



## **SPLKA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**November 21, 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. Present: Al Cocconi, Nic Amicon, Rob Vensas, Bobbi Rymer, Larry Stulz, Mark Hallenbeck, Susan Land, Dean Collingswood, Erika Nielsen, Kathleen Guider, Carol Cooper, Jack Greve
- b. Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m.

#### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

- a. Lead by Al

#### **3. Audience Comments/Correspondence (Jack)**

- i. Jim Gallie was unable to attend today due to meetings regarding construction at Ludington State Park. An end of year wrap up meeting is scheduled for Dec. 10. Jim suggested writing a letter to the DNR regarding more funding. They are hiring a new state park interpreter. Jack hopes that they are available for the meeting.
- ii. Jack pulled a web traffic report. The WRLS camera is getting the most traffic of all pages. It is accessible through our website.

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

##### **a. Approval of meeting minutes - October 2024**

- i. Bobbi moved that the minutes be approved and Nic seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

##### **b. Treasurers Report (Al)**

- i. Our books are in order. Al suggests that we close more often than annually. He suggested at least quarterly. We need to evaluate our chart of accounts.

ii. Nic moved that the treasurer's report be accepted, and Susan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**c. Staff Reports: (Jack)**

**-Executive Director**

- i. See list of meetings in report
- ii. Amy Dow the new operations manager has started her position.
- iii. He is working on the camera at the Breakwater.
- iv. He is working on the 150<sup>th</sup> celebration for WRLS. Logos are ready to be applied to merchandise. Front and back logos will be different. The logos are beautiful. We are starting to distribute.
- v. The last bus day netted over \$7000. In the future Jack would eliminate the 9:00time. Erika liked the bus day and the way it was run and felt guests really liked it. We had a few new members and sold some all-access passes.
- vi. He has been working on the budget and projected revenues.
- vii. He has moved his office upstairs.

**-Marketing**

- i. Sarah is working on a full inventory of our merchandise.

**-Operations**

- i. Amy started working. Raelyn left great instructions and notes for her to help with the transition.

**-Maintenance**

- i. The gift shop trailer at LS P is going through an overhaul and is looking really good.
- ii. Updates to exterior signage at LSP is underway.

iii. LNB house repairs are still needed. We can put in a request for funding for those repairs. Jim G. would like to contract the repairs, versus using volunteers.

**-Site Manager**

**b. Officer Reports: (optional)**

**- President**

- i. He worked with Jack and the Finance committee on the 2025 budget.
  - ii. We have never gotten our road signs for WRLS and he would like that to be pursued.
  - iii. We need to generate excitement for tower climbs.
  - iv. We need to generate a fundraising goal.
- a. Erika suggested that we need to become more sustainable before we start spending more money.
  - b. Dean will visit the tribe to discuss possible financial support.
  - c. Kathleen is at a loss that the state park isn't providing more funding for us.

**- VP**

- i. Is there any benefit to having large photos of the view from the top to encourage people to climb?
  - a. Bobbi had an idea of having cards created with lights, views from the top. Having the door open behind the cash register at WRLS.
- ii. He shared an unsolicited testimonial about Sarah. It was very complimentary. Mark suggested that she should get a raise. Jack says that her contract has been extended.

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

**a. Finance – 2025 Budget Proposal**

- i. The committee met twice to discuss the budget. Two documents in packet.
- ii. There is a monthly budget document that helps us track if we are on track.

- a. Mark asked about turnaround time on those. Jack and Carol have not discussed that yet. Carol indicated that it wouldn't be a problem. Carol wondered about a definition of closed monthly Kathleen will work with her once she is on board.
- b. Erika and Rob both expressed that the monthly budgets will be a great improvement.

iii. The budget looks good. If we close more often, it will be more accurate and easier to track if we are on target.

iv. Dean asked what we spend the advertising budget on. Right now, its rack cards, printing, some social media, etc. He feels rack cards are a waste of money and we have no way of tracking what we get out of them. Al responded that there is no way of tracking any advertising. They are especially useful at hotels, etc.

v. Dean asked about the accounts receivable inventory. The number should be what's on hand for inventory. We want to increase that line item on hand to have inventory for ecommerce. It is based on cost, not value.

vi. Jack will update the 990. Both 2022 and 2023 need to be updated on the website. The actual budget does not belong on the website.

vii. Mark moved to approve the proposed budget and Rob seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **b. Education – Oct. 25 Meeting Minutes, Next Meeting Scheduled for Nov. 22**

i. The family of Bob Spurling has some large binders regarding the building of BSP. Mark believes that his son may be open to donating them to SPLKA. Al thinks that Bill Mitchell might be the best person to approach the family. Jim Hardie may be a contact. Mark will ask Bill.

ii. The committee needs new members. Mark will be leaving and will not be the chair. He will continue on the committee. The chairmanship should be a board member.

iii. They are moving forward with publicizing the lesson plans, which are on the website.

- iv. The monthly contributions to the eblast are current.
- v. The draft of the article on WRLS is out for review. It is longer than was requested and may need to be trimmed down.
- vi. We received \$1700 from the community foundation of Mason County from the Nancy & Leo Hesting Fund
- vii. Erika suggested that the new operations manager join the committee as she has an education background.

**c. Archive –**

- i. No new updates.
- ii. Looking at moving some WRLS's archive out of the light to Fruitland Township Hall.

**d. Personnel – Amy Dow–Operations Manager, Interviews for Marketing Manager Scheduled, Seeking Restoration/Maintenance, Need to schedule annual reviews**

- i. Amy is working two days per week until she moves to Manistee.
- ii. Interviews for marketing manager is ongoing.
- iii. Restoration and maintenance is ongoing.

