

# Minutes

## Laird Fine Arts Building Renovation Advisory Commission City of Marshfield/UWSP-Marshfield/Wood County

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**DATE**

August 19, 2026

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**TIME**

3:30 pm

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY**

Chair Donna Rozar

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### IN ATTENDANCE

Chair Donna Rozar, Assistant Chancellor for UWSP at Marshfield Dr. Anthony Andrews, Wood County Director of Zoning and Economic Development Jason Grueneberg, Marshfield Director of Economic Development James Lieven, UWSP Director of Economic Development Jenny Resch, Wood County Director of Facilities Reuben Van Tassel, and Project Manager Tom Zink. Dean of the UWSP College of Fine Arts and Communication Dr. Stuart Benkert and Theater Director for Marshfield and Wausau Kris Berge were present online via Zoom. Others present included Wood County Executive Lance Pliml (via Zoom) and Matt Polum.

### INTRODUCTION

Chair Rozar provided an icebreaker asking whether the commission members are homebodies or travelers and why. A quorum of five (5) was agreed upon for this advisor board. Quorum was established at 3:31 pm.

### HELEN CONNOR LAIRD THEATER RENOVATION OVERVIEW

Jason provided an overview of the Helen Connor Laird Theater renovation project. The project was made possible through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and 2023 Wisconsin Act 250. Wood County is the fiscal agent for this grant. Grant delays were resolved after direct engagement with the WEDC. The Laird Endowment Fund has committed up to \$400,000 to cover costs not eligible within the WEDC's grant, such as contingency costs which are included in the project budget. A non-specified fiscal match to the grant is still required from as part project after the governor dropped the initial match requirement. The goal is to close out the grant by the end of the 2027 calendar year. If the project extends into 2028, the county will need to pay for an additional audit.

Sherif Construction provided the current project estimates. The project budget is fixed and cannot exceed the allocated amount. Aesthetic improvements are to be prioritized for public enjoyment. Potential designers will provide refined cost estimates. The Helen Connor Laird Theater, art gallery, and lobby are priorities.

The commission will issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) to firms recommended by the board. Five (5) firms will be invited for interviews at the next meeting. An additional three (3) will be shortlisted. The commission hopes to select a

designer at the next meeting. James and Reuben noted that the commission needs to consider “Construction Manager at Risk” and “Construction Manager as Agent” due to Wisconsin law prohibiting a design-build approach.

## **BOARD DUTIES**

The commission hopes to meet every two (2) weeks in person with a Zoom option for those requiring one. A quorum of five (5) commission members was established for the LFABRAB. The UW Commission, which includes three (3) Wood County executives and three (3) City of Marshfield city councilpersons, is the campus landlord and has final say over project details. The LFABRAB is to provide specialized expertise on the theater renovation project at the behest of the UW Commission.

The commission plans to invite experts to future meetings to hear their professional input on the project, future capabilities, and the impacts on local communities. Dave Barbier, Director of Sustainability at UWSP, will attend the third meeting to present sustainability regulations relevant to the project. Other community stakeholders have already expressed interest in doing the same.

## **FIRST STEPS**

The commission hopes to hire a designer within two to three (2-3) weeks of this meeting. Jason will disperse a project synopsis to as many companies as the commission recommends. Five (5) of these will be invited for a design hearing and up to three (3) additional contacts will be placed on a short list of possible contacts. A RFQ will be sent out later this week. A two (2) week response timeline is expected to hear back from each contacted entity.

James suggested creating a shared digital project folder for the commission members. Wood County IT and Legal need to be consulted on the parameters, feasibility, and confidentiality requirements. The designer will dictate project management software.

Future meetings are planned for the workday with Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons are a firm “no” and Fridays are a strong possibility. There is potential for special meetings when a decision needs to be made quickly.

Donna and Dr. Andrews will provide quarterly updates on project progress to the UW Commission. Matt will compile meeting minutes and send them to Trent Miner, Wood County Clerk, to post on the county’s website.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9 at 2pm where the commission will hear from potential project designers. The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 pm.