

Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2026

Board members present: Fred Cate, board chair; Liz Witte, treasurer; Charles Cammack; Andy Conner; Amber Finley; Steffanie Lim-Ho; Pete Nagel; Angila Retherford; Ivory Salmon; Marc Samardzija; Judy Singleton; John Wechsler and Mike Zick

Board members absent: Nancy Jordan; Melissa Caito; Aaron Dixon, Michael Galbratih; John Hammond and Allison Karns

Advisory board members present: Bill Browne

State-appointed representatives present: Chris Smith, Department of Natural Resources; Abigail Hill, Governor's Fellow and Parvonay Stover, Governor's Office

Staff present: Cathy Ferree, president and CEO; Tracy Damone, executive assistant; David Daum, chief financial officer; Michele Greenan, director of archaeology; Susannah Koerber, chief curator and research officer; Brian Mancuso, chief officer of engagement; Judy Palermo, chief marketing officer; Joseph Pinnell, chief people officer; Bethany Thomas, vice president of education and engagement and Eric Todd, chief operating officer

Fred Cate called the meeting to order.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda consisted of the March 12, 2026, board minutes, collections management policy and ethics and conflict of interest policy.

ACTION: The board approved the consent agenda as presented.

Governance

Fred Cate presented the following slate of nominees for election to the board of directors, adviser directors and officers:

1. Appoint Connie Basham to the ISMHS board for a three-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029.
2. Appoint Andy Conner, Amber Finley, Pete Nagel and Marc Samardzija to the ISMHS board for a second, three-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029.
3. Appoint Nancy Jordan as vice chair of ISMHS board for a two-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028.
4. Appoint John Hammond as secretary and governance chair of ISMHS board for a one-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.
5. Appoint Liz Witte as treasurer of ISMHS board for a two-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028.
6. Appoint Gary Anderson, Andrew Briggs William A. Browne Jr., David Go, De'Amon Harges, Thao Nguyen, Greg Pemberton, Alice Schloss, Judy Singleton, Mary Walker and Robin Winston as advisor directors for a one-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

ACTION: The board elected the nominees as presented.

The board recognized members Melisa Catio, Judy Singleton and John Wechsler who have completed their board appointment terms.

Strategic Framework Update

ISMHS Teacher Study

The education and engagement team recently completed a comprehensive education study. The study was conducted in conjunction with research and evaluation associates Elena Tsakakis and Alexa Swan from the Science Museum of Minnesota. Funding for this project was received through a grant from the Allen Whitehill Clowes Foundation. The project focused on understanding the needs of educators as it relates to informal learning opportunities and how museums and historic sites can meet those needs. The team from the Science Museum of Minnesota as well as Bethany Thomas, VP, Education and Engagement for ISMHS shared the methods used and key findings from the 18-month study.

Through a series of phases, including literature review, kick-off meetings, ISMHS data review as well as teacher surveys, the study revealed six key findings:

- Teachers are generally unaware of museum offerings, including ISMHS, but are interested in the future to support their students
- Trusted relationships are how teachers connect with external offerings
- Teachers want logistics that match existing practices and habits
- Teachers want resources and programs that they cannot do on their own
- Teachers have consistent needs from any type of external program
- Teachers want support in specific content areas for different reasons

These key findings have led to the development of both areas to focus on at ISMHS as well as potential applications of the information.

Collection Highlight

Michele Greenan, director of archaeology, presented details regarding the acquisition of the Tomak Collection, a large donation acquired from Curtis Tomak. Mr. Tomak is a long-time archaeologist with the Indiana Department of Transportation and founding member of the White River Valley Archaeological Society.

The significance of the collection is represented in great part for the manner in which the items were recovered and recorded. The items represent scientifically collected evidence of the deep history of Native American communities from some of the most data deficient areas in Indiana. These sites fill huge gaps in our understanding of Indiana's history.

The Tomak collection is a statewide collection and ISMHS will be receiving site materials from Grant, Rush and Miami Counties. Photos of various items and materials received, as well as an explanation as to how they compare to current items in the ISMHS collection, were shared and indicate the historical relationship and significance of the objects. To date we have received 20 boxes of materials that make up the Tomak site collections from the broad White River Valley region.

Investment Committee

Investment Committee Report

Andy Conner, Investment Committee chair, provided an overview of the ISMHS endowment. The value of our portfolio was \$6,678,143 as of April 30, 2026. We are performing well among our peers with similar asset size.

FY 2026 Dashboard, as of May 31, 2026

Total ISMHS attendance was at 163,206 (up 4.1% over May 2025), paid daily ISMHS attendance was at 63,039 (down 3.9% from May 2025), school tour attendance was at 45,689 (up 2.4% over May 2025), and member visits were at 16,879 (up 2.2 % from May 2025). Free day attendance has been strong and there are many events and exhibits that are drawing guests across the system.

Development

To date, individual giving is at \$286,256 (58% to annual budget); board giving is at \$144,432 (83% to annual budget); grants are at \$267,837 (124% to annual budget); sponsorships are at \$162,250 (81% to annual budget); and in-kind donations are at \$14,107. The development office is in the process of hiring a vice president of development following the resignation of the former vice president in January. We are ahead of where we were last year in terms of giving. Grant work has been strong, discovering additional grants to support operations.

Upcoming donor cultivation opportunities include:

- July 27: America's 250th Outdoor Summer Celebration
- August: Hoosier Salon Awards Ceremony, Celebration, Preview and Sale
- November 27: Celebration Crossing and L.S. Ayres Tea Room Open

Finance and Budget Update***FY 2026 Financials Update through May 31, 2026***

As of May 31, 2026, total assets are \$30.6 million and total liabilities are at \$6.7 million resulting in total net assets of \$23.9 million. Total revenues are \$13.5 million and total expenses are \$13.3 million resulting in an increase in net position of \$145,120.

ACTION: The board approved the FY 2026 financials through May 31, 2026, as presented.

FY 2027 Budget

David Daum presented the proposed FY 2027 operating budget of \$16,618,307 for board approval.

ACTION: the board approved the FY 2027 budget as presented.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes recorded by: Tracy Damone, executive assistant

Minutes submitted by: John Hammond, secretary

Upcoming Board Meetings

September 9, 2026

December 9, 2026