

Hatlie Committee Year-end Review, March AGM 2021

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Chair, Hatlie Project Committee

While in Edmonton for our most recent Casino fundraiser in September 2019, then President Mike Cameron and I were in his truck, on our way to some R & R on a golf course. I had with me a business card for the Hatlie Group which Rob Hubick had picked up at the AMA Convention months before. I gave them a call.

Over a year later, here we are. We are currently undergoing a community and membership survey, have recently taken delivery of a revised and proposed Governance Manual, and are expecting a final report and recommendations for a business plan by the end of this month.

Following is a chronology and some highlights.

- Our contract, priced at \$20,000.00, served to highlight an existential question that has raised its head most sharply this year - the relationship between the Historical Society (HS) and Museum and Archives (MA). The contract made reference to the objective of “how to best leverage the asset of land that JYMA holds”. It is actually the Historical Society that holds all assets, including the museum and archives itself. The typo was not deemed to hinder the process.
- The original motivation to engage assistance was related to frustration on the Board regarding the decades of inactivity regarding the development or use of the Society’s empty lot, even though a “Lot Committee” had existed for quite some time. In fact, frustration existed regarding the effectiveness of our Committee structure in general, and the pattern over years of declining financial resources.
- We had a preliminary meeting with Crystal Willie, one of the two principals, on the Thanksgiving weekend, October 2019. A Special Board meeting was convened on

November 18th, to further consider a proposal. To ensure directors unable to meet then had further opportunity for input, another Special Meeting was convened on December 27th, with Ms. Willie also in attendance.

- Other sources of funding or services were considered, including Community Futures. The contract was reduced in cost by eliminating the provisions for a Governance Review and Community Engagement- a new cost of \$16,500.00. It was decided the initiative was important enough that we would use our reserves if necessary. Mr. Cameron signed the Consulting Agreement on our behalf on March 4th, 2020.
- Greg Key, Alison Snowball and Rob Hubick were appointed members of the Ad Hoc Hatlie Committee, chaired by Herb Robinson. The first committee meeting was held April 23rd, 2020.
- Hatlie conducted staff and board interviews, reporting the results in June of 2020 under the headings of Strengths, Opportunities, Concerns and Aspirations. The interviews understandably approached circumstances from a perspective of a museum environment. It was noted at that time that it was unfortunate that one of the “Aspirations” did not include a reference to the Society’s health. The board was asked to consider how the relationship between the museum and the Society, in the context of the Hatlie Project, as well as how it currently existed, should inform the progress of the project.
- July 8th, Hatlie Group conducted a day long virtual workshop to help inform a Strategic Framework and business plan. All staff and board members were invited to participate, and most did. Stakeholders were “mapped”, and connections were made to the interview results.
- July 17th, the Board initiated a postponement of the project with the Hatlie Group until the Fall, due to Covid-19 and summer uncertainties. At this time, the miss-statement about ownership of the lot was pointed out, and it was suggested that the letters JYHS might be substituted in almost every instance where the project referenced JYMA. The perspective presented was that while our primary goal and

purpose was the sustainability of the museum and archives, a strong society would guarantee this outcome. There was a perception that HS/MA issues were complicating the process.

- At the end of September, 2020, the project started up again, with a revised cost of \$19,200.00 due to the Board's reinstatement of the Governance piece and a reduced Community Engagement piece. Given questions about identity and HS/MA confusion, it was important that at least the Governance piece be reinstated, as without a solid foundation, any future planning could be of limited value. In for a penny, in for a pound - including a survey of the community and membership seemed a no brainer.
- Oct 26th, 2020, a day long virtual workshop was held with board and staff to consider values and vision in order to further define the Strategic Framework. A half day workshop was held the next day with staff only to consider a "sustainability matrix" that considered/analyzed all fundraising efforts.
- Oct 29, 2020 the Governance Sub-Committee met for the first time. The members were the original Hatlie Committee, joined by Roben Nurgitz. This committee was charged with reviewing four sections of a proposed Governance Manual to replace our current Board Manual. The Terms of Reference for a standing committee, the JYHS Governance Committee were drafted and ratified by the Board.
- Nov 23rd The draft Strategic Framework was received. This contained a proposed new Vision and Mission for the Society. The board met several times to discuss the contents, and there was uncertainty expressed on the part of a few directors regarding the new mission compared to the old. (Visit www.jaspermuseum.org/ourhistory to review the existing ones.) It was ratified at the February 9th Regular Board Meeting and the final version of the Strategic Framework is attached. It is the foundational document proposed to drive the next few years of our efforts.
- Several meetings have occurred regarding the contents of the proposed Governance Manual, with a Special Meeting convened to consider sections 1 and

2, though sections 3 and 4, related to the board-manager relationship, has only been considered thus far by the Committee . There are interesting suggestions and implications regarding some possible changes. Examples include:

