



Minnesota Genealogical Society

1185 N. Concord Street
South Saint Paul, MN 55075

<http://mngs.org>

MGS Board Meeting
1185 Concord Street North
Saturday, November 14, 2009

Present: Jay Fonkert, President
Terry Kita, Vice President
Jennifer de Fiebre, Second Vice President
David Suddarth, Secretary
Robin PanLener, Past President
Bergetta Monroe, Director
Sandy Thalmann, Director
Sandy Stadtherr, Director
Dick Thill, Director
John Schade, Director
Lois Mackin, Director
Kathryn Otto
Jennifer Sly

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 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, seconded and passed.

President's Report:

Give to the Max Day: Jay Fonkert talked about 'Give to the Max Day', a day in which several Minnesota foundations will be putting up money to match contributions made on this day. Jay reported that he has registered MGS so that we can take advantage of this opportunity. In addition, Jay spoke about the annual fundraising letter and passed out a draft of what is to be sent out and asked for feedback. Kathryn Otto suggested that we may not need to send a letter out through the mail, but could send out an email asking people to contribute on Give to the Max Day instead. Terry asked if the letter would go out to only MGS members. Jay replied that yes that was the plan. Terry asked if it would be emailed, to which Jay responded yes, but that it would also be followed up with a letter sent through regular mail. Jen de Fiebre moved to do an email blast for Give to the Max Day and follow up with a mailed letter. Bergetta Monroe seconded the

motion. Robin asked about sending this to the branches as well. Discussion on this topic followed and it was decided to redo the letter to include the branches. Robin suggested other groups as well, such as the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota Science Museum and others in order to inform them that we exist. Jay responded that there is a cost involved and we want to send to those most likely to give. Robin pointed out that we cannot keep sending this to the same people. Jay then suggested looking at ways to do this in 2010 and that the Board set fundraising goals and a way to meet those goals. Robin offered to chair a fundraising committee that would develop a plan to meet a fundraising goal for 2010. Terry asked if we could send a modified letter to the branches. Jay responded that we could. Bergetta then mentioned that we should also send the letter out to other genealogical societies. She also believes that we are missing an opportunity with the LDS Family History Centers. Jay suggested setting up a day for a tour. Lois Mackin mentioned that she went to four Family History Centers to drop off fliers for the Beginning Genealogy Class and that getting to them in one day is very doable. John Schade volunteered to set up a tour with a Family History Center. Bergetta offered to work with John. The original motion was then voted on and passed.

MGS Web Redesign: Jay Fonkert mentioned that we have a volunteer to redesign our website. He attended the Technology Committee and Publications Committee meetings. He is cooperating with Jim Robasse and has access to the site in order to start building new pages so that when they are complete, they can be moved into the website.

Web Policy for non-MGS events: Jim Robasse sent a query about advertising non-MGS events. Jay Fonkert outlined the priority for advertising events on the website. Jay suggested that when the website is redesigned, we incorporate a way to publicize other events easily.

Legacy Grants: Jay Fonkert spoke about the Legacy Grants and the different categories. He mentioned that the next application deadline for the small grants is coming up on November 30. Jay reported that he and Kathryn Otto have been talking about the types of things for which we could apply. One idea was to build up the library collection by expanding the marriage records. Jay passed out a proposed application and suggested using the grant money to purchase films from the Genealogical Society of Utah relating to Minnesota marriages for certain counties. Dick Thill asked about obtaining records for Ramsey County. Because the Minnesota Historical Society has Ramsey County marriage records, Kathy suggested obtaining films that MHS does not have. John Schade moved that we prepare the application to purchase microfilm not to exceed \$7,000. Robin PanLener seconded. Terry Kita suggested that we include a film cabinet in the application. Robin mentioned that there would not be enough money to buy a cabinet. Kathy responded that we could apply for another grant to purchase a cabinet.

John Schade suggested also buying city directories on microfilm. Kathy mentioned that MHS has some. Robin mentioned that he believes obtaining the city

directories on film is a good idea in order to free up shelf space, because the rent on the library is high due to the amount of space. He suggested that we need to free up space to make the library smaller. Kathy suggested forming a committee to look into what we should purchase. John offered to head up the committee. Jen de Fiebre offered to help. Dick asked about privacy issues surrounding the marriage records. It was noted that because marriage records are public information and are public records, that should not be a concern. Terry brought up the fact that the branches may also want to do this, so we should allocate enough space. Kathy mentioned that you can only have two open grants at a time and that the branches would not count in that number. The motion was passed.

