

**Coolidge Standing Committee**  
**January 5, 2026 5 PM**  
**Hybrid in Lisa's Office and on zoom**

**In Attendance:** Bill Scher(chair), Lisa Downing (minutes), Julie Bartlett Nelson, Brian Tabor, Cynthia Simison, JoEllen Mackenzie, Katy Wight, Rob Weir, Leslie Skantz-Hodgeson, Rich Szlosek, Jay Fleitman

This meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm.

**1. Public Comments**

No public in attendance at the start of the meeting.

**2. Approve November Minutes**

Minutes approved unanimously

**3. Strategic Planning**

**Discussion: Review of mission and priorities**

Consultant Sarah Tanner asked us to review our mission statement and priorities. Julie asked us to review this before our next strategic planning meeting. Cynthia, Leslie, Bill, Julie, and Lisa agreed to be a subcommittee to meet to discuss. Leslie suggested that we survey the committee to get their feedback as well as feedback from the exhibit committee work. Julie will schedule a meeting late afternoon on Wednesday or Friday.

Julie has created a folder of documents shared by Sarah. Reminder that folks signed up to help with data collection in time for our next meeting.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**a. Exhibits Committee (JoEllen & Rob)**

We have a rough cost estimate for the exhibit. Mike is working with Julie on identifying objects for the exhibit.

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J.R. Greene, President  
William Scher, Vice-President

Lisa Downing  
Jo Ellen Mackenzie  
David Murphy  
Eli Porth  
Cynthia Simison

Leslie Skantz-Hodgson  
Rich Szlosek  
Brian Tabor, Emeritus  
Rob Weir  
Katy Wight, Trustee

**b. Development Committee (Jay)**

A Cultural Facilities grant to MCC was submitted for \$200,000 which has a 1 to 1 match. We will find out in May. The small CPA grant to restore Coolidge's City Council desk has been approved. Next we will apply in the spring CPA round for \$150,000 for lighting. We are also planning to apply to the Beveridge Foundation for storage space and collection storage to restore funding from an IMLS grant that was lost when funding was cut. Cynthia and JoEllen have applied for grants. Some individual solicitations have also been made. We have scheduled an online day of giving March 4th.

**c. Nominating Committee (Bill)**

There is a trustee who is interested in joining our committee.

**d. Programming and Education Committee (Bill)**

Bill reached out to a couple of professors suggested by Rob for a tax cut panel. Bill followed up with Marjorie Senechal about the Narcotic Farm Act. Bill edited the CBI panel which is now ready to go up on YouTube.

The Presidential book club had a good McKinley discussion and will be discussing Teddy Roosevelt at the end of this month. Herstory is reading a book about Elizabeth Packard, a 19th-century housewife committed to an asylum by her husband for disagreeing with him. Next month they will be reading about Jackie Kennedy Onassis.

Rich suggested a panel about Amherst College advisors to Coolidge. Unfortunately, he has been having trouble finding people interested.

**e. Marketing & Outreach Committee (Katy & Cynthia)**

Julie, Lisa, and Cynthia attended Senator Gomez's legislative breakfast and we received a shout out from Representative Ash. Senator Comerford's breakfast is coming up. Appeal letters are being sent to Florence, Easthampton, Peoples, and Cooperative Bank.

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Chris Nolan and Martha McCormick are joining the committee. They are looking at new merchandise ideas to offer as new events ideas.

#### **4. FY26 budget**

We have raised about \$17,000 this year towards and are still waiting for \$15,000 from our last MCC grant.

#### **5. Archivist's report (Julie)**

300 new records were added to our online database including additional photographs of objects. Bill said that it would be useful to have a single click way to access just the Coolidge objects. Julie has been working with staff to make this happen but there is currently not a way to do this.

Chris Kennedy completed a 130 hour internship that included working with our Smith work study students. He also transcribed 175 postcards and plans to continue volunteering.

Bill wrote an interesting article for Washington Monthly.

Rob found an article calling Coolidge the “quilting President” because he is the only president known to have made a quilt. He did it when he was 10 years old.

Coolidge received a bunch of publicity regarding the national Christmas tree.

Julie followed up with Sioux and Apache contacts by email and phone and had not heard back so she followed up with a mailed letter. Julie will continue to follow up and report back.

#### **6. New business**

Cynthia requested that the packet materials be received a week before the meeting.

Proposed 2026 meeting dates: 1st Monday except July and Sept due to holidays

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Jan 5, Feb 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 13\*, Aug. 3, Sept. 14\*, Oct 5, Nov, 2, Dec. 7. We will check in late spring and decide if we can take a month off this summer.

Rich made a motion to adjourn at 6:08 that Cynthia seconded.

Next meeting: February 2, 2026 at 5 PM

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