



SPLKA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2024 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 (Al)

- a. Called to order at 9:31 a.m

2. Pledge of Allegiance (Al)

- a. Pledge of allegiance led by Al.

3. Audience Comments/Correspondence (Jack)

- a. We have been invited to local museum meetings.

4. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of meeting minutes - September 2024 (Al)

- i. Mark made a correction to the report from Education. Motion to approve minutes with the correction was made by Mark and seconded by Bobbi. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Treasurers Report (Al)

- i. The focus is on making it through June of next year. This was discussed extensively at the finance committee meeting. There are expenses that can be reduced. Our liquid assets going into next year look good, however we will need to generate more income.
- ii. We will make it through this year.
- iii. Two funds are maintained at the Mason Co. Foundation. The Endowment Fund and the Capital Campaign fund. We are not making much money through dividends and interest. We cannot access the Endowment. The Capital Campaign

fund is accessible and was not touched during the pandemic. Funds for the HSR were withdrawn.

a. The committee questions whether leaving funds there is good for the organization.

iv. Inventory is noted on the balance sheets. Al feels that tracking gift shop sales, online sales, in person sales, and tour climbs separately would be useful. That is the responsibility of the Marketing Manager. Jack feels that the inventory should be more accurate.

v. Al feels that we will be fine both years.

vi. We have been doing a lot of “fire fighting” during the past two years. We need to make efforts to shift to major donor focus in the coming years to meet the goals set for SPLKA.

vii. Dean asked about the \$20,000 grant applied for from Radiant. The grant was to help with operational costs for the shut-down in exchange for using our sites for team building.

viii. Rob moved to approve the treasurer’s report. Mark seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Staff Reports: (Jack)

-Executive Director

i. See list of meetings in Executive Directors report.

ii. Lumber Day is a salute to the town’s start during the lumbering era. Jack will be in a meeting about the event. Lighthouses are directly tied to the lumbering era. Jack will know more after the meeting next week.

iii. Erika and Jack met about corporate donors. She reviewed the list and letter, and the letters will go out after this meeting. The focus is on improvements prior to 2025, including cameras at WRLS and LNBL and repairs to the LSP trailer. They are trying to schedule meetings with local banks but have been unsuccessful. They are planning to visit major corporations on Fridays. Mailing is going out to membership, corporations, donors, etc.

iv. Met with Safe Harbor CU is interested in contributing \$3000 for the hardware and installation of camera at LNBL.

v. Dean is interested in the cost of the Trexboards and how much we make for them. Jack is considering increasing the cost. Jack does not feel that they are a net income fund but are useful for creating a donor list. Al moved discussion to New Business.

vi. Interviews for Gift Shop and Marketing this afternoon.

-Marketing

i. Sara, Raelyn and Cherie have been covering the position.

ii. Cherie has been keeping bus days going.

-Operations

i. Raelyn has resigned effective Nov. 7.

ii. She is working on getting things ready for 2025.

-Maintenance

i. LNBL is closed and painting has been done.

ii. LSP trailer is being worked on at Greg's home. Jack would like to reevaluate the trailer over the next two years.

iii. Greg has been training Sara about things at WRLS.

iv. Al asked for flagpole lights to be installed.

-Site Manager

i. Sara is helping fill the gaps created by other staff departures.

b. Officer Reports: (optional)

- President

i. Wants to shift focus more to fundraising.

ii. Recommends adding staffing to new business

iii. We need to nominate people for officer positions for 2025 in November. Voted on in December, then transitioned in January.

- VP

i. Deferred to Education report.

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

a. Finance – Met on Oct. 4 – Main Topics: State Park Closure, fundraising Staff Budgets Received, Finance Meeting Nov. 15, Seeking Board Approval of 2025 Budget on Nov 21st or Dec 19th

i. Erika pointed out that the \$40,000 reimbursed by the state would be placed in the West Shore bank so that it is accessible and will earn interest. It will only be accessed in the event of an emergency.

b. Education – Sept. 27th Meeting Minutes, Oct. 25 Meeting Scheduled

i. Committee met on September 27. Sara attended.

ii. The lesson plan project is underway. A poster has been started with a QR code that will go into schools publicizing our lesson plans.

iii. The article for the newsletter is underway. Historic photos are proving tricky. Nic, Jack and Sara are working on that.

iv. Jack would like to have a bag of tricks to take to classroom presentations. This would provide a more hands-on experience for students.

v. October 25 next meeting.

c. Archive –

i. No further word from the man with the Ship's wheel

d. Personnel – Seeking Restoration/Maintenance, Gift Shop/Marketing, Operations

i. Jack is in the process of filling open positions

e. Outreach –

i. No current project going on. The trifold is in place for the Saturday bus tours.

