

Board Meeting Summary – June 26, 2009

The first full board meeting of the MAS Board of Directors was held on June 26 at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum. The Board would like to thank all of the members, the session presenters and the MAS staff who attended the mini Conference & AGM - together everyone contributed to the success of the event.

Key results of the June 26th meeting are:

- MAS' Board would like to thank the three contract employees whose terms ended on June 30 for all of their contributions to the association. The employees are: Michelle McKay (Director of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage); Jessica Leavens (Project Coordinator); and Lisa Thomson (Communications Manager).
- News has been received from the Department of Canadian Heritage with respect to applications for funding for Education (Museum Development Project) and the Aboriginal Initiatives (Responsible Care and Handling of First People's Heritage Development Project).

Funding for the education project has been approved with only minor reductions, which will allow MAS to continue to offer its full range of learning options this year.

Funding for the Aboriginal Initiatives project was not approved for this year.

MAS was advised that "Assessors acknowledged the value in the project; however, concerns were raised regarding the project design and the level of community support demonstrated in the application."

This decision will mean that the Director of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage position will be vacant until further notice. However, even though this project did not receive funding, MAS is still committed to moving forward with its Aboriginal initiatives in other ways.

The First People's and Saskatchewan Museums Committee will continue to be a vital advisory body. Work will continue on the various projects already underway, such as the Elders Protocol, Standards for the Care of First Nations and Metis

Collections, the Repatriation Guide and the new First People's Museums Studies course - 'Rethinking the Museum'.

Members of the First People's and Saskatchewan Museums Committee will be notified of the funding situation and asked to continue their commitment to work with MAS on these initiatives.

- As our members know, MAS has recently experienced significant upheaval and, as a result, may have strayed from its foundation and goals. We are pleased to advise you that rebuilding is underway!

We have received a strong vote of confidence from SaskCulture, which has offered to fund an organizational audit and review for MAS. We have gratefully accepted this offer and expect work to begin immediately.

This organizational audit and review will include:

- a review of MAS documents and reports;
- discussions with the board and staff to determine what MAS wants to do, for whom, and with whom, and identifying the financial and human resources necessary for accomplishing these goals;
- developing monitoring processes for the board and determining the governance structure which would best suit the needs of the organization; and
- developing an implementation plan to help us start moving forward.

SaskCulture will hire a consultant as soon as possible to begin conducting the review, with a goal of receiving an initial report in September. Members will be kept informed of the progress of the review and asked for input at an appropriate stage in the process. In the meantime, MAS will continue to conduct its activities, including applying for its annual grants and providing education, museum development, networking and communication opportunities to its members.

During this transition period, Brenda Herman and Wendy Fitch will maintain their current titles as Director of Finance and Director of Museum Development, respectively, and will work together to co-manage MAS, sharing the responsibilities of the Executive Director. We thank them for their assistance and encourage you to contact them, or any board member, with any questions while the review is taking place. You can contact us by mail, telephone or email.

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