



Minnesota Genealogical Society

1185 N. Concord Street
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

<http://mngs.org>

MGS Board Meeting
1185 Concord Street North
Saturday, September 12, 2009

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

The meeting was called to order at 1:17 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, seconded and passed.

President's Report:

Broadband: Jay Fonkert deferred to Robin PanLener. Robin reported that broadband will be installed. He also reported that five groups have signed up, and therefore, there will be no set up fee. We are currently paying \$120 per month and the bill with Comcast should stay about same. Robin reported that we can expect an improvement in the internet speed. In addition, we will also switch our phone service to Comcast. The charge for that will be about \$125 per month. The package we are purchasing also includes cable hookup. We will receive a credit for unused cable. The installation needs to be done by October 7. Jay thanked Robin, Terry Kita, Jim Lavalley, Bob Rowe and others involved for their work in making this possible.

Members' Morning: Jay reported that the last Members' Morning went well and that we will continue to offer this next year.

MN Arts & Heritage Fund: Jay reported to the Board that we may be able to qualify for some small grants through this program. Jay suggested trying to think of what we may write a grant for. Kathy Otto mentioned that there are three categories and that the small one (up to \$7,000) accepts applications once a month. Jennifer de Fiebre asked about deadlines for the larger level grants. Bergetta Monroe inquired as to how much the larger grants are for. Kathy addressed both questions. Bergetta suggested an intern, paid position to digitize records. Kathy asked whether the branches would be able to apply, since the branches are part of MGS. Jay Fonkert replied that they would need approval of the MGS Board because they are a legal entity of MGS and MGS is a fiscal agent. He added that the Ostfriessen and Czech groups are not branches, so that would not apply to them. Jennifer de Fiebre suggested forming a committee to look into different options for grant proposals. Jay Fonkert suggested that the Board revisit the issue at a future meeting. In addition, anyone interested in fundraising should let Jennifer de Fiebre know. Robin PanLener mentioned that he would like to accept Jennifer's idea of forming a committee now, instead of waiting. However, it was decided that the Board would come back to the idea for more discussion at a later meeting.

Fall Fundraising Campaign: Jay Fonkert reported that we will do a fund raising appeal this fall and that this will go out in early November.

2010 Priorities: Jay Fonkert distributed the President's Report. He mentioned that we have had a good year and that our finances have stabilized. However, we cannot keep going the way we have been in the past. At our current spending level, we are going to start eating into the principal balance of our investments. Terry Kita said that he believes that we are taking money from the principal balance currently. Val Morrison concurred. Jay suggested that we focus on new programs and products, attracting new members and raising funds. In addition, he said that he believes we may need to cut back on library expenses.

Jay then mentioned that he would like to form three new committees, two ongoing and one temporary. These committees are as follows:

1. **MGS Branch Options Committee:** This committee would be relatively small and short term. Its function would be to look at the bylaws and constitution of MGS for the structural and legal MGS Branch status. Once that has been completed, the committee would look into at least one alternative model. The committee would report back to the Board as early as January, 2010 with a preliminary report. Then, possibly in March, the Board could begin putting things in motion at the Board level so any needed changes to the bylaws could be approved at the September quarterly meeting. Jay mentioned that Jerry Maher may be on this committee. Anyone who is interested in working on this should let Jay know.

2. Local Society Outreach Committee: This committee would be more of a standing committee than the MGS Branch Options Committee. Jay mentioned that he has already asked some people if they would be interested in serving on this committee. Kathy Otto mentioned that this committee is already in the handbook. The function of this committee would be to develop a statewide awards program with the purpose of involving local societies. In addition, the committee would look into the idea of coordinating membership between MGS and local societies. John Schade mentioned that the Marketing Committee has been looking at this idea as well.
3. Future of Library Committee: Because we receive a lot of donations to the library, this committee's function would be to help with the task of organizing the materials. Jay has already asked people if they would be interested in serving on this committee. In addition, the committee would look into and consider the space constraints of the library for the future, as well as the expense of maintaining the library. Jay mentioned that about 70% of our budget goes to rent.

