



Washington County Historical Society  
Executive Committee Meeting - May 26, 2021  
10 a.m. Pioneer Courthouse  
Minutes - Approved

Attended: Doug Alder, George Cannon, Keith Cannon, Sidney Creer, Susan Crook, Susannah Nilsson, Jesse Stocking, Loren Webb, Sharee Webb. Jeanine Vander Bruggen was excused.

Welcome and Call to Order - Loren Webb

1. Jesse Stocking motioned to approve the meeting minutes for April 28, 2021. Keith Cannon seconded the motion. Motion was approved.
2. Susan Crook presented the WCHS Financial Report for April 27 through May 23, 2021. She stated that the WCHS membership renewal with the Utah Nonprofits Association has now been paid by her. She also said the InfoWest Internet security system is now on autopay and was paid out of a Pioneer Courthouse grant.  
Motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Keith Cannon and seconded by Jesse Stocking. Motion was approved.
  - I. Website report. George Cannon was previously asked by Loren Webb and Jeanine Vander Bruggen to give a report on plans for the Washington County Historical Society website. (See Addendums A and B)
  - II. Updates.
    1. Sidney Creer reported she had a scheduling conflict with the June 5 LaVerkin Field Trip. She was asked to get more details from her contact Chuck Hardy. She later notified everyone that LaVerkin has a water festival set for June 5, so the LaVerkin Field Trip will be rescheduled to sometime in September.
    2. Upcoming Events  
Jeanine Vander Bruggen submitted a written report ahead of her scheduled absence.
      - a) Historic St. George Live tours begin June 3 and will continue Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of each week through the end of August. The program is sponsored by the City of St. George.
      - b) Reuben Wadsworth is scheduled to give a lecture on Thursday, June 10 at 7 p.m. on ghost town stories in the Pioneer Courthouse.

- c) The group Wooden Tantrum is scheduled to perform on Tuesday, June 22 at 7 p.m. in the Pioneer Courthouse.

### III. Committee Chair Reports

#### 1. Pioneer Courthouse

A. attendance is improving with the lifting of restrictions related to COVID-19.

B. Several activities are in the planning process.

- a. A Young Women group will be holding a private lecture on June 4 to hear A. Rolapp, creator of the Mountain Meadows Massacre quilt hanging in the courtroom.
- b. The Sons of Utah Pioneers have redone the community photos in the SUP room so they would be more permanently attached.
- c. The Cannon family display will be changed out to honor the William Carter family in July. William Carter is being honored for his 200th birthday with the dedication of a new statue on July 24.
- d. The planning committee is scheduling lectures/field trips/activities during the summer and beyond.
- e. A special lecture will be held on Saturday, July 24 at 1 p.m. to celebrate Pioneer Day.
- f. The Native Flute Circle that performed on May 21, intends to hold regular performances at the Courthouse.
- g. The Puppetry Guild is considering holding performances at the Courthouse.
- h. Arts to Zion will hold its annual Art Studio Tour over the Independence Day weekend. The Courthouse will be involved and have exhibits.

C. Jeanine contacted Frank Lojko regarding the Sorensen Foundation Grant and a copy has been requested. A copy of the grant has not been received. Frank is living in Kingman, Ariz., and his internet/phone service is not always reliable. The copy is necessary to make a final report. We are also hoping to have Frank write an additional grant for future expenses. Any help in reaching out to Frank would be appreciated.

D. A meeting was held with a city facilities person to discuss issues with the Courthouse. Several items were identified as needing attention and agreement was made to take care of the items. To date, there has been no action. Follow-up will continue.

E. Jeanine said we need to keep spreading the word about the Courthouse and invite others to visit, to view the Pioneer Courthouse Facebook page to share and “like.”

Susannah Nilsson said it is important that the Pioneer Courthouse be the face of the Washington County Historical Society and mesh all things through it.

2. Special Projects. Jesse Stocking reported that he had spoken with Doug Alder, Keith Cannon, and Susan Crook regarding developments with the Juanita Brooks statue project.

The City of St. George is working on a final location for the placement of historical statues. Mayor Michelle Randall has directed the City Parks Department to draw up a map showing proposed locations at the gazebo located between the Woodward Building and the Washington County School District on 100 West Tabernacle.

Keith Cannon asked if the School District has approved the location. Jesse said to his knowledge the District has not yet approved the location.

3. Publicity/Promotion/Community Outreach

Susannah Nilsson reported that an ad advertising the WCHS is running in the Senior Sampler. She has also submitted a similar ad to KZEZ-FM radio to be run as a public service announcement.

She also pointed out that she found a Seminole jacket in a thrift store for \$3, but it is more likely worth \$1,000.

4. Membership/Fundraising.

Sharee Webb said she has set up a WCHS sponsored Dutch oven dinner as a fundraiser for Thursday, Sept. 30 at the Hela Seegmiller Historic Farm, 2592 S. 3000 East in Little Valley from 5 to 9 p.m.