**e. Outreach –**

- i. No current report.

**6. Unfinished Business**

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

- i. Manistee is covered for the structure. Jack is working with our carrier for workman's comp. and other insurance. To cover volunteers and staff, he has to review volunteer coverage. We may have to raise insurance to cover volunteers, or have a waiver signed. Al feels that we have both. Jack will get information on the cost and what is covered. We would like to see what the insurance company would except.
- ii. What is left to resolve before we can vote on it? The National Parks Service has reviewed it. They suggested a 5-year agreement. We need the city to approve our solar panels.

b. Big Sable HSR – Completed

i. It is complete. We have not received our final invoice. Jack knows the final steps to close it up. It should be wrapped up by the end of the year. Once we receive it, it becomes public knowledge. They are not currently available on our website. Al suggested that we should provide a link on our website.

ii. There are critical portions that can be used for fundraising.

iii. We have possession of the HSR for Manistee.

iv. Jim Gallie said that we should have conversations with Rob McKay once the HSR is published.

c. LSP Power & Internet

i. Construction has been completed. The internet has not been turned on. There are no additional expenses expected for that project.

ii. The router needs to be inside the trailer to function with the upgraded POS system.

d. LNBL Live Camera & Internet

i. Met with Parks and Rec on 10/29. No approval was required for the new cameras. Jack will be on the agenda at the 11/25 City Council meeting to report on the cameras.

ii. We have a commitment from Safe Harbor CU to help pay for it.

iii. P&R doesn't support pay for use.

iv. It must be removed during the off season. It will be a clamp mount on the railing.

**7. New Business:**

a. Donation Letter Response

i. Sent 600 letters out this fall and a total of \$3,966 has been reported at the time of document. An additional \$700 has been donated since the report was made.

b. Slate of Officers

i. The Nominating Committee has presented the following slate of Officers:

- a. President: Susan Land
- b. VP: Erika Nielson
- c. Treasurer: Kathleen Guider
- d. Secretary: Dean Collingswood

ii. Susan nominated Erika for the position of Vice President. Bobbi seconded the nomination for Erika, who accepted the nomination. Al nominated Dean for the position of Secretary and Susan seconded the nomination which Dean accepted.

iii. The election of officers will be conducted on December 19, 2024, at the board meeting.

c. Raffle License For BSP Suite

i. Board approval is required for the license. Entities that sell tickets for us must have similar mission statements. Michigan Lottery will approve up to 18-months in advance. Jack doesn't know who approves on-line "gambling". This is one at a time, but there can be multiple drawings during that time. Will online sales increase the workload for the office? Probably, but it would allow for out of state sales.

ii. Jack will get more information, and the board will vote on the license at the next meeting.

d. Advertising

i. Jack would like the opinion of our new hire. She favors building a story as an organization. Print advertising is the largest part of our current budget. Jack believes that we need to increase our digital advertising. Jack would like to throttle up our newspaper advertising. He would like to focus on locals in the shoulder seasons. Dean hasn't seen much in Grand Rapids. Jack feels we under promote in Grand Rapids. He can get on more radio stations and is going to be on a podcast in December. NPR radio? Mark asked about the cost of a digital billboard. Jack believes it is a monthly charge, and it is over \$1000 a month. Susan suggested that the cost may not be reasonable to take on with the

budgetary impact of the park closure. Jack believes that there may be opportunities based upon the Ludington award for best historic small town.

ii. Rob asked about any travel and leisure shows that we might have a booth at. Jack said that there was a Michigan Lighthouse festival. It isn't going to happen this year. Grand Rapids has a big camper/RV show every year and it may be an opportunity to educate people about the light. He asked if we have maximized our opportunities through the DNR and State Park service.

i. Dean says there is a show on PBS that may be an option. He will dig up the link. Jack believes it's Michigan under the Radar. Dean also recommended that we develop Reels for Facebook. Erika agrees that development of Reels would be an excellent source of advertising.

ii. Erika advocated for the development of a PR plan with our new marketing person.

f. Fundraising Goal

i. We should have at least 3 months of our operating costs in reserve on the low side. Erika would like to see at least 6 months of operating in goals.

ii. Al had a fundraising goal of 2 million. Erika suggested that that goal be spread over several years. The goal of \$350,000 annually is more reasonable.

a. Susan moved that the organization adopt a fundraising goal of \$350,000 annually and Dean seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Building our reserve will help us when seeking funds.

**8. Executive Session.**

**9. Open discussion**

a. Dean sent a document outlining costs of Trexboards.

i. Erika thinks we need to continue looking at this issue and that we consider the man hours to put Trexboards out and take them in.



- ii. Rob thinks we need to let people know that they have a shelf life.
  - iii. Erika felt that Kathleen should review the list and then we should decide the profit margin we want and adjust the consumer price accordingly.
  - iv. Mark noted that we need a strategy for discarding outdated boards.
  - v. We need a good tracking system. Cherie does have an excel spreadsheet.
  - vi. The DNR has not said that we have too many out.
  - vii. Jack asked about the development of a different process for hauling them in and out. Al suggests that we keep this on the agenda.
- B. Hiring of a full-time maintenance person.
- i. Gregg would like to stay on part-time. Dean recommends that we discuss this. Jack says he's getting mixed signals about that.
  - ii. Susan expressed concern about the budgetary impact given the park closure.

**10. Motion to adjourn**

- A. Rob voted to adjourn the meeting and Larry seconded the motion.

**Next scheduled Board Meeting December 19, 2024 at 9:30 am, Zoom and in the office.**