

GRIGNON MANSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 19, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Gavin Schmitt, at 4:30 p.m. in the Municipal Services Building, Hydro View Room.

Roll Call

Present – Gavin Schmitt, Christina Crook, Lyle Hansen, Brian Schuh, John Moore, Bruce Werschem, Brian Buechel

Absent – Patty Brogan

Others in Attendance – Allison Engels

Public Appearances- N/A

Review/Approve Minutes from April 28, 2025 Meeting

Revisions requested.

Motion to approve Minutes, Werschem moves, Moore seconds, with revisions, Minutes approved.

Report from the City (Engels)

Friends voted to raise admission prices: Adult-\$9, Senior (62+)-\$8, Children aged 5 and under free, Children aged 6-17-\$5.

Events:

6-11-2025- kick off event, Little Chute Band beginning at 7:00 p.m. will have a 50/50 raffle and Culvers free ice cream scoops. Mansion will not be open for the event; however, gift shop will be open.

Background checks are in process for the Civil War reenactors, which are necessary as they stay on the grounds. The Civil War group made a \$100 donation for a training weekend held on the grounds the 1st weekend of May.

Updated information regarding the archeological dig: Several areas were dug/reviewed, approximately 900 artifacts found, preliminary notice sent and a final report will be completed. Pubic Works approved the project. It was confirmed that the Board did not approve the dig and the dig was conducted through sonar. The approximate 900 items found will need to be cataloged and provided to the State. The Board asked Engels if more exploration would be completed. Engels indicated more exploration is unknown at this time.

Park Project- Civic Engagement Class with Kaukauna High School will attend the committee meeting held on May 20, 2025 regarding fundraising. Moore will attend the meeting as well. Schmitt requested Moore ask the class to attend a Board meeting to discuss working together on options. Schuh indicated part of the project would be to display artifacts. The City also wants to know what is going on with the project as the City may be responsible to take care of the Park Project eventually. Werschem questioned how much area would the project take up and how is the area around the Maison impacted. Schuh indicated that on the Park Project website, there is not a footprint shown of the area. One option at this time is to tear down the current shelter and build a new shelter, the project would need area/buildings for slides, tubes, skates, etc. and this would be set back and not near the Mansion. Schmitt indicated that if the Park Project's area is further back, it may benefit the Mansion. Werschem requested that the Board should be informed regarding the status of the Park Project. Schuh indicated that school would be done for the year in approximately two (2) weeks so it may not be until fall to get any updates and may be with a different group of people. Schuh indicated he would provide any information he may learn.

Engels indicated the Friends group set a spring-cleaning date of June 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. This will include the Mansion and the gardens.

Report from Friends

No report

Discussion regarding whether the Chair of the Friends should attend the Board meetings and whether there was a specific requirement in the Bylaws. It was suggested a letter is sent to the Friends to invite them to the Board meeting. Engles indicated she would research the requirements for a Friend to attend the Board meeting. It was confirmed that Engels should send an invitation to the Friends group. Moore did confirm that the Ordinance indicates that the Board should have nine (9) members, two (2) being from the Friends. Discussion of what happens if the Board is not in compliance with the Ordinance.

Report from the Chair

Schmitt indicated he reached out to the former Chair regarding duties. It was confirmed the main duty is to facilitate the meeting, i.e. call it to order, etc. Schmitt will be leading three events through the library regarding the Grignon family on June 17th, July 15th and August 19th all beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Board discussed cross advertising the events on the Mansion Facebook events page.

Other Business

Summer Meetings:

Engels indicates it had been suggested previously to cancel summer meetings. The Board discussed this and indicated that summer meetings were important due to the number of events being held in the summer. The Board agreed to continue holding summer meetings.

Mansion Summer Open Hours:

Robust discussion regarding the 2025 summer open house hours. It was discussed that over the last several years, the open hours seemed to have decreased. Several reasons as to why were addressed including lack of volunteers, the role the former Director had and their need to be on site for each open weekend, lack of attendance at the scheduled open house times. One option discussed was to allow small groups to schedule an appointment time to tour the Mansion outside of the posted open hours so that the Mansion could hold tours with guaranteed attendance. It was decided to change the verbiage on the website to allow for small group appointments outside the listed open house hours. The lack of volunteers was discussed. There is a lack of volunteers everywhere. This discussion focused on the need for someone, or several people, to be at the Mansion during open hours even if no tours are scheduled which may deter people from volunteering; however, several on the Board indicated if a scheduled tour, outside of the standard hours was scheduled, they would be able to assist in completing a tour. Frankly, the lack of attendance does not attract volunteers to give up weekends of their time in the summer to sit at the Mansion with no tours to give. It was discussed that we could reach out to other historical sites in the area and put together a, "passport" of sorts to include several sites to visit in the area to attract more people to tour the Mansion. It was also discussed to reach out to businesses, Chamber of Commerce, etc. to include the Mansion as a possible event for a tour when they are hosting meetings and conferences. Discussion continued to advertising to get the Mansion known throughout the state and beyond, it appears that advertising is a Friends responsibility. It was confirmed that an AI search of things to do in Kaukauna returns the Mansion as the first event. It was discussed to try to have more of a social media presence and again to start including small groups by appointment. Engels pointed out there is availability to advertise at the Kaukauna Farmer's Market. At one point, the Friends did have tri-fold brochures made which were distributed to gas stations, motels, etc. in the area and surrounding areas.

Set Next Meeting Date and Location

Monday, June 16, 2025 beginning at 4:30 p.m. in the Hydro View Room.

Adjournment

Motion by Werschem Seconded by Hanson. Motion unanimously approved, with meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.