Jay asked that the Board approve the MGS Branch Options Committee and the Local Society Outreach Committee. Robin PanLener moved to form four committees, the additional committee being a Fundraising Committee. Bergetta Monroe seconded the motion. It was mentioned that the current Library Committee is more of an ongoing operations committee and that the new committee being proposed would look at the future and policy making for the library. The motion was passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Val Morrison passed out the Treasurer's report. She reported that she sent the balance sheet and profit and loss through email to all Board members. The profit and loss statement shows that the income from membership dues is down 12% from what we have budgeted. Val also reported that there are a lot of registrations coming in for the conference. In addition, Val has received rent payments from branches and money from the Research Committee. She reported that our gross profit is at about \$70,000, which is about 9% under target. She said that the expenses are in good shape and that she expects that to be about 8% below budget. We are still running at a loss, but improving. We are at a year to date loss of about \$4,000, which is about what was expected. Jay Fonkert reported that we are just about at a break-even point with the conference. Val reported that there have been a lot of membership renewals and donations.

John Schade moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Bergetta Monroe seconded and the motion was approved.

Finance Committee Report:

Val Morrison reported that the Finance Committee met September 2. Terry Kita mentioned that we need to develop a cash flow plan. It was decided that the Finance Committee will work on that.

Other Business:

Jay Fonkert reported that it was suggested we buy a rolling table storage cart. Bergetta Monroe moved to purchase the cart. John Schade seconded the motion. Kathy Otto asked if the cart would fit in the storage area with tables stored on the cart. Bergetta then amended her motion to approve the purchase by adding that someone investigate the logistics and the best one to buy up to an amount of \$150. Jennifer de Fiebre seconded the amended motion. The motion then passed.

Jay then mentioned that we have a donation with which to purchase a perpetual plaque for awards winners. John Schade moved to buy the plaque. Bergetta Monroe seconded the motion, which was passed.

Kathy Otto mentioned that we could use the table cart for the upcoming conference.

The Board then took a short break.

Nominations & Elections:

The new Board will be elected at the membership meeting. Robin PanLener said that we have two nominations for the Board, Deborah Fors from Mankato and John Schade. Robin mentioned that we need one more. Sandy Thalmann mentioned that she knows someone who may be interested and will have them contact Jay. In addition, we will need to find another Second Vice President to replace Jennifer de Fiebre when she moves to First Vice President. Jennifer asked if there would be a benefit to having a two year President term. John Schade outlined the progression from Second Vice President to First Vice President to President to Past President and mentioned that each is a one year term. Kathy Otto mentioned the point that it is hard to fill the Vice President jobs. Jay Fonkert said that he believes the bylaws should be reviewed this winter.

We will be at the annual teachers' conference October 15. Robin PanLener mentioned that he needs volunteers. Kathy Otto volunteered. We will sell the Teacher's Guide at the conference.

Education Committee Report:

Beginning Genealogy: John Schade reported that the Beginning Genealogy class will begin September 13. He mentioned that if there are less than five enrolled in the class, it may be canceled. Bergetta Monroe wanted to know how many were presently enrolled. John replied that he is not sure, but probably about six.

Technology Class: John Schade reported that the Technology class is scheduled for October.

Publications Committee Report:

Sandy Thalmann reported that the Publications Committee is looking for a member from the MGS Board to be on the committee. Bergetta Monroe indicated that she may be interested.

Kathy Otto proposed that we do a small guidebook on Minnesota cemeteries. She mentioned that MGS could partner with the individual counties for the Legacy Grants.

Jay Fonkert mentioned the Rick Krum book, *Plugging into the Internet* and suggested that Rick may be willing to help with internet projects.

Marketing Committee Report:

Robin PanLener reported that the Marketing Committee developed an icon for people's computers to be used on Facebook and other social networking sites. In addition, the committee is doing publicity for the upcoming conference and classes. He also reported that the committee is working on a marketing plan targeting the area within a one hour circle outside of the metro area.

Awards Committee Report:

Jay Fonkert reported that the six winners have been notified and invited to the upcoming awards banquet. The Michael Clark Writing award will also be given out at that time.