Jesse Stocking suggested that State Rep. Travis Seegmiller, District 62, be invited to attend.

Sharee said she is also checking to see if a ghost walk during the week before Halloween could be held as another fundraiser. Susan Crook said the story of the 1880s lynching of Tom Forrest by Silver Reef miners near the Pioneer Courthouse could be one of the stories told.

5. Website/social media.

At the last Executive Committee meeting, "George was asked if he could bold the word Membership on the website index to make it more noticeable. He will investigate that." George reported that he could not do that because bolding is the standard for labeling groups of things and using it within one of those groups would introduce a degree of disorder to the website. But he did move the About WCHS, WCHS Membership, and Contact WCHS links up to the top of the Miscellaneous list of links that appears on every webpage.

George Cannon noted there are 7,357 subject pages on the WCHS website and 10,112 JPEG photos and 2,652 Pdf files on the website.

IV. Other

Loren Webb noted that he has a Thursday, May 27 meeting with Amy Christiansen, Science/Social Studies/Health/PE coordinator, Washington County School District regarding a draft WCHS-sponsored lesson plan on "The History of Washington County" to be taught in the 7th grade as part of the teaching of Utah history.

He also noted the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining has scheduled a Friday, June 18 hike to the Apex Mine Paymaster Headmaster site. The BLM is planning to put up a fence around the site, but it will also put up an information kiosk. Loren and George participated in the University Naming Focus Group held via Zoom on April 30. It was just an attempt to identify the pros and cons for each of a group of possible new names for Dixie State University, but not a debate or vote on them. The group moderator, Aaron Evans, was going to check with the powers that be and then if he could send us copies of the slides for our further consideration, but I don't think that ever happened.

Meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

## **Addendum A (Draft minutes from May 26, 2021)**

### **III: Website report**

George Cannon was previously asked by Loren Webb and Jeanine Vander Bruggen to give a report on plans for the Washington County Historical Society website. His report is included in these minutes by reference and as an attachment.

There was a discussion on how to publicize the website so that more people would be aware of it. We want people to know about what it offers and to contribute the history they have. The idea was put forward of having an article written about the website that could be put in various publications.

and distributed by various means. George said he would draft such an article, but it should be passed around and refined until it is really polished. Various people suggested places where it could be used: The Spectrum, the Senior Sampler, a WCHS newsletter and/or WCHS e-mail distribution list, the St. George (and other) Senior Center newsletter, various homeowner association newsletters, assisted living center newsletters, ... We also have postcards for bulletin boards that are like our business cards, but include a QR code for our website.

George also stated that Washington City and New Harmony historical societies are setting up websites. But they already have Facebook pages which are getting a lot of attention, including exchanges of historical information and the raising of significant amounts of membership and donation money via a PayPal link. Jesse Stocking pointed out that New Harmony was primed and right for that, but it doesn't take away the efforts that WCHS has made.

There was a discussion of how to recruit more helpers to work on the website. Susan asked if Tracey O'Kelly was still interested in helping with the website. George said she is still interested and has been exploring the website, but she keeps getting drawn into reading the interesting info.

Then the discussion turned to recruiting of trainee webmaster(s), assistant webmaster(s), and eventually a replacement for George. Loren mentioned that any person who replaces George would need to be a volunteer. Susannah said we've got to have an official request from the President and Vice President that we want someone started in training. We don't want this going on for another 6 months with nothing done. Susannah said she had already advertised the assistant webmaster job description in the Senior Sampler Newspaper. It was also suggested to advertise the position on the WCHS Facebook page. Sidney said she would advertise the position in all the local Homeowners Associations newsletters for the assistant webmaster position. Susie recommended breaking the job down into two or three smaller parts because no one can do what George is currently doing. We need to write a well-defined job description and then send it out on the WCHS distribution list. A brief description could be placed in the news article mentioned above.

There was a discussion of upgrades to the website. George talked about a modern "landing site" which the committee talked about on Monday. That would probably have to be contracted out, maybe in the \$3K range. A full rewrite of the website would probably be \$35K or more. George would like to have a contract with Mike Gburski, a computer specialist with Utah Non-profit Organization, or someone like that who could be available to help with specific technical issues. Susan clarified that seed (grant) money would help to pay for a different website platform.

George also said the forms feature on the website has suddenly stopped working so that is a problem. He also said there are about 10,000 broken links on the website that constantly need to be addressed.

Jesse Stocking said he talked with Mike Harless of the Washington City Historical Society and noted that Greg Arnold is now the Washington City Historical Society's tech (web) master, and their society has committed to helping with the WCHS website.

George reported he had met with Mike Harless and Greg Arnold last Monday and they agreed to be on his website committee. They would not be active "worker bees" on the website but could give advice and direction. They will work with George on coordinating their website with the WCHS website. Their model is the one that was talked about for us in 2020 where there would be an attractive modern website focusing on current activities and advertising of what we have and can do, but linking to the current WCHS website for the massive library of history data.

