

OLIVE BRANCH SCHOOL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Minutes of the Meeting on January 11, 2023

The OBSPS meeting was called to order at 4:07 PM by Chairman Jim Leathley. Trustees present were **Jim Leathley, Cyndie Gerken, Susan Morgan, Sharon Leathley, Howard Stahl, Virgil Studebaker**, and ex officio TLS Director of Facilities and Safety **Brian Dixon**. Member Wes Baker was also present. Trustees not in attendance were Alec Ashbaugh, Scott Suther, Sara Suver, and Don Wallace.

Secretary Susan Morgan read the minutes of the October 12, 2022 Annual Meeting. No additions or corrections were made. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Howard Stahl and seconded by Cyndie Gerken. Motion carried.

A printed Treasurer's Report was distributed by Sharon Leathley, Treasurer. Sharon highlighted that our current balance is \$23,577.86 plus \$5,000.00 in the Springfield Foundation Horizon Fund. Her report also included notes on when future reports are due and results of grant requests which we discussed later in the meeting. A motion to approve the report was made by Cyndie Gerken and seconded by Virgil Studebaker. Motion carried.

Under Old Business, results of our grant application awards were discussed. Cyndie reported that she had to do the Springfield Foundation application quickly as it was due just two days after we received the estimate from Blind Eye; we applied for funds for restoration of the southwest room windows and door. But she felt that the application was done thoroughly for their consideration. Cyndie also mentioned that Suzie Carey from the Springfield Foundation had seen the building, said she loved it and was very encouraging in our seeking a grant from the Springfield Foundation. However, we received a form-like letter back from the Foundation that we did not receive any grant money. This was very discouraging. Brian Dixon mentioned that TLS Superintendent, Paula Crew, recently became a board member of the Springfield Foundation and that she hopes to gain some attention and help to the western end of Clark County. The Turner Foundation did award us with a grant of \$5,860.00, which we can use toward the southwest windows and door restoration. We received no response at all from The Della Selsor Trust grant application. This was also disappointing as they have always awarded us something in the past. Cyndie has called to inquire about the Della Selsor application but has not received any response from their co-trustees. Cyndie also stated that she will look into applying to the Clark County Convention Facilities Authority to see if we can get any funds there. OBSPS board member Don Wallace and past TLS Superintendent Jim Gay are on their board and may be of help in getting our project attention and consideration. Also under Old Business, the Blind Eye estimate of \$14,650.00 to renovate the windows and door of the southwest classroom was received with an expiration of offer being 2/12/2023. Chairman Jim Leathley said he wanted to discuss this more under new business.

Under New Business, Chairman Jim Leathley wanted to have a "frank and honest discussion" of the reality of our situation, to delve deeper into why we do not receive more money from our grant applications and why such little support has been received in our efforts to renovate the historic "little OB" building. While our efforts did accomplish getting the southeast classroom door and windows restored and the historic plaque in front of the building for the community's benefit and awareness, our progress has been slow and small. The trustees have put in many years of fund raising, advertisement, open houses, research into renovation companies and personal work on renovation as well as record keeping in all areas of the project. Many, many hours have been spent on this project with relatively little support from the community, alumni and organizations. Since the building was last used for teaching in the 1960's, the alumni interested in its restoration are in the 65yr and older age. Likewise the OBSPS Trustees are at an age where they can no longer physically and safely do laborious jobs on the building. Jim

Minutes of the OBSPS January 11, 2023 Meeting (continued)

also had a list of what the building needs in terms of big ticket items such as plumbing, electric, heating and A/C, water supply, handicap accessibility, etc. Discussion ensued on whether we should continue our efforts or dissolve the Society. Susan Morgan asked Brian Dixon if he had a feel for what the TLS would do with the building if we cease our efforts. He said they would most likely not sell the building as it is very complicated for school systems to do that. Also, if sold, the TLS would have someone else's building sitting in front of their bus barn. He said he couldn't imagine the school system would tear it down in the near future but most likely would use it for storage again. Howard Stahl mentioned bigger corporations have money to give if we could only tap into that somehow. Jim Leathley mentioned he had checked into COVID money that Clark County received but that Mr. Lohnes at Clark County said he reviewed uses for that money and he could not see where that money could be applied to our project even as a Bethel Township community center in Clark County. Virgil Studebaker also asked how it might look to The Turner Foundation if we use their grant money and then dissolve sometime later. Cyndie Gerken stated that as long as we use The Turner Foundation grant money for renovation of the southwest windows and door, we would be honoring our agreement as we would be spending the money granted for that project. We also discussed that if we decided to dissolve the Society, what we should we do with any remaining money. Jim Leathley mentioned that he had some ideas on the use of left over money. He stated that giving it to TEF for THS scholarships could be one option. The Trustees were asked for their opinion on whether or not to move forward with the building restoration. Virgil Studebaker suggested that we do the southwest windows with the Turner Foundation grant funds, adding what additional money we need from our account, and then use remaining funds to power wash and paint the front (south, road-facing side) of the building as it would at least give that road-facing façade an appearance of completion if we decide to dissolve. Other projects we could do if we have time and money would be removing the southwest classroom drop ceiling tile and flooring. After more discussion Jim stated a plan to proceed as follows: 1) Commit to the Blind Eye window and door contract for the southwest classroom before the 2/12/23 deadline, and 2) see what we can do with what money we currently have in the next 4-6 months. This *could* include getting the exterior of both south classrooms and the front of building power washed and painted on the outside, old flooring and ceiling tile removed from inside the southwest room, front entry dry walled and painted, etc. In four to six months we can evaluate what we have been able to do with the funds we have and decide if we feel we should or want to continue with future efforts. The group agreed to this plan.

Having no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Susan Morgan and seconded by Cyndie Gerken. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

By Secretary Susan Morgan