6. Unfinished Business

a. Manistee North Pier Light (MNPL) – Insurance Update

- i. An initial estimate was received in September 23
- ii. Now that we have a concession agreement, the insurance company is balking at taking on another lighthouse.
- iii. The current proposal is that Manistee will insure the structure and SPLKA will insure the guests and personnel.
- iv. This is currently the biggest snag in the acquisition. Jack is working with an insurance agent to try to resolve this. Al suggested we seek a specialty agent.
- v. The goal of all parties is to have this all resolved and the acquisition be complete by the end of the year.

b. Big Sable HSR

- i. 100% drafted document has been received. The bill has not been received.
- ii. The grant has been extended through the end of the year.

c. LSP Power & Internet

- i. The power portion is completed. The fiber internet portion is currently being worked on and the line is being bored underground at this time.

d. LNBL Live Camera & Internet

- i. Proposal for camera and internet at that site has been sent. It was well received. They want the dish/antenna to be lower than the solar panels.
- ii. Safe Harbor credit union will sponsor it during the season.
- iii. There will be a negative net on this project in the first year but is projected to have a positive net balance in subsequent years.
- iv. Dean asked about charging a one-time access fee for its use. Jack says that will increase our expenses on the project. Dean feels that it would pay for itself. Jack would have to check with sponsors as to whether that would impact their willingness to sponsor. Jack feels it would be beneficial to offer a free trial

period. Rob would rather it be free. This discussion has generated several ideas that Jack will have to research further.

e. 2025 Hours of Operation Schedule

i. The lights will move to a 7 day per week schedule from May 19-Sept. 10, then will drop to a 4 day per week schedule. BSP Light will open 7 days per week from July 1-Sept. 10 then drop to a Thursday-Sunday schedule.

ii. There has been no significant backlash from volunteers regarding the changes in scheduling.

iii. Daykeepers

a. **LSP provides the greatest challenge in staffing by daykeepers. WRLS has an abundance of day keepers.**

b. **Day keepers must be members of the association, have access to all our lights and receive a 30% discount on the days they work.**

a. **Ericka suggested that we talk with local rotaries, senior centers, etc. for recruitment.**

7. New Business:

a. Trex Boards

i. **Instillation and removal is hard work and there are liability concerns due to the potential for injury of older volunteers.**

a. **Boards have traditionally been pulled and stored in groups of 10. It is recommended that they be pulled and stored in sets of no more than 5 for easier handling.**

b. **Greg used his machine for the work this year, but it will not be available next year. It was suggested that we seek the help of local high school athletic teams or hire the work out. Al will reach out to Nic about visiting the high school in Ludington.**

c. **A cost analysis of the boards needs to be done to determine if they are appropriately priced. Dean will do the analysis.**

d. We need to reach out to people whose boards are in decay to see if they want to replace them. Further, we need to state up front that the boards will be put out for a specified number of years.

b. Repair Listing

i. Dean will create a list of jobs that need to be completed at LNBL and forward the list to the Board.

c. Staff Planning

i. Jack has shared a staffing plan for the next 3 years. He feels that the staffing structure is appropriate through 2025.

ii. Erika feels that the Marketing/Gift Shop position should include both, but should be classified as a Marketing position and that we should be looking for someone with a marketing focus.

a. Ericka feels that the organization should consider an organizational rebranding and try to develop a lifestyle brand.

iii. It was suggested that we take the word supervisor out of the maintenance job description, as well as restoration.

iv. The issue of providing health care for employees was brought up, however, as with many non-profit organizations nationwide, it is cost prohibitive for the organization.

8. Executive Session

9. Open discussion

a. It was suggested that the issue of increasing the cost of tower climbs be placed on the November agenda.

10. Motion to adjourn

Next scheduled Board Meeting November 21, 2024, at 9:30 am, Zoom and in the office.