



SPLKA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2025 9:30am

SPLKA In-person & Virtual Meeting

“The mission of SPLKA is to preserve, promote, educate the public, and to make our lighthouses accessible to all.”

1. Call to Order/Establish a Quorum (Susan)

Called to order at 9:35

2. Pledge of Allegiance (Susan)

Led by Susan Land

3. Audience Comments/Correspondence (Jack)

- Amy, the new Operations Manager, was in attendance. She feels she is getting a handle on things and says everyone has been helpful.

4. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of meeting minutes - December 2024 (Susan)

- Bobbi had a correction. She and Jack met on the 14th not the 16th.
- Nick moved to accept as amended. Bobbi seconded. Passed unanimously.

b. Treasurers Report (Kathleen)

- Kathleen has looked over the materials sent by Jack. She had some questions about the financials. She asked why the reimbursement from the state was not listed as an asset. Jack said it could be listed as a future asset. Carol responded that we have not previously listed grants not received. This has been a longer delay in receiving funds than we have experienced in the past. Jack explained that it was a reimbursement grant, not an upfront grant. Carol will create a grants receivable line item.
- Kathleen asked about the investments at the Community Foundation. Jack explained that those are restricted funds.
- Bobbi suggested that Carole, Jack and Kathleen move this to a meeting at the end.

- Bobbi moved to approve the financials with the correction regarding the \$40,000. Nic seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

c. Staff Reports: (Jack)

-Executive Director

- Gregg's last day was yesterday and they took him to lunch.
- He took a vendor to BSP to evaluate the installation of a camera there.
- Working on the 150th at WRLS.
- We have been accepted for a letter of intent for a grant at WRLS for five youth programs.
- Q4 and Q1 are the best times to seek grants and donations. He has been inquiring with multiple companies and organizations. Safe Harbor CU is sponsoring the camera at the Breakwater.

-Marketing

- She is working on anniversary T-shirts to be ready for the camera party.
- She worked with vendors and wants to do Business-to-Business sales for smaller items, like our models and Christmas tree ornaments.
- She is reworking some of our advertising budget. A billboard on 96 is being considered. The White Lake Chamber will cover half, and Fruitland Township will cover the rest.
- The newspaper budget is being reviewed and hopes to shift to more online promotion. This is not cost savings but shifts allocation of funds to digital.
- She is looking at rebranding. This is good timing with the acquisition of Manistee.

-Operations

- She is scheduling at all sites, including a June hypothetical if Ludington State Park is ahead of schedule.
- She is working on volunteer training and the volunteer waiver.
- Working on reorganization of office space.
- BSP volunteer schedule is almost full. WRLS is full.

-Maintenance

- No updates for the Breakwater.

- Trailer is good to go.
- Jim Foster has started, and Gregg is training him.
- He is reviewing HSRs.
- He will be meeting with Jack and all the stakeholders.

-Site Manager

- Sarah has been helping out during the interim between the staff members.
- The e-commerce store is being cleaned up.
- She is working on kids' activities at White River and the anniversary.

b. Officer Reports: (optional)

- President

- Excited about the coming year.
- Impressed with how well the staff is working together and the ideas that they are bringing to the table.
- She has drafted an article for the newsletter.

- VP

- No report

5. Committee Reports: commentary and questions (led by committee people)

a. Finance –

- There was no meeting. Kathleen will work with Jack to schedule a meeting prior to the next board meeting.

b. Education – January 10th meeting update

- Mark Hallenbeck will continue as the chair.
- Discussed getting information out to teachers about the website.
- Sarah has developed a proposal for kid's programs at WRLS. Amy has worked with her on some ideas.
- Jack would like us to have some physical form of our lesson plans in the office for teacher check out.

- Susan was very impressed with the activities that Sarah is developing.

c. Archive –

- No update.

d. Personnel –

- Contracts have been signed for 2025, and we are fully staffed.

e. Outreach – January 14th meeting update

- Bobbie, Jack and Julie met and discussed ideas. There are no specifics at this time.

