr, Director
Mary Wickersham
Kathryn Otto
Jennifer Sligh
Jennifer de Fiebre

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 P.M.

A motion was made to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed. Introductions were made of all present.

Secretary's Report:

David Suddarth reported that minutes from last meeting were distributed via email. A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded and passed.

President's Report:

Jay Fonkert reported that the board needs to have an election within the next few months, as the new board takes over in September. The positions held by Myrtice Orr and Bergetta Monroe are up for election. In addition, all officers are up for election as the officer positions are only a one year term. All present officers indicated that they will run again. The position of Second Vice President is currently vacant. Robin PanLener nominated Jennifer de Fiebre for the position of Second Vice President. Bergetta Monroe seconded the nomination and the motion passed. Jennifer Sligh indicated that she is interested in volunteering and may serve on the board. Robin nominated Jennifer for a Director position of either one or two years. Jennifer accepted a one year term. Bergetta seconded the nomination and the motion passed.

Jay then mentioned that the journal committee would be making a report. He reported that he sent a letter to John Mercer and invited him to attend the Board meeting. Jay suggested that the Board review the editor position annually in May and accept applications. In addition, he said that John needs to let us know if he wishes to continue as editor.

Jay also reported that he has tried to generate some interest in getting the website updated.

Treasurer's Report:

Val Morrison passed out the Treasurer's report and mentioned that we have a good balance in the Money Market Fund. The Finance Committee has decided to invest part of the balance in a mixed bond fund. Val pointed out highlights of the financials, including the budget. She reported that dues are coming in well. In addition, fundraising is less than budgeted and library income is ahead of schedule, due to the Research Committee. Terry Kita discussed the need to show meeting income and expenses in more detail, broken out by each meeting. The total income is currently 21% less than budgeted and total expenses are about 7% less than budgeted.

The Bond Fund investment began on May 1, 2009. The Finance Committee has decided to remain with UBS, but will also talk with other investment advisors in the future.

Dick Thill inquired as to a copy of April financials from Terry. Terry reported that he has distributed these to the Education Committee.

A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded and approved.

Jay Fonkert then talked about a form for any future event facilitators to use in the preparation of a budget, showing a summary of the expected income and expenses for the event. Jay passed around a sample from the Intermediate Genealogy Course.

Val announced that we have received a donation from the MN Huguenot Society in the amount of \$2, 000 to MGS. Val read a letter to MGS from the MN Huguenot Society.

Education Committee Report:

John Schade passed out copies from the committee detailing items to report, as follows:

Compensation for speakers: John went over the proposed Speakers' Compensation Policy, mentioning that the committee has tried to remain consistent regarding all events.

He asked if anyone had any changes to the proposed policy. Jay Fonkert stressed that the key to the policy is the coordinator preparing a budget and working within the guidelines of that budget. Robin PanLener recommended and moved that the policy be approved. The motion was seconded by Bergetta Monroe. Discussion then followed. Terry suggested an amendment that the word "may" be changed to "will" in the area discussing Other Events. A vote on the amendment was held and the amendment failed. Jennifer Sligh asked about why we should separate the Star of the North from our other conferences. John Schade replied that because the Star of the North conference is our major conference of the year, the education committee decided to keep it separate. A discussion followed and John Schade then moved to strike the paragraph dealing with the Star of North conference. The motion was not seconded, so there was no vote. A vote was then called on the original motion, which passed.

Presentation agreement: John then reviewed the Speakers' Contracts. He presented two contracts. The short one is to be used for metro area speakers, the longer one for out of the area speakers who would require transportation reimbursement, an overnight stay and other extra items. Jay Fonkert mentioned that a speaker may have his own contract. Terry Kita suggested that we use electronic handouts, instead of paper handouts and examine how to do this in the future. A motion was then made to approve the proposed contracts. Bergetta Monroe seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed.

Course proposal: Jay Fonkert spoke about the committee proposal of a four part course in the fall on technology. This would be a hands on lab type course. Tom Rice would be the primary instructor and would be willing to do the course for a very nominal fee. Jay has begun completing a budget worksheet, which he outlined. The expected MGS profit is about \$400. Jay would like Board approval to plan the course. Terry Kita asked about the expected number of students. Jay responded that the course would be limited to 12, depending on the demand. Terry brought up a concern regarding our capacity to have that many people online at the same time and suggested that the committee talk to Bob Rowe. Mary Wickersham said that she and Tom Rice are aware of the issue and that it is being taken into consideration. Robin PanLener mentioned that if we get more than 12, we may want to consider purchasing an additional computer terminal. Kathie Otto said that if enrollment is limited, it could create more demand in the future if people cannot get in the first time the course is offered. Jay then detailed the expected income and expenses. Kathie asked about the planned date of the course and John Schade replied that it would be held in October or November. Robin PanLener made a motion that we go ahead with the planning of the course. The motion was seconded and passed.

Jay Fonkert then reported that we have had three of the ten Intermediate Genealogy Course classes and that the whole course is now scheduled out through March, 2010. He reported that attendance has been running from 25 to 30 in each session. Kathie Otto asked about whether she should send the names of people taking classes who are not MGS members to the membership committee.

Robin PanLener responded that they should be sent. Kathie indicated that she will send the names. John Schade stated that the names could be sent to him and that he will then send out a brochure.

Jay then talked about the Star of the North conference. Tom Rice is the program chair. Jay passed around a draft of the schedule and a spreadsheet of the current budget. As currently budgeted, the conference is about \$500 to \$600 ahead. Jay went through the proposed budget and suggested we bring in more people in order to increase profit. Jay discussed the fact that we are charging less than neighboring state conferences, but more than other area (Minnesota) conferences. Jay asked for volunteers to help with the conference. Robin PanLener talked about the reasons for charging more, including the fact that we are bringing in a national speaker. He pointed out that the banquet is more than just a banquet, but an awards banquet. Jennifer de Fiebre suggested having an early bird special. Kathie Otto suggested that the price of membership be the minimum difference between the member registration fee and the non-member registration fee. Val Morrison suggested that none of the fees be set at \$35, because the membership fee is \$35. It was also suggested that the banquet fee should be same for everyone. David Suddarth mentioned that increasing fees does not always equal increased profit, because we could attract less people due to the larger fee. Jay mentioned that attendance last year was not as good as we would have liked. Bergetta Monroe believes that \$40 is too high for the banquet and suggested that wine should not be included and we do a cash bar instead. Kathie Otto agreed that we should have a cash bar. Dick Thill wondered what the difference in price would be between having wine and having a cash bar. Terry Kita said that the pre-registration cost and at the at-the-door cost should be proposed by the Education Committee. Robin suggested voting online so that Education Committee could refine the proposal and the Board could have this approved before the July Board meeting. This was agreed to by all. Jay then again asked for volunteers. Dick asked if the award recipients received their dinner free at the banquet. All agreed that this be done, but only for the recipient. In addition, it was decided that MGS will only pay for the MGS awards. The Branches must provide their own awards and cover the cost of the banquet for the recipient, if appropriate. John Schade wanted to know how many attended last year. Jay responded that there were about 60 to 70 attendees Friday and Saturday. He then mentioned that we have to aim for 100 to 125 people. Robin mentioned that we need to get the Branches involved. Mary Wickersham believes that we charged \$100 last year for the full conference and suggested lowering that cost to \$90.

Awards Committee Report:

Jay Fonkert reported that we are getting the word out to nominate people for an award and encouraged people to nominate. Nominations should be sent to Kathy Lund, Jay or the awards committee.

Calendar:

Jay passed out a proposed calendar. The Irish Society may have a conflict in September, 2010. All 2010 dates have been approved, but September date has not been decided. Jennifer de Fiebre moved that we adopt the dates of September 24 and 25, 2010 and September 23 and 24, 2011 for the Star of the North Conference. Bergetta Monroe seconded and the motion passed. It was also agreed that the June picnic dates should be on a Saturday for both 2010 and 2011.

Marketing Committee Report:

Mary Wickersham discussed the proposed privacy policy. The committee advises strongly that we must have a policy on the website. The new policy states that we will not share any information with other organizations. Terry Kita wanted to know how this policy affects the information from the Branches. Mary responded that this is a 'one-way' policy and that each Branch should have their own policy. John Schade asked about collection of information on visitors to a webpage. He believes that the Marketing Committee may want to know how many visit our website. In addition the word 'personal' should be added in the second paragraph so that it reads 'personal information'. Kathie Otto made a motion to accept the policy. The motion was seconded and passed.

Mary also reported that the committee will be creating a Facebook page for the society and would like Board approval. A motion was made by Bergetta Monroe, seconded and passed.

Mary then passed out a library description page which can be used as a press release.

She then reported on the member survey taken at the April event. The results were what was expected, which indicates that we are on the right path. Bergetta suggested having a suggestion box at all events. The Board has given the Marketing Committee the OK to raise funds to support their efforts. In addition the committee is looking into advertising on website.

Journal Review Committee Report:

Sandy Stadtherr passed out and reviewed the report. The committee decided that there should be several departments added to journal, the journal should be punctual, come out four times per year and that we publish items of interest to members and that those items have Minnesota connections. The committee also suggested that the journal and the newsletter be published alternately. In addition the committee recommends that the Editor be selected by the Board of Directors. Jay Fonkert mentioned that the handbook states the Editor is to be selected by the President and approved by the Board. Currently, there is no term limit to the length of the Editor's appointment. The committee suggests that the Editor position be reviewed annually in July.

John Mercer has been the Editor for about seven years and the position has not been reviewed. It was also recommended that the Editor attend all Board meetings. Kathie Otto then mentioned that John Mercer submitted his resignation that morning through email, effectively immediately. He also implied that Paula Goblirsch had resigned as well. Jay reported that he has started working on a position description and stressed the need for communication between the Editor and the Board. Terry Kita asked about paying the Editor. Jay responded that the position is all volunteer and we may need to find many different people to do the job, as it is a multi-faceted and complex job. Terry asked if there is a journal in the works and ready to be sent out. It was reported that one is almost ready. It was also mentioned that we need to obtain all articles from John Mercer, as these are the property of MGS. Jay reviewed the qualifications for the Editor position and mentioned that he will send out a preliminary job description for the Board to review. John Schade asked if we will advertise the position. Jay responded that we should. Bergetta Monroe then suggested asking Mary Bakemann for the next issue. Robin PanLener suggested asking Paula Goblirsch. Terry wants to know how many issues are currently in the works. Jay replied that he will send out that information when he obtains it. Sandy passed out examples of other journals from a printer. Terry suggested that cost of printing our own could be significantly less. Sandy replied that the quality would not be as good.

Other Committee Reports:

John Schade reported on the library. All donations through mid April have been acknowledged. He also reported that he is starting to bar code the library's books. There are currently 27,000 to 30,000 items on the shelves. Bar coding is being done to track what books are being used and for inventory purposes.

Val Morrison asked when the next Executive meeting is scheduled. Kathie Otto responded that it is scheduled for June 16. The next Board meeting will be on July 11.

Robin PanLener spoke about the picnic. The picnic will be in the Western half of the park. Food will be provided as well as soft drinks. There will be a donation jar and door prizes.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
David Suddarth, Secretary