

**Coolidge Standing Committee**  
**February 2, 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, Rich Szlosek, Jay Fleitman, Bruce Stebbins, JR Greene

Guests: Fred Kass, Marc Hoffeditz

This meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.

**1. Public Comments**

No comments

**2. Approve January Minutes**

Minutes approved unanimously

**3. Strategic Planning**

**Discussion: Review of mission and priorities**

Subcommittee met and made a light revision to the existing mission and priorities Motion to recommend the revision to the trustees made by Cynthia and seconded by Rob. Jay raised concerns about word changes that he feels reduces focus on Coolidge's presidency. Others stated that we may end up reviewing priorities again as part of the strategic planning process. We voted 8 in favor and 1 against.

Lisa reminded folks signed up to help gather background information and identify people to survey or interview should have that done in time for our next meeting on Monday, February 9th.

**Subcommittee Reports**

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

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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

Valley Quilt Guild has offered to make a replica of the quilt that Coolidge made as a child that Mike Hanke thinks will make a good addition to the Vermont wall of the new exhibit. Historic Northampton has several oral histories from the 1970s with content relevant to Coolidge. Rob will review the transcripts soon. We also need to decide what to do with the videos and tapes that Rob recorded within the last couple of years.

Mike Hanke came on site to review possible objects to display. He is calculating the size the cases will need to be so that we can be accurate for bidding. He asked our committee to meet without him to review the content outline as well as the must have objects. Cynthia requested that a member of the exhibit committee be present when Mike meets with Julie or Lisa. We will talk about this at the next Standing Committee Meeting.

A proposal was made to offer the Valley Quilt Guild up to \$1,400 for the construction of the replica quilt that includes the cost of materials, research trip to Vermont to see the original, and an honorarium for the quilt guild for their time. JoEllen asked that we eliminate the travel costs to reduce the cost. The proposal from the guild was for a 50"x60" and Mike thought it would be too large. Jay made a motion to move forward with the construction of a quilt that will fit into the design for a cost of no more than \$1,000. JoEllen seconded the motion: 8 yes, 1 abstention. Julie will follow up with Mike Hanke to figure out the right size.

#### **b. Development Committee (Jay)**

Julie and Jay visited the MA GOP Committee in Watertown where they distributed 75 folders of information. Jay gave some background on Coolidge and Julie spoke about the museum and the renovation project. They felt that most people in attendance did not know much about Coolidge and seemed grateful about the presentation. We anticipate that we will have some folks visit and ideally some donations.

Julie submitted a \$9,300 grant for space planning and museum assessment to the Beveridge Foundation. Having this assessment might make us eligible for additional

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IMLS funding for a grant program called “Inspire for Small Museums” that may provide some funding for the exhibit.

We are working on an application for CPA for exhibit lighting that is due at the end of the month.

We are planning an online day of giving on March 4th. We are hoping to have a challenge match to announce.

Bruce Stebbins wrote some letters to local businesses that we will review at the upcoming Coolidge Development meeting.

**c. Nominating Committee (Bill)**

Fred Kass is a new trustee who is hoping to be appointed to the standing committee. He has been reading about Coolidge and is eager to get involved. He works at Amherst College and is thinking about Coolidge’s role there as a student, parent, and trustee.

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

Bill met with Marjorie Senechal about recovery farms which Coolidge was responsible for implementing. Marjorie’s father was a psychologist on one of these farms and she is very knowledgeable about the topic. She has a contact that will be visiting from out of the country and Bill hopes to hold this panel on May 27th.

Bill is also working on a tax panel in conjunction with an anniversary of the 1926 Revenue Act. Jay will be on the lookout for someone to join the panel.

The recording of the program, “Coolidge and the Jewish Community” is on the library’s YouTube. Please share with your friends.

51 Steps to Freedom - augmented reality walking tour may come to Forbes.

Eli is helping to put together a program about Grace and Deaf education.

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

We received a \$5,000 gift from Peoples Bank. Several of us met with a representative from Easthampton Savings Bank and will be asking them along with the cooperative banks and Florence Bank.

Several of us attended the Comerford library legislative breakfast. We filed a formal earmark request with Comerford and Sabadosa of \$80,000 for the murals in the space. They cautioned that this will be a tough year because of constraints on the state budget.

They are looking at new merchandise ideas. Cynthia asked for an accounting of what we have in stock as well as how many rack cards we currently have.

**4. Archivist's report (Julie)**

Volunteer and Donor event will be held at 2 PM on Sunday, March 1. Everyone is invited.

Julie shared information about a statewide archival competition featuring local high school students. They are desperate to find judges.

Congratulations to J.R. Greene and Debin Bruce who have been selected to receive the Trustee Award in 2026

Utah Governor Spencer Cox made many mentions of Coolidge in his State of the State Address on January 22, 2026

Coolidge statue to be added to Bok Tower in Florida which he dedicated in 1929.

Coolidge Foundation held a program with the Library of Congress on January 9- Business to the rescue: The American Economy in the Twentieth Century. Recorded by C-Span and available online to watch

**6. New business**

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Cynthia asked for an update on the status of the headdress. Joellen knows a former reporter who may be able to help nudge things along.

JoEllen made a motion to adjourn at 6:21 that Jay seconded.

Next meeting: March 2, 2026 at 5 PM

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