**Austin Genealogical Society**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**June 15, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Diane Harvey.

Board members present: Diane Harvey, Tracey Marcelo, Kris Murphy, Belinda Brouette, Ann Elbert, Richard Gruetzner, Pat Murphree, Elizabeth Price and Karen Liston.

**Minutes:** Elizabeth motioned for approval. Tracey 2nd and approved unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Audit was conducted June 3 at Ann’s home. Auditors were Janet Kres, Jim Gudenrath and Gayle Boyce. They found one discrepancy/question which Elizabeth was able to answer quickly. The auditors signed off on the annual audit. The auditors did note that they would prefer that the accounting records be kept in Excel rather than QuickBooks. Elizabeth and Ann noted that, while there is a major learning curve to understanding QuickBooks, once learned it works fine and AGS has utilized QuickBooks for many years. Changing now would be a major stress.

Elizabeth and Ann met and began going through the treasurer files given them by the previous treasurer, Erin Garcia. Using the protocol adopted by the board earlier this year, they are working to make sure there is a paper copy and electronic copy of all records that must be kept. Electronic copies will be on the shared drive organized for easy retrieval.

Elizabeth reported that we currently have $11,929.75 in the checking account and $15,591.44 in the savings account.

**Membership Update:**

Karen reported that membership increased by 10 in May. In the last month, in an attempt to discover why membership numbers had decreased from last year, Karen sent a survey to those who had not renewed their membership. Only about a dozen of those people responded out of over 60 surveys sent out. A couple of responses stated that they had moved out of state, felt they were enrolled in too many societies. Most responded that they had forgotten to renew and then went and renewed their memberships. Currently we have 163 total members, which is about 50 less than last year.

**Technology Corner:**

**Cemetery project:** Kris, with assistance from Tracey, has created a test page of one of the cemeteries data sets. She shared her screen to show everyone. Unanimous kudos from the group. Mindy has blessed the test page. Next steps for Kris are to meet with Mindy again to make sure that the embedding process maintains the format of the Google Sheet document. Mindy also has tools to help locate any problems in the various data sets. Kris also wants to seek assistance from the original sources of the data to look at problems to make sure data maintains integrity. She will also work on creating a template.

**Communicating Electronically with Members:** Belinda brought up the struggle we have been having with Yahoo and AOL email addresses not always receiving our newsletters when they are sent through Vertical Response. Board discussed looking into other free distribution options, like MailChimp and Constant Contact. Belinda noted that MailChimp will allow for animation and Utube videos to be included in newsletters/communications. Belinda will create a sample test communication piece and send to the board members, which includes Yahoo and AOL email addresses, to see if they are viable.

**Programs:**

Pat reported on upcoming programs. Virtual meetings for the remainder of 2023: June is Sydney Cruise Dixon with “Mapping Out Your Family History With Maps”. July is Diana Crissman Smith and “Documenting Your Sources”, September will be our own Pat and Diane with “Genealogy Travel”, and November is Cyndi Ingle with “Cyndi’s List In Practice”. In October (Sat. Oct. 21) we will have an in-person gathering at the German Heritage Center (on 10th St. near Red River) with Richard Guetzner presenting “German Migration Patterns”.

There was much board discussion on whether to have in-person gatherings at all. March (Texas State Cemetery) and May (Briscoe Center) were not well attended. It was noted that both of those events required quite a bit of walking and standing. In October it will be a sit-down presentation type of event. Virtual meetings have allowed us to procure presenters of very high caliber from anywhere in the world, impossible for in-person. The possibility of hybrid meetings where the members are in-person but the presenter is virtual was brought up as well. After much discussion, it was decided to revisit the issue after October’s in-person meeting. It was also brought up to create a poll during a virtual meeting to ask if they prefer virtual, would like in-person/hybrid, etc.

Karen reported that the Summer Seminar plans are moving along well. Saturday, August 26, 1:00-4:30pm, virtual, $55 registration fee. Karen gave Belinda all of the info about the seminar for inclusion in the newsletter and requested that she use that information to create an ad for ConferenceKeepers. We have been drawing a solid number of registrations (abt. 20) from ConferenceKeepers the past two years for the seminar. Discussion that $55 is higher than we have charged in the past, but that seems to be a common fee amount around the country. (And Diahan is expensive, but worth it!)

**Collaboration with other groups:**

Carver Genealogical Center: one person from Briscoe Center registered via the Carver.

Waco Library, Lock-In October 20: we will send invite offer out to members to sign up directly

TXSGS: Richard met Tony Hanson recently and they discussed idea of Texas genealogy societies cross-informing about their upcoming events. After some discussion, Diane and Belinda will work to reach out to societies on Facebook using info on the TXSGS member listing at their website.

**Upcoming board meetings:**

July 13

August 10

September 14

Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm