

**OLIVE BRANCH SCHOOL PRESERVATION SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING REPORT
OCTOBER 11, 2023**

In accordance with the bylaws, the OBSPS Chair presents this annual written report to the Board of Trustees and makes it available to the general membership. The following report reviews the activities, decisions and other such information deemed important to the operations of the Society. Activities and meetings occurring this past 12 months included:

- The regularly scheduled Quarterly Trustee meeting was held on January 11, 2023. Among items discussed were grant application results. We were notified that we did not receive approval of our grant application through The Springfield Foundation, despite being encouraged to apply for a grant by its Executive Director (Suzie Carey) during a personal tour of the building. Equally disappointing, it was also reported that we received no response at all from the Della Selsor grant application. This was discouraging as we have received funds from them for several years, using monies to offset costs of brochures, mailings, web page updates, etc. On a more positive note, it was reported that we did receive approval for a grant from The Turner Foundation, in the amount of \$5,860.00. These funds will be used towards the restoration of the windows and door in the southwest classroom.
- Also during the January meeting, a “frank and honest discussion” was held regarding the future and direction of our restoration efforts. The statement was made that, it appears we are at a major turning point in our restoration efforts, and that a decision needed to be made regarding whether we can (in reality) continue, or not. Concerns include lack of funding from grant sources, fund raisers, alumni, benefactors, community members, etc., as well as the increasing aging of community members with potential interest in the building, as well as Trustees themselves, limiting the physical ability to do laborious work on the building. Adding to these concerns is the fact that we will soon be faced with major “big ticket” items such as plumbing, electric, heating and air conditioning, handicap accessibility – all of which far exceeds our current financial capabilities. After much discussion, it was agreed upon that we would (a) commit to the renovation expenses for the southwest classroom; (b) see what we can do with the limited funds we have (including exterior power washing, front entry drywalling and painting, and drywall and paint in the southeast classroom. At the end of 2023, assessment will be made as to the potential continuation of renovations.
- On April 13, 2023, Scott Suther and I met with BlindEye Restoration to begin the restoration process of the southwest classroom windows and exterior door. As in the case of the southeast classroom windows and door, as well as the main entry doors and windows, these items were removed and taken to BlindEye’s place of business, and the building properly secured.
- The regularly scheduled Quarterly Trustee meeting for April 12, 2023 was canceled, due to a lack of quorum. On April 18, 2023 a special “virtual” meeting was held, to discuss the OBSPS funds being held by The Springfield Foundation (\$5,000.00). These funds were deposited with them in 2017, in hopes of generating grant opportunities and/or outside donations, none of which have occurred. Given this, as well as the fact that we have received no interest or return on our funds in over 5 ½ years, a motion was made to withdraw the funds, in order that we may use them for renovation expenses. The motion passed unanimously, and funds were subsequently requested to be returned.

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- On May 1, 2023 a special “virtual” meeting was held to discuss the potential power washing of the building’s exterior. Prior to this meeting, I met with the owner of a local company (Eldon with Aqua Force) and obtained an estimate (\$1,800.00) for power washing the exterior of the building. In doing so, it is our hope that the majority of the peeling and flaking paint will be removed, facilitating our ability to get the exposed wood repainted. In addition, the stonework, fascia, and gutter exteriors will be cleaned. A motion was made to proceed with the power washing as proposed, and was unanimously approved.
- On June 5, 2023 Cyndie Gerken prepared and we submitted a grant application to the Della Selsor Trust in the amount of \$3,144.00. This grant request was for printing and distributing our brochure, for invitations to an event (Open House), and for the maintenance of our web site throughout 2024. We did not receive any funding last year, but we decided to apply again.
- On June 28 and 29, 2023, the restored exterior door and windows from the southwest classroom were installed by BlindEye Restoration. As with the restoration of the southeast classroom windows and door, and the main entry doors and windows, the renovation and installation has made a marked improvement of the entire front of the building.
- On July 5, 2023, Scott Suther, Alec Ashbaugh, and I met with Aqua Force at OB. On that date, the entire exterior of the building was power washed. As was hoped, the majority of the peeling and flaking paint did come off during the process. Note: In addition to providing protective plastic to “catch” the flaked paint for cleanup, Alec donated his labor, as well as that of two of his workers to assist with the cleanup process. This was greatly appreciated!
- On July 12, 2023, a “Meet and Greet” meeting was held in lieu of the regularly scheduled Quarterly Trustee meeting, and was held at the Olive Branch School. In addition to the Trustees, members of the Medway Area Historical Society were invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to view past and most recent renovations to the building. At this meeting, Herman Schiller of the Medway Area Historical Society presented OBSPS with a check in the amount of \$1,400.00, to pay for the entire cost of the most recently completed power washing. OBSPS is most grateful for this very generous donation.
- Following our July 12th meeting, I met with a couple of potential parties, regarding the potential exterior painting of OB. Given their current commitments, none were able to commit. In discussing this with Trustee Alec Ashbaugh, Alec has offered to do the painting. Basically, I have offered that OBSPS would pay for the cost of the paint, and the cost of his two helpers. No timeline has been set for this to happen, but should be by next summer.
- On August 15, 2023 Cyndie Gerken prepared and electronically submitted a grant application to The Turner Foundation. The grant request was for \$5,760.00 (80% of the total amount of the \$7,200.00 estimate) for the dry walling and painting of the SE classroom and front foyer. The final report for the 2022-23 grant award is due on November 9, 2023.

As year-end 2023 approaches, my initial concerns of viability continue. Grant opportunities and donations have been minimal, in relation to the overall picture of what will be needed to see the project to fruition. As we enter into the 16th year since the inception of this organization, and given the continued “seniority” of the group, I believe that we continue to be at critical crossroads. In my opinion, it will most certainly be a time for introspection for all.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Leathley, Chairperson
Cyndie Gerken, Vice Chairperson
OBSPS Board of Trustees