Board Vacancy: Jay Fonkert announced that we have a volunteer from Wisconsin, Kathryn Deiss, who is interested in serving on the Board and wanted to know if we should place her name in nomination. Kathryn Otto moved to nominate Kathryn Deiss. The motion was seconded and passed.

Library: Jay Fonkert reported that there has been discussion on opening the library from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. He also suggested opening the library on Monday evenings. Kathy Lund will send out a note to volunteers. John Schade mentioned that it is hard to get volunteers on Thursdays and that Tuesdays are easier. John moved to change the hours after January 1, 2010. Bergetta Monroe seconded and the motion passed.

Journal: Jay Fonkert mentioned that we are on the third issue of 2009 and that the fourth issue will be sent for copy editing soon. Terry Kita asked how many issues will be mailed in 2009. Jay responded that at least four will be mailed in 2009, possibly five. Sandy Stadtherr said that the journal will maintain the current design and layout in 2010 and that Jay Fonkert has offered to continue as editor. Sandy moved to name Jay Fonkert Editor of the MGS journal. Robin PanLener seconded the motion, which was passed. Sandy also said that Jay has created a draft which authors can follow for submitting articles.

Publications Committee Report:

The newsletter is sent to about 635 by email and 350 via hard copy. In order to overcome delays and send out on a timelier basis, the Publications Committee would like to begin sending out the journal completely via email. In addition, it was suggested that the newsletter be sent to more organizations, like historical and genealogical societies. A hard copy could be provided if absolutely needed (if no email).

Kathryn Otto passed out examples of e-newsletters and a sheet detailing the benefits of doing an e-newsletter. Jay mentioned that the newsletter is primarily a vehicle to promote news about MGS and advertising. Bergetta Monroe asked whether anyone on the Board receives a hard copy. Sandy Stadther mentioned that she does.

Dick Thill mentioned that in Dakota County there are a lot of seniors who do not have access to computers and suggested an option of receiving a hard copy for an extra charge. Bergetta suggested that another option could be for seniors to use

someone else's email address. Robin PanLener suggested eventually sending out the journal electronically as well. Jay mentioned that we should deal with the newsletter and the journal separately. Sandy mentioned that we would notify members that the newsletter will be all electronic by January, 2010.

Terry Kita asked whether there is a way to determine if members have email. Jay mentioned that we would have to ask Rick Rusinak to compare his email list against the membership list. Kathy said that the Publications Committee would start in January with an e-newsletter, continue the paper copy to March, 2010 and then send notification that it will be sent in an electronic form then on. Jen de Fiebre mentioned that the newsletter should be on the website. Sandy moved that MGS begin sending the newsletter by email to MGS members and non-MGS entities beginning in March and make it free. Jen seconded. John Schade said that newsletters are used in membership packets, so we will need some hard copies. The motion was passed.

Sandy then moved that MGS instruct Jim Robasse to make the MGS Newsletter, MN Families, freely available to all who visit the MGS website and to remove the MGS Newsletter from the list of member benefits. Jen de Fiebre seconded the motion, which was then passed.

Sandy moved that the MGS Board of Directors award a free membership, with all benefits of full membership, be granted Scott Hayes for assisting with the website and for becoming our co-webmaster. Jay Fonkert suggested removing the part about becoming co-webmaster. Bergetta Monroe seconded the motion, which was then passed.

Sandy then moved that due to a savings of approximately \$2,000 per year, MGS pay \$200 each to the journal editor and layout design person per issue for a total of \$1,600 per year. Kathryn Otto mentioned that a lot of people work hard and we are trying to save money. Jay Fonkert noted that he will decline any stipend approved for him. Robin PanLener moved to table the motion. Sandy then seconded and the motion to table the original motion was passed.

The Board then took a short break

Treasurer's Report:

Valerie Morrison emailed the Treasurer's report to the Board for review prior to the Board meeting. Bergetta Monroe moved to accept the Treasurer's report contingent upon Terry Kita and Val Morrison looking into the amount invested in the Money Market Fund. John Schade seconded and the motion was approved.

Finance Committee Report:

Terry Kita passed out a proposed 2010 MGS budget. He reviewed the income and expenses and discussed the budget. He then talked about the fact that our rent is very high. He reviewed the 2008 to 2009 comparison figures and pointed out that dues and tenant rent have both dropped. He then mentioned that we need to do an accounting by project for each event, meeting and class that is held which includes proposed budget and expense amounts. In addition, he spoke about the amount of rent charged to the branches. John Schade and Terry Kita will determine the lineal feet each branch and affiliate has in the library. Kathy Lund will provide the number of members (MN residents) for each branch. John mentioned that some groups paid this year's rent last year and so that figures into the drop in the tenant rent figure.

