



Arizona Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Education Museum

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the AMMNRE Museum Advisory Council July 16, 2026

A public meeting of the AMMNRE Museum Advisory Council was convened on:

Date: **July 16, 2026**

Time: **11:00am**

Location: **Virtual, via Zoom**

Members Present: Jim Ballinger, Brian Gootee, Sen. David Gowan, Rep. Gail Griffin, Nicole LaSlavic, Les Presmyk, Stefanie Smallhouse, Steve Trussell

Members Absent: None

U of A Staff Present: Marta Bones, Richard Cate, Angela Person, Catie Sandoval

A quorum was established.

I. Welcome & Introductions

- Vice-chairperson Les Presmyk greeted everyone and began the meeting.
- Presmyk led the group through introductions, including new member, Brian Gootee, who has succeeded Phil Pearthree as State Geologist and Director of the Arizona Geological Survey, as well as Angela Person, the new Executive Director of Museums and Engagement within U of A's Office of Research and Partnerships.

II. AMMNRE Museum Updates from the Director

- There were no questions about the written report.

III. AMMNRE Museum Project Updates from Senior Advisor to U of A President

- Richard Cate, Senior Advisor to the University President for Operations, provided a presentation about renovations of the museum building at 1502 W. Washington St.
- Cate shared this first phase of construction and re-imagining the museum will set it up for success in fundraising, engagement, and future installation of exhibits.
- Cate confirmed the scope of work, which will include:
 - Exterior renovation, historic colors, window replacement, new roofing, handicap accessibility, and renovation of the first floor, specifically:

- Removal of non-historic interior walls and stairways, renovation of interior and lobby, construction of offices, meeting room, and restrooms, restoration of hardwood flooring, HVAC upgrades, and A/V capability.
- The scope of work does not include:
 - Restoration of the second floor, HVAC and electrical upgrades on second floor, new elevator, full-scale museum exhibits, lighting, and technology.
- Cate shared renderings of the south and east sides of the exterior and floor plans and renderings of the interior first floor improvements.
 - Cate noted the lobby will have flexible layouts for lectures, events, exhibits, and displays.
 - It can be an impactful first impression for visitors, donors, and U of A partners to experience an early version of the museum.
 - The gallery space will be available for events with a capacity of 300 people.
- Cate shared a summary of the Capital Project Sources and Uses. This includes \$12M in state capital funding and \$0.9M in accrued unspent operating funds.
 - The remaining unspent funds include \$1.6M in the Centennial Plate Fund and \$2.0M in accrued unspent operating funds.
- Cate also shared the schedule:
 - Design and construction drawings will be completed by September 2026.
 - The bidding process will begin shortly after;
 - followed by groundbreaking and construction in late 2026;
 - to be completed in late 2027.
- There was also discussion about HB 2057, sponsored by Rep. Griffin, which incentivizes businesses with fleet vehicles to purchase the Centennial Plate; this should result in more revenue for the museum.

IV. Next Steps and Strategies to Support the Project Moving Forward

- Trussell made a motion to approve the plan to move forward; Sen. Gowan seconded.
 - The motion was approved with no opposition.
- There was discussion about fundraising and partnerships, including:
 - engaging the U of A Foundation to create a high-level fundraising plan;
 - materials to support the strategy and to share information with interested parties and potential donors;
 - the potential benefits of strategic partnerships with other museums;
 - re-engaging the Council's finance and donor development subcommittee.

- **Action Item**: Person and Bones to work with the U of A Foundation on a fundraising plan and timeline for next meeting.
- **Action Item**: U of A/Museum representatives will share an update about the museum at the AMA's annual meeting Nov. 3-5.

V. Discuss the Chair Position

- Chair Stefanie Smallhouse shared she is the new Executive Director for the U of A's Natural Resource Users Law and Policy Center.
 - Therefore, Smallhouse would like to step down as Chair to ensure the Council's work is not impeded by this new commitment.
- Discussion about a new chair followed, including who was interested; discussion concluded with a motion.
- Trussell moved to nominate Les Presmyk as Chair and Stefanie Smallhouse as Vice Chair.
 - The motion was approved with no opposition.
- There was also discussion about Advisory Council positions in general, including all the positions, which members fill which, and which remain open.
 - There was also a question about members' terms.
 - Presmyk has been in touch with the Governor's office recently about how best to facilitate the appointment of members to fill the open positions.
 - **Action Item**: Trussell, Presmyk, and Bones will meet in the coming week to discuss potential candidates and facilitate their application.
 - **Action Item**: Bones and Sandoval will review the Advisory Council statute to clarify terms of service for members.

VI. Future Meeting Dates and Items for Future Agendas.

- Discussion of the next meeting date, August 21, 9am – 10:30am included a potential conflict for one member.
 - **Action Item**: Members will review schedules and notify if other conflicts exist; if so, Bones and Sandoval will find an alternate meeting date.
- There was discussion of future agenda items including:
 - Fundraising Plan from Person and Bones
 - Updates regarding Bones and Sandoval's work drafting the museum's Collections Management Policy
 - Updates from Trussell regarding outreach related to the new bill that incentivizes the purchase of Centennial plates for fleet vehicles