6. Unfinished Business

a. Manistee North Pier Light (MNPL) – January 21 City Council meeting

- The concession agreement is included in the Board packet. A couple minor word changes have been made making the document more accurate. Dena Stamford made a few amendments.
- The City of Manistee will maintain building insurance. SPLKA will maintain general liability insurance.
- Item 32 was added. It is a governmental immunity clause. The city is held liable for any occurrence at their property.
- Jack is on the city council agenda to present the contract. There is one new individual on the council who questions why the city shouldn't open the light themselves. Jack is prepared to address that.
- Nic moved to approve the concession agreement with the applied edits from the City of Manistee, SPLKA and the National Park Service. Kathleen seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously.
- Rob commended Jack for the work he has done on this agreement.

b. MLAP Grant Update

- Jack received an email on January 7th that the \$40,000 reimbursement was coming. Once it is received, it will be transferred to savings to be used for BSP restoration.

c. SPLKA's Future Office Space Update

- The site needs more improvements than originally thought. Initially, Jack thought renovations would be about \$20,000, however Jim believes it will be closer to \$50,000. The location would be great; however this property is a little out of reach for us. He is going to reach out to the owner.
- Jack will continue to keep an eye on the possibility of a better location. A better location would provide us with more storage and the ability to sell merchandise through the office.
- Nic asked about business cards for volunteers. It is still on the table, but staff turnover has caused a delay. Jack will talk with staff.

7. New Business:

a. Earned Sick Time Act – Effective Feb. 21, 2025

- The act is included in the packet.
- It is a new law in the State of Michigan requiring businesses to grant paid sick leave to employees.
- Salary based positions at SPLKA already have sick and personal leave. Jack suggests that hourly employees be granted 40 hours of sick leave per year, without tracking the number of hours worked to accumulate time.
- Bobbie moved that SPLKA will follow the earned sick leave act passed by the State of Michigan and will grant hourly employees 40 hours of sick time per year. Rob seconded. Passed unanimously.

b. IRS Mileage 2025 Rates – .70/mile

- The mileage rate increased from .67 per mile to .70 per mile.

c. Big Sable Live Camera and Network

- Jack met with SyncWave. He has not received an estimate yet. The camera is slated to be in the lantern room. There are two pieces of glass that are currently plexiglass, and they will need to be replaced with glass. It is outlined in the HSR in phase two. Jack would like to do that sooner. A new hole will be necessary between the video room and the hallway to run an ethernet cord. We will need approval from the DNR and SHPPO. Jim Gallie is aware.

- Nic asked about sponsorship at this site. Jack is suggesting pursuing a partnership with Friends of Ludington State Park. They are willing to help us with the installation and would like them to pay Starlink costs. Jack could seek corporate sponsorship but is leery of that. Nic expressed a preference for working with the Friends of Ludington SP as we have similar missions. The camera would draw more people to our website and could generate more income through our gift shop and donations.
- Rob asked about pursuing a grant from the state to replace the glass. Jack estimates that it will be between 4 and 5 figures to replace the glass. He indicated that we are past the ask time for the state. It would be a Q4 request. He also indicated that the Community Foundation may be a source of funding.
- Rob also asked about the repair of the bricks on BSP. Jack will be talking to Robb McKay about that. It is unlikely that that repair will be done this summer with state funding.

d. Lake Michigan CPA Services – Engagement Letter

- We have used this service for financial reviews, etc. for many years. Jack is not impressed with their service and would like to look for someone else. Our ability to contact them is poor and materials from them have come to us late.
- We can do either an audit or a review. The review is less expensive.
- Jack would like to consider a new CPA.
- Carol expressed that she likes working with Sarah and feels that she has a calm demeanor. She was very helpful with our switch to QuickBooks online.
- Kathleen indicated that they are charging us very little for the cost of an audit, but she isn't impressed by what she has seen.
- Jack about what SPLKAs past process was. Carol indicated that we historically did an audit every three years with reviews in between. Since the problems with Peter, we have conducted audits annually. Jack favors an audit annually.
- Bobbie and Rob suggested that Kathleen, Carol and Jack check other vendors. Nic said that he recently hired a CPA, Connie Tews, who he recommends. Carol said that Connie Tews is excellent and has worked with us in the past. Connie no longer does 990s or audits of non-profits. Connie recommended our current accountant. Susan expressed her

concern about the audit not being completed until November and the lack of response when Jack calls.

- Susan asked if there was any deadline for the contract. Jack felt we could bench it until next month. Kathleen suggested that she, Jack and Carol do some research and come back next month.

8. Executive Session

- None

9. Open discussion

- Susan said that she was looking forward to meeting the new staff.

10. Motion to adjourn

- Rob moved to adjourn. Nic seconded motion

Next scheduled Board Meeting February 20, 2025, at 9:30 am, Zoom and in the office.