Jay Fonkert passed out a page describing budget issues. He mentioned that we need to have goal of reducing the deficit each year and that it cannot be done in one year. Terry would like a list of those people who are responsible for spending money (journal, insurance, software) so that they can provide him with projections as to expected expenses. Jay said that we will be renegotiating our lease in about two years and that we may need to look at reducing our footprint because of the fact that rent is the largest item in our budget. Terry mentioned that the rent increases should be small; we need to look at storage and the space used. Jay said we have two options: fundraising and programs. Robin PanLener mentioned that we should try to increase our membership and suggested that we try to renegotiate our rent. Terry said that he would be willing to speak with a real estate agent. Robin added that John Frayne (landlord) is willing to offer a finder's fee of \$20,000 to anyone who can bring in a new tenant. Jen Sly asked about the percentage branches pay for space in the library. Terry responded and talked about the formula and the meeting with the branches to discuss the rent when we first moved in. Terry mentioned that there needs to be a readjustment. Jen de Fiebre asked if the branches are paying for any office space they use. Terry responded that they are. Jennifer Sly asked if we have talked to the branches who do not store collections here to see if they would move them here. Jay responded that there is not a lot of opportunity in that area. Terry wanted to know if we should go back to the formula we had. It was decided that it should be brought up at the Branch Council meeting. The Finance Committee will bring back a more complete budget for the Board's review in January.

Education Committee Report:

Lois Mackin passed out a report containing the proposed second Technology class. She talked about the two new courses we introduced – Technology and Beginning Genealogy and asked if the Board wanted to approve the second Technology course. She mentioned that the proposal has not been passed through the Education Committee. However, she would like agreement from the Board to go ahead with the course in some form. The Education Committee can bring back a specific proposal to the Board in January. Terry Kita would like to defer a decision so that the costs can be incorporated into the budget. It was decided that the Board will approve the planning, but defer the actual proposal until January.

It was also reported that the committee suggested getting a larger screen for educational programs. Terry asked about the size. Lois responded that the

committee was interested in purchasing a screen with a size of about 8'x10'. Terry asked for more details. Lois responded that she will provide those and then Terry will look into obtaining the screen.

Jen de Fiebre suggested having a list of places which are willing to display our brochures and other information. Robin PanLener said that the Marketing Committee is looking into putting together a list of locations within one hour of MGS where we can leave information.

Bergetta Monroe suggested doing a kids' camp in the summer to introduce kids to genealogy. Terry asked about the teachers' guide. Robin responded that we have given out quite a lot of them. Terry suggested mentioning that teachers can contact MGS to have someone come out and speak to students about genealogy. Lois responded that the committee will put that on its agenda.

Marketing Committee Report:

Terry Kita reported that Erv Chorn sent suggestions to Jay Fonkert regarding programs from the last committee meeting. Terry mentioned that the committee talked about doing the administrative part of events. Bergetta Monroe asked if we have a speaker for next fall's program. Jay responded that we have Tom Jones, editor of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly. The Education Committee looked at a number of people. In addition, the committee is working on the rest of the program with Tom Rice. Bergetta asked about the breakout sessions and why we are having multiple sessions. Jay responded that we need to offer multiple sessions in order to give people more of a choice. Terry responded that we should only have breakouts if there are enough people attending. Jay responded that breakout sessions allow more variety, which can help to draw more people. The fall program is the main conference and we want it to grow. Therefore, we should try to have something for everyone, from the beginning to advanced genealogist. Terry asked about the amount collected and mentioned that we should be trying to maximize profit. He would like proposed income and expense figures for the fall program from the Education Committee. Jen de Fiebre asked if the speaker fee would be about the same as last year. Jay responded that yes, it would be about the same, maybe a little more.

Library Report:

John Schade reported that Comcast is up and running. In addition, we have been receiving a lot of donations of materials. He is trying to schedule another training session for library volunteers and trying to get a committee formed to put together a list of items we will and will not accept. In addition, he wants to barcode everything and eventually put the collection out on a national level. Terry Kita asked about lending books for a fee. John responded that we do not have the manpower to handle it at this time. Robin PanLener suggested allowing people to check out books for a fee.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
David Suddarth, Secretary