- An AGM would elect directors only, with those elected choosing the executive.
 - The "Historian" as an officer of the board would be eliminated.
 - There would only be two permanent committees - the Governance Committee and the Audit/Finance Committee.
 - The museum manager would assume far greater responsibility in terms of investments, loans and allocating resources.
 - Personnel Policy would be removed from the Board Manual and included in an Operational Manual developed for the Manager.
 - The use of the term "organization" raised much debate, as it was contemplated Society efforts or initiatives might include areas not related to the museum environment (e.g the empty lot, reunion efforts etc.)
- Alexandra Hatcher, the other Hatlie principal, spearheading the governance review, has indicated that recommendations are to spark discussion, and are based on Hatlie's experience and knowledge in the field. Ultimately, however, it will be up to the Society's board to decide how and what to adopt. If we feel more committees are required, then we incorporate this. An Historian could become a non-board volunteer position, retained as an officer if justifiable etc.
 - It appears clear that the Hatlie Group was viewing the HS and MA as being a single entity, albeit the HS having the legal responsibility to file government required reports, issue tax receipts and having the ultimate responsibility for the health of the organization. A suggestion was made from the Committee that we might delegate our museum manager, rather than being "just" the museum manager, to become an executive director of the Historical Society itself. This would accommodate the view that the Society mandate is broader than operating a

museum and archives, though obviously our primary goal. The Hatlie response was “he already is”. This was news to us.

- The Committee has recommended that the Board takes the view that everything is up for discussion, and that we do need to “trust the process”. Some recommendations have essentially been adopted already, such as a change in our meeting format, the recording of motions and actions, and the adoption of a clear template for developing committee terms of reference. For the rest of operations, however, the “default” is how we currently operate until formally deciding otherwise. Hatlie has suggested that considering and implementing those recommendations deemed necessary could occur over a period of several years.
- On Feb 9th the Hatlie Group presented at the Regular monthly board meeting. The Strategic Framework, revised to include reference to Society members and clarify the lot future is for the benefit of the Society as well as the community, was ratified. In an attempt to address confusion, the Hatlie Group recommended a motion “The Board confirms their understanding that the Jasper-Yellowhead Historical Society is a legal entity, in service to its members and community, which operates the Jasper-Yellowhead Museum and Archives and is governed by a Board of Directors.” The motion was carried.

The project has introduced a degree of stress and forced directors out of our “comfort zones” that would be normal in such a change process even without the constraints of a pandemic. The compilation and analysis of the community and member surveys is due in early March, and will further inform the business model. The draft Governance Manual is being revised to ensure the clarity that our organization is more than a museum with a volunteer board. As it indicates in Section 1; “The Board develops long-term business and financial plans that provides a context for the Manager to create and carry out short-term plans to move the Museum and Archives forward. A secondary function of the Board of Directors is to promote activities for its membership and public.” The final report is due March 31st.

Regardless of the wording in Section 1 referenced above, there is still debate about the possibilities or desirability of the Society being involved in some programming or activities outside of the museum environment. The staff, without board involvement, has been exclusively engaged in considering which efforts are worthwhile in terms of revenue and publicity. Similarly, the Hatlie process has engaged staff with the development of job descriptions for recommendation for approval. It is assumed that these activities will likely form the bulk of the business plan.

There is no doubt that greater clarity in terms of policy and parameters for operational efforts on the part of our manager is required. It remains to be seen how we resolve the issue of “museum manager” vs. “Society manager”, as there are fundamental questions about our future that this entails. In addition, for the success of our organization going forward, it is clear that at least one of three things must happen. Perhaps ideally, all three are the preference. Specific goals/initiatives must be strictly prioritized to equate with resources; Society and museum volunteers, with appropriate guidelines, require revitalization and clear purpose; the Society must hire more staff.

The issue of “branding” is also one that will need to be addressed, and Hatlie has recommended that we seek professional expertise to consider how best to represent our identity and present our public face. The work will not end!

Strategic Framework

Jasper-Yellowhead Historical Society

Adopted – February 9th, 2021



Values

With a foundation of respect, compassion, loyalty, and authenticity, we champion:

- Community;
- Stewardship;
- Accountability;
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion; and
- Sustainability (*Culture / Health / Environment / Financial / Social*).

Vision

Encourage a sense of belonging in our community by fostering a life-long relationship to our cultural and natural heritage.

Mission

We are keepers of the cultural and natural heritage of the Jasper Yellowhead region, sharing, celebrating, and promoting our unique corner of the world.

Strategic Priorities

Financial Stability

- Diverse revenue streams provide ongoing funding to operate the museum, provide unique programs and exhibitions, and engaging activities for members, visitors and the community.

Community Connections

- Relationships throughout our community increase participation and engagement in our work.

Use of the Vacant Lot

- The decided course of action on the Lot will benefit the Society and the community.