

Meeting Minutes

Date: 5/6/2026

Meeting Start: 6:30 PM

Attendance:

- Executive Director: Candice Blackstone-Larson
- Board Members: Luke Guindon, Ann Fisher, Phil Britton, Andie Johnston, Mary Tilson, Lee Ossenheimer
- Board Members joined remotely: Tom Dummer, Dick Pierson, Susan Divine
- Board Members absent: Steven Sams, Sue Bertram
- **Approval of Previous Minutes**
 - **Andie Johnston moves to adopt the meeting minutes.**
 - **Seconded by: Phil Britton**
 - **The motion carried.**

Treasurer's Financial Report

- Bell Financial Investment
 - \$118,009.83
- Business Checking
 - \$48,838.70
- Grant Business Checking
 - \$59,383.42
- Business Money Market
 - \$106,468.20
- 12-month CD for \$100,000 at Incredible Bank
 - \$103,806.06
- Account Totals
 - \$436,506.21
- **Treasurer's Financial Report Approval**
 - **Lee Ossenheimer moves to approve the Treasurer's Report, subject to audit.**
 - **Seconded by: Phil Britton**
 - **The motion carried.**

Committee Reports

- Events Committee Report from Andie Johnston
 - Annie Capps will be the musical act for the July 9th pre-fest at the Ore Dock.
 - New Third Coast trio will play for the 2027 pre-fest event.
 - HOTAP on Wednesday, May 20. Cloverland will provide the music.
 - We currently have enough volunteers for this event.
 - A community square dance and membership potluck event will be held at the office facility in the parking lot with the Hiawatha House Band on June 17th.

- Membership Committee update from Candice Blackstone-Larson
 - Community square dance on June 17th
 - Members-only informal potluck.
 - Potluck will not have a signup sheet and will take place from 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM.
 - Hiawatha House Band will play from 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM and will be open to all including non-members.
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson asked Lee Ossemheimer if it would be possible to use a dance floor in the parking lot. Lee said that it would be possible but would require a crew and a trailer to transport it.
 - Festival Food Tent event
 - In the food tent, Membership will host a social with light food options for members to meet between 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM on Friday night.
 - This event will be mentioned prior to the festival to membership via email to help raise awareness that it will be taking place.
 - The festival program will mention the things that are available and happening at the membership tent.
 - Activities and amenities will be available at the tent, including popcorn, coffee, and use of a charging station for phones. Katrina Keough is building a charging station for the membership tent to offer to members for use during the festival.
 - All new members that purchase their membership at the festival will receive an exclusive Hiawatha branded bandana that will not be offered for sale at this year's festival. They will also be entered into a drawing for a \$25 merchandise coupon.
 - The membership tent will be an estimated 10 ft x 10 ft with an additional 10 ft x 10 ft popup canopy tent set up behind it to allow space for all needs.
- Fundraising report from Ann Fisher
 - Mary Tilson sold \$4,000 worth of ads for the program.
 - 5 new ads.
 - 7 renewals.
 - 5 from advertisers that participated in prior years, but not last year.
 - In total, she had 35 requests and 17 ads sold.
 - The fundraising committee would like to consult with Zosia Eppensteiner from the Marquette County Community Foundation to explore what the foundation may financially be able to offer to Hiawatha, and if it would

make sense for Hiawatha to invest money into an endowment with the foundation.

- Festival sign sponsorship update
 - The committee ran out of time to coordinate asking for festival sign sponsorship at the same time as ads.
 - Signs Unlimited can provide signs with slogans at \$22 cost with sponsorship proposed to be at \$100.
 - These signs can still be sold for the festival and sponsored by businesses or individuals.
 - **Phil Britton moves to proceed with ordering the signs needed from Signs Unlimited.**
 - **Seconded by: Mary Tilson.**
 - **The motion carried.**
- Ann Fisher has donated \$4,000 to help pay for the new semi-trailer.
 - The donation was requested to be used to create an *In Memoriam* section for people that have been important to Hiawatha that we have lost, with space to add more names.
 - There is a need to expand \$100 sponsorship decal slots on the side of the trailer.
 - An additional \$750 is needed to completely offset the cost for the trailer.
- Discussion about targeted donations
 - There is a need to create a way for donors to choose where they would like their donation to be used. This can be updated on the donation website.
 - Susan Divine brought up a past earmarked donation from family and friends of Pearl Taylor. A dedicated dance was requested, but due to a change at Hiawatha it was missed and has not yet been fulfilled. Candice Blackstone-Larson will search for the records and work to follow through with the request.
- Investment planning from Tom Dummer
 - The committee is working to put forth a proposal to change the bylaws to offer a standing committee for investment planning instead of an Ad Hoc committee.
 - Tom reports the committee has looked into various scenarios to gain a full and complete understanding of the non-refundable amount of money that is needed in the case of a catastrophic festival failure.
 - Normal operation annual expenses are \$262,484.

