

**The Governance Committee helps the Board of Directors develop bylaws, policies and procedures of use to the Historical Society in the pursuit of its mission. It also proposes candidates for election to the Board and monitors implementation of the strategic plan.**

The Governance Committee has continued to help the Historical Society further its organizational development, but lately that work has gone beyond routine duties such as recruiting new board candidates and recommending bylaw changes. This spring, the committee also had to consider how the organization could become more agile in a time of crisis.

As Covid-19 took hold in March, the Governance Committee contributed to discussions that led to the board's creation of successive committees intended to guide and speed the Historical Society's response to the pandemic. The first, a Covid-19 Response Committee was formed that month. It was replaced in May when the board established an Executive Committee to address not only the pandemic, but also other emergencies and urgent issues. Working closely with staff, the new Executive Committee approved postponement of the season's exhibit, closure of the Grindle House and Abbott School to the public and expansion of the Historical Society's walking tours. The Executive Committee also served as a forum for initial discussion on how the Historical Society can substantively address issues of racial injustice highlighted by the May 25<sup>th</sup> killing of George Floyd. (See the Executive Director's report posted on this site.)

With the guidance of board member Howard Lowell, meanwhile, the Governance Committee proposed bylaw changes allowing remote membership voting in the election of members of the board of directors and the postponement of the annual meetings during declared emergencies. The revisions, approved by the board in June, have allowed the Historical Society to delay an in-person membership meeting until next year and to hold this year's vote on new directors both by mail and electronically amid concerns about Covid-19 transmission.

This work did not prevent the Governance Committee from making progress on a variety of more typical organizational-development fronts—a prime one being the recruitment of board prospects as part of the ongoing implementation of term limits. On the slate for this year's election are three outstanding candidates endorsed by the board in June: Kelly Gualtieri, John Mitchell and Marc Pelletier. (See the bios of Kelly, John and Marc posted on this site.) Sadly, term limits also will mean the departure in August of two superb directors—Brooke Tenney and

Jack Macdonald. Both former presidents of the board, Brooke and Jack led the Historical Society through a time of remarkable achievement.

Jack, a board member since 2008, served as Vice President in 2012 and President during 2013-15—a period in which the Grindle House was restored to create the exceptional CHS staff offices, reading room and collections-storage facility housed there today. He also led the Historical Society in co-hosting the spectacular 2015 visit to Castine of *Hermione*, a replica of the frigate that brought the Marquis de Lafayette to America in 1780 with news that France would back the colonies against Britain. Jack's wise and able leadership contributed in no small way to the success of both initiatives.

Brooke joined the board in August 2009, becoming Vice President in 2013 and serving a two-year term as President from the Fall of 2015 to the Fall of 2017. Her achievements included leading the board in the drafting of an ambitious strategic plan and, crucially, helping ensure that the document did not gather dust. The plan called for deepening the Historical Society's collaboration with other community organizations and the town government to unlock Castine's historical resources, implementing board term limits and, maybe most importantly, recruiting and hiring the organization's first-ever executive director. Brooke's energy, thoughtfulness, dedication and patience were critical not only to the plan's adoption, but also to its ongoing implementation—by no means a guarantee when it comes to strategic plans!

The Governance Committee during the past year also proposed a staff performance-review and compensation policy, as well as formal criteria for the appointment of honorary directors. The board approved both measures and put the latter to immediate use in June, naming Lynne Dearborn and Ruth Scheer as honorary directors in recognition of their combined 41 years of outstanding board service.

Individually and in combination, Lynne and Ruth have been exemplars of the thoughtful and productive leadership that over the decades has built the Historical Society both in size and capability. Together, they have orchestrated three local House and Garden Tours, drawing throngs of visitors to the town and generating substantial funds for the Society's programs in the process. (Another Dearborn- and Scheer-planned Tour, on hold due to the pandemic, has been rescheduled for July 22, 2021, so stay tuned for details!)

Meanwhile, each has contributed to the Historical Society in myriad ways on her own—and continued doing so since rotating off the board in 2018. Lynne, a board member for 18 years as well as an exhibit docent, has served on a range of standing committees, helping to propel each with incisiveness and humor. She also was a member of the search committee that found the Historical Society its first and current executive director, Lisa Simpson Lutts.

Ruth, for her part, has contributed enormously to the Historical Society's development as a director and through wide-ranging committee service that included chairing the executive director search committee. Ruth's keen intellect, excellent judgment and extraordinary devotion to the organization have done a great deal to keep the Historical Society on a constructive course as it works to bring Castine history to life.

### **Governance Committee Members**

George Hatch, Chair

Ellen Benjamin

Susan Hatch

Brooke Tenney\*

Lisa Simpson Lutts, staff

\* Member through August 2020