Regarding acquisition of historical data, George Cannon said he has contacts with the Utah State Historical Society and other groups. Loren asked if he had made any contact with the Washington County Library Special Collections. George said he had

not had much contact with the County Library recently. Doug asked if anyone who walked into the Washington County Library would know anything about the Washington County Historical Society website. George said probably not. They have a card holder with WCHS business cards, but have not asked to have it refilled. There is also a card holder with cards on the reception counter at the DSU Archives.

Loren and Doug agreed they would hand out WCHS business cards on Thursday, May 27 to both the Washington County Library Special Collections Archives and the Dixie State University Special Collections Archives.

George said the website was designed to be a tool for use in support of current activities as well as the recording of our history. He would like to see the WCHS continue the calendar of upcoming events sponsored by any historical organization in the county. That would include listing of upcoming activities, keeping a record of past activities, and notifying interested parties of those activities.

Susan Crook suggested we hold a WCHS Executive Officers work meeting with George to address some of these issues. George said he would prefer to have a Zoom meeting with the Website Committee at which the interested WCHS Executive Officers and Board would be invited. That could be followed by George being invited to an Officers meeting to further discuss these issues.

## **Addendum B (Draft minutes from May 26, 2021)**

### **WCHS Website Planning**

#### **Goals**

The website is designed as a place to collect the history of Washington County in an organized and permanent fashion where everyone can have ready access to that information. The idea is for it to be the place to start when anyone has a question about Washington County history.

#### **Philosophies**

The website is designed to evolve as new and corrected information is received. Unlike a book or published article, updates can be made at any time so the website should continually get better and more complete.

The volume of information is very large, so it is important that the website be well organized and stable. Access should be intuitive with tools to quickly locate the information that is wanted.

#### **Succession Plan**

We need a succession plan to deal with the possibility that something happens to me or the certainty that I will need to gradually phase out.

I have been working almost full time on the website for the past 14 years. My age and family needs mean I need to start reducing the amount of time I spend on the website. At the same time, the size and usage of the website is continuing to grow, so more help is needed.

I hope that I have created something so valuable that people will want to see that it continues long after I am gone.

We urgently need to find people who are or can become interested in advancing the goals for the website and who are available and willing to work towards those ends.

The steps I hope to see happen:

- Find people to work on selected projects of interest to them. This might be working on the history of their own ancestors, documenting buildings or other subjects, improving existing subject pages, working on acquisitions of existing collections, etc. Will get them involved and educated on the workings of the website.
- As people become familiar and committed, they can take on more responsibilities like doing the detailed formatting of data, recruiting, and supervising new contributors, etc.
- We need to recruit and train one or more webmasters (there should always be at least two) who can access the server computer to update the data and fix problems that will arise. They need the desire and ability to commit a significant amount of time over an extended period, some technical knowledge or aptitude, a good understanding of the website structure and operations, and ...

## **Activities for the Year**

### Advertising and Promotion

- Get the word about the website out to the broader public.
- Submit an article about the website to the St George News, Senior Sampler, and/or ...
- Include a reference to the website in all our advertising and publications.
- Mention the website whenever it has relevant additional information about a subject being discussed.

### Recruiting and Training

- Need to find people who are available and interested in getting any area of our history recorded and preserved.
- I will work with and help anyone who is interested.
- I could use help in making website information videos.
- I need occasional help from people who can help solve website technical problems. A knowledgeable volunteer or on-call consultant would be useful.
- We need to find someone to be an emergency backup for me as we find and develop new assistant webmasters.

### Acquisition of Historical Data

- People should be encouraged to share the information they know about the history of Washington County.
  - Family histories.
  - Other subjects they know about.
  - Refinement of any of our subject pages that are of interest to them.

- I know of several sources for major collections of related history. We need people who are interested and willing to work on acquiring and organizing those collections.

#### Editing and Refinement of Data

- We have thousands of current subject pages in varying stages of completion. Some are complete and polished while others are hardly more than place holders. And most fall somewhere in between. We need people with the knowledge and interest to refine the information on those webpages, and possibly do additional research.

#### Technical Evolution of the Website

- Fix the forms feature.
- Explore options for an automatic backup and restore feature.
- Plan for landing page(s).
- Evolution of pages to a better standard.
- Find a way to clean up the broken links.

#### Transition of Functions Off of the Website

- The website was designed to be a tool for use in support of current activities as well as the recording of our history.
- If those current activities can be done better elsewhere or offloaded to ease the load on me and my successors, we can do that.
- Some of those activities might include:
- Calendaring upcoming events sponsored by any historical organization in the County. That includes listing of upcoming activities, keeping a record of past activities, and notifying interested parties of those activities.
- Responding to requests for information or other communications going to [info@wchsutah.org](mailto:info@wchsutah.org)
- Maintaining of our various e-mail lists.

#### Coordinating With Other Websites and Organizations

- The Washington City Historical Society website model