- If a festival is cancelled in early March or April it would cost \$22,000 less.
 - If a festival is cancelled at the last minute, it would cost \$15,000 less.
 - \$240,000 - \$262,000 is needed each year to pay for all HMC expenses.
 - The committee agrees that there is a need for a strategic planning committee that can assess how to use the remaining money outside of the emergency fund that should be kept on hand to deal with unforeseen circumstances.
 - Things to be considered, but not limited to, might include investing in the 50th annual festival, music committee budget, events, or youth-oriented activities over several years' time.
 - Kevin Knaffla joined the committee. Kevin has a background and experience with accounting, and has created a document that is shared to all board members on Google Drive. This document is a list of the Investment Committee's responsibilities.
 - **Tom Dummer moves to change the Ad Hoc finance committee to a standing committee.**
 - **Seconded by: Ann Fisher.**
 - **The motion carried.**
 - Ann Fisher recommends moving some funds to Embers Credit Union at an interest rate of 4 percent.
 - The reason for this is that FDIC only insures up to \$250,000 in one financial institution and this would allow the Co-Op to diversify where the money is kept.
 - **Ann Fisher moves to transfer up to \$100,000 into a money market account at Embers Credit Union to earn an interest rate of 4 percent.**
 - **Seconded by: Susan Divine.**
 - **The motion carried.**
 - Kevin Knaffla has agreed to meet with Candice Blackstone-Larson to have monthly or quarterly checks and review QuickBooks together.
- **Board Eligibility Requirements Review Committee**
 - Discussions have resulted in abandoning deep discussion of adding additional eligibility guidelines.
 - A discussion of many board members concludes in agreement that the three eligibility requirements still need final updates.
 - **This topic will be tabled for the next Board meeting when more board members can be present for the discussion.**

- Board of Directors & Music Selection Committee Communication Plan
 - Board members and MSC met to discuss the recent verbiage that the Board voted on. The added language establishes a communication plan between the two entities and specifies that the MSC will use the music selection rubric grid while choosing performers. After discussion between board members and the MSC, additional language is needed to enable the MSC to request changes to the rubric grid as traditional music and labeled categories may evolve and require updating over time.

Old Business

- Annual Board Retreat Date
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson still needs, and will send out reminders, to several board members that still need to fill out the available date survey.
 - A discussion amongst the board members and the executive director reviewed the benefits of holding the annual retreat in the fall near the time of the annual membership meeting.
 - Spring has many more conflicts and scheduling challenges than fall for several people.
 - The annual meeting may be moved from Barrel and Beam to Ore Dock. If it does move venues, it may rule out a Friday option for the annual meeting to allow a day between the meeting and the retreat.
 - If a fall date was decided, board members in attendance would have more experience serving on the Board before entering into the retreat.
 - If the annual retreat were to be held near the membership meeting, it would require involvement and planning from many more board members.
- **Ann Fisher moves that we add a new permanent committee to the bylaws. This committee shall be called the Facilities and Equipment Maintenance Committee.**
 - **Seconded by: Andie Johnston.**
 - **The motion carried.**

New Business

- Economic Impact Study Proposal
 - Susan Divine has prepared information detailing an economic impact study for Hiawatha from Lake Superior Community Partnership. There is a \$1,200 fee.
 - Lake Superior Community Partnership sent a contract, but the Board needs to vote in agreement before action can be taken.
 - **Susan Divine moves to authorize Sue Bertram to enter into a contract with Lake Superior Community Partnership for the completion of an economic impact study in the amount of \$1,200 to be completed by the end of 2026.**