Program Discussion:

Jay Fonkert inquired as to whether the Board wants to continue doing a conference with a national speaker. He also mentioned that timing is a factor for next year and that the conference may push into October. Kathy Otto mentioned that if we want to establish ourselves as the state's genealogical society, we need to have the state conference with a national speaker. Robin PanLener believes that we need to have the awards and banquet included, but disagrees with doing it in September. He believes that we should do it April. Kathy mentioned that October is Family History Month and that we need to establish a weekend that is our weekend.

If the conference is moved to October in 2010, we need to negotiate with branches because all weekends are scheduled. Terry Kita mentioned that the Polish group may be able to do their outstate meeting in October to free up the weekend for MGS.

Jay Fonkert asked if we should do four major programs, roughly one per quarter. He mentioned that there are problems with energy and publicity. He suggested doing only two major programs a year, along with classes and other activities throughout the year. Kathy Otto mentioned that we are doing more educational programs and that used to be what quarterly programs were for. Val Morrison said that because we are having Members' Mornings, that should replace at least one, if not two of the quarterly programs. Jay suggested doing a program in Duluth in June and our conference in October. Robin mentioned doing the picnic in the summer, but as a very informal event.

Jay mentioned that we need an MGS chair to work with Duluth in coordinating the June program. Terry Kita wanted to know who the chair in Duluth is. Jay replied that the program chair in Duluth is Joanne Scheer. Terry then volunteered to work as the MGS chair.

Jay then asked for a program chair for our fall conference next year. Kathy Otto suggested that we have co-chairs. Jay agreed and believes we need someone to do the conference and someone to do the banquet.

Jay then talked about the hiring of speakers for our conferences. He mentioned that the Education Committee has researched possible speakers for next year's fall conference. The committee considered many speakers with many different specialties. The four names which came out on top are David Rencher, Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak, Hank Jones and Pamela Cooper. David Rencher has been here in the past. Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak is very expensive, but is well known. Hank Jones gets mixed reviews. Pamela Cooper is a librarian from Florida and has a broad range of talks. Kathy Otto wanted to know if anyone talked to Paula Stuart Warren for recommendations. Jay replied that he would contact her. Robin PanLener wanted to know who else was mentioned. Jay mentioned other names which were considered along with their specialties. Jay will begin contacting possible speakers. Kathy wanted to know if there would be a cap as to the amount spent. Jay suggested \$2,000, including airfare, hotel, etc. Kathy moved that the Education Committee check out a possible speaker. Sandy Stadtherr seconded the motion, which was passed.

2010 – 2011 Calendar:

Jay Fonkert suggested adopting a proposed calendar with the change of moving the fall program to Oct. 1 and 2. In addition, there would be a change of deleting the April and November programs. The picnic would need to be added, but that would not be at MGS. Bergetta Monroe moved to adopt the calendar. John Schade seconded the motion and it was approved.

John McKeen introduced himself and mentioned that the Scottish American Center is now an affiliate of MGS. The Center has relocated from New Brighton to West River Parkway South in Minneapolis, near the Lake St. bridge. The official opening was today. Bergetta Monroe attended.

Jennifer de Fiebre mentioned that the Membership Committee requested that we discontinue sending a new member card with a member number since each member gets a library user number when they come to library. She suggested sending a generic business card with space to write in the membership number. The Board gave approval to the Membership Committee to go ahead with the change. She also mentioned getting a study group together at the Minnesota Historical Society and possibly putting a notice in newsletter.

Kathy Otto mentioned that the Minnesota Historical Society will be a Family History Center beginning in the near future and suggested coordinating our library hours with the MHS library hours.

Sandy Stadtherr inquired as to whether Robin PanLener will continue with the newsletter. He responded that he will until someone wants to take over and that he would like to have someone else take over. Kathy Otto mentioned that she would go back to the newsletter if Deborah Fors takes over the journal. Sandy also wanted to know if Jay had written the letter for MHS which was authorized in the July meeting. Jay replied that he has not. Kathy Otto mentioned that MHS will scan the newspaper collection.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
David Suddarth, Secretary