- **Seconded by: Tom Dummer.**
- **The motion carried.**

Festival

- Ticketing and membership platform
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson is recommending all memberships and ticket sales to go through TicketSpice.com.
 - The site provides analytics and data in real time with sales. This includes analytics concerning both memberships, and festival ticket and camping sales.
 - This platform charges \$0 per month, \$.99 per wristband and \$.99 per membership purchased.
 - TicketSpice will capture user information from purchasers of tickets for HMC. The platform also offers post-event surveys.
 - In 2025, there was an estimated \$10,000 in credit card fees from the 3% fee that HMC covered and was not passed on to customers.
 - **Tom Dummer moves to approve the use of TicketSpice.com for membership and ticket sales, pass the cost of the \$.99 ticket fee to the customer, and include the option for buyers to check a box on their form to cover the additional 3% credit card fee.**
 - **Seconded by: Susan Divine.**
 - **The motion carried.**
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson sent a comprehensive email and has created a “Thursday early entry: Quick Guide What to Know” document of frequently asked questions and pushback strategy that board members can reference to effectively explain the policy if needed.
 - There is a discussion about Thursday night household campsite charges.
 - Hiawatha pays the City of Marquette for a full Tourist Park rental on Thursday night. This includes a regular Tourist Park camping fee for every site in the park.
 - Susan Divine is opposed to the part of the policy that has separate households paying for Thursday night even if they share the same site as another household.
 - Tom Dummer is opposed to charging any Thursday night volunteers to camp for the night.
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson explained that the policy was developed this way because of logistics, equity, and fairness toward all people camping. It provides more fairness to situations where someone is camping alone on a site and would have to pay more than someone that is sharing a site. This was intended to be more of an entrance fee that was the most fair to all households.
 - The policy was designed to allow one structure per site, per household. This was implemented to bring fairness to all people camping on Thursday night. This keeps people that

do not share a site from being allowed more structures on their site than the people that are sharing a site.

- Susan Divine discussed the history of Thursday night going back to 2013 when the City of Marquette had a lottery to fill any empty Thursday night spots in the park, but kept the funds for themselves.
- Sound Contract Update
 - We have a 3-year contract signed with Sombrero Sound.
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson is working with legal counsel to update the language in an older contract.
- Electrical Update
 - Jesse Ossenheimer is requesting additional funds. His allotted expenditure is currently \$700.
 - The construction changes in the park require redesigned wiring because of voltage drop over distance. The new cabling needed has an estimated cost of \$2,700 just for the cable and there are other electrical supplies needed as well.
 - In total, he will need an estimated \$3,200 in additional funds to be ready for the festival.
 - Adrian Wojcik is the licensed electrician and electrical monitor that is working with Jesse Ossenheimer on the redesign.
 - Adrian works for Peninsula Solar. Peninsula Solar is donating the use of solar generators for the remote tent locations.
 - He pulls the electrical permit for the festival, saving money in festival expenses.
 - Our grant money has allowed the purchase of a light tower to mount in the receiver of a vehicle at the Powdermill Road and Sugarloaf Ave location. Peninsula Solar will donate the use of one of their vans to mount the light tower on site.
- Music Selection Report from Dick Pierson
 - There have been no new updates to be shared.
- Stenberg Brothers Inc. Budget
 - Stenberg festival costs have increased close to \$4,000. Most of this increase is directly related to the uncertainty of rising fuel costs.
- Tourist Park Update
 - Jesse Ossenheimer and Adrian Wojcik walked the park to evaluate needed changes which were discussed in detail earlier in the meeting.
 - Candice Blackstone-Larson, Lee Ossenheimer, Jesse Ossenheimer, and the food vendor area coordinator walked the park to examine and properly prepare the infrastructure for the food vendors.

- An electrical pole has been installed where the merch tent is usually located. This will require a slight shift in the tent location, but should still work well.
- Trees have been planted where the info tent is usually located, which will require a change in the tent location.
- Many of the Hiawatha tents will be moved out further into the field on the north side of the park, along the road at the entrance to the park.
- The new parking lot on the north side of the park is intended to be used as handicap parking. Campers in Section D will likely be able to utilize this parking lot to set up, but will not be able to use it to park vehicles for the weekend.
- The shuttle will enter the park from County Road 550, as well as vendors.
- Food Vendors
 - Applications closed with 18 applicants and 14 vendors.
 - Lee Ossenheimer requested an extra water spigot to be installed on the side of the restroom building as part of the construction.

Meeting Adjournment

- **Phil Britton moves to adjourn the meeting.**
 - **Seconded by: Ann Fisher.**
 - **The motion carried.**

Meeting Ended: 8:56 PM.

Next Regular Board Meeting - June 3, 2026, 6:30 PM.