

**Wayzata Historical Society**  
**on behalf of**  
**Lake Minnetonka Area Historical Societies**  
**Request for Proposal (RFP)**

Services: Consulting services to develop options for Lake Minnetonka area historical organizations to consolidate or form a formal alliance

Closing Date: August 17, 2020 at 4:00 PM

Contact: Aaron J. Person

**Purpose**

Six Lake Minnetonka area historical organizations (Deephaven Historical Society, Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, Minnetonka Historical Society, Museum of Lake Minnetonka, Westonka Historical Society and Wayzata Historical Society) are seeking a consultant to help develop options regarding how they consolidate or form a formal alliance. In the remainder of this document the participating organizations will be referred to as LMHS.

**Background Information**

The settlement of the Lake Minnetonka area began in 1853. Lake Minnetonka is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest lake in Minnesota and supports a population of approximately 75,000.

Six historical organizations connected to Lake Minnetonka are partnering to hire a consultant to conduct a viability study of a possible consolidation and/or alliance. The partners are Deephaven Historical Society (DHS), founded in 2000; Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (ELMHS), founded in 1972; Minnetonka Historical Society (MHS), founded in 1995; The Museum of Lake Minnetonka (MLM), founded in 2004; Wayzata Historical Society (WzHS), founded in 1982; and Westonka Historical Society (WHS), founded in 1966.

All six partners are entirely staffed by volunteers except for ELMHS, which employs a half-time executive director. All partners have a common mission to collect, preserve, and publicly share the history of Lake Minnetonka and their respective areas. All partners maintain historical archives and host public programs to achieve their missions. Several also operate museums which are open to the public (ELMHS, MHS, WzHS, and WHS), and two operate historically significant structures (MLM and WzHS).

The redundancy of the partners' collecting practices has put them in competition with one another for resources such as artifacts, volunteers, donors, members, and visitors. It also means

that the interpretation of Lake Minnetonka history is fragmented, making research more tedious and time consuming. In terms of research, a consolidation or better way of sharing resources would benefit not only the organizations, but all the communities that they serve.

Furthermore, all six of these organizations depend on a small number of active volunteers to function and would struggle to function effectively without these key individuals. The threat of volunteer fatigue raises concern about the ability to continue valuable research and public programming. Comments from the membership of each partner organization and the public at large have indicated that there is widespread concern about the long-term sustainability of each respective organization without a reliable supply of active, dedicated and knowledgeable volunteer leaders. These challenges should be addressed now while the partner organizations are in a good position to do so, with board enthusiasm, financial stability, and volunteers willing to do the work.

Conversations among the partner organizations have brought them to the realization that they are all facing similar challenges and that the barriers between them are artificial, as the history of Lake Minnetonka has always defied municipal boundaries. Through a consolidation and/or strategic alliance, short and long-term planning for sustainability can be developed. This would improve the ability to share resources, public access, and awareness of local history; create a stronger network for documentation; and streamline public research. The individual representatives from all of the partner organizations have conducted extensive research and discussed the problems and possible solutions and have determined that the best course of action is hiring a professional consultant with experience in strategic alignment.

This project is entirely funded through a Heritage Partnership Grant of \$52,000 administered by the Minnesota Historical Society. As such, the project must be carried out in accordance with the provisions outlined by the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants manual. The Wayzata Historical Society (WzHS) is the lead representative and recipient of the grant.

### **Key Deliverables**

- True program cost analysis
- A report with options for consolidation, forming a formal alliance, or maintaining the current independent structure. Estimated costs and resources, both for transition and on an ongoing basis should be included in the analysis
- A risk assessment, high-level schedule and high-level transition plan for each option presented
- The data (e.g. interview notes, industry data, financial modeling) to support each option presented
- Presentation of the report to the Board of Directors (BOD) of each LMHS organization (note: would consider a single meeting with representatives from each BOD attending)
- A brief bi-weekly report of project progress

## **Scope of Services**

The scope of the project will be to analyze all information pertinent to determining the viability of a consolidation of the partner organizations, the partner organizations forming a strategic alliance, or the partner organizations maintaining their current independent structure. This analysis should include the following areas:

- Gathering input from participating organizations' BODs, members, communities, and financial supporters regarding their perspectives on consolidation or forming a formal alliance
- Museum facilities, consolidated or community based
- Archives, space needs and cost estimates for a consolidated archives
- Public Programs, centralized or community based
- Governance, how to consolidate the BODs, by-laws, articles of incorporation
- Finances (transition costs and long-term viability)
- Membership, effects of consolidation on loss/gain in membership
- Staffing, need for hired (part-time or full-time) and/or volunteer
- Administrative functions, need for hired (part-time or full-time) and/or volunteer
- Communications, newsletter, website costs/savings

## **LMHS Project Support**

LMHS has developed a structure to support the review of consolidation and/or strategic alliance efforts. A Joint Committee has been set up to oversee the entire effort. This group will consist of a representative from each LMHS partner historical society. They will be the primary communication conduit with each BOD and provide general direction for the overall project. The Joint Committee will provide the consultant with the means to set up meetings with various groups, find needed information from each LMHS partner organization, be the initial review group for findings/potential options and provide daily guidance/support for the project. The consultant's bi-weekly progress report will be sent to the Joint Committee.

## **Schedule**

Key dates are as follows:

- August 3, 2020: RFP distributed
- August 4, 2020 to August 17, 2020: Aaron Person will field questions from potential vendors regarding the RFP (and ensure any significant clarifications are sent to all potential vendors)
- August 17, 2020: RFP responses due to the Wayzata Historical Society (no late submissions will be accepted)
- August 31, 2020: Consultant start date.
- July 30, 2021 projected completion of the consulting project

## **Consultant Selection**

When selecting the winning bidder LMHS will consider the following in selecting the winning bidder (note: information from each bidder is requested in these areas):

- Significant experience in integrating nonprofit organizations (experience with historical organizations is highly desirable)
- Excellent communication skills
- A reasonable plan for collecting information from various constituencies within the current constraints of the COVID 19 situation
- Excellent financial analysis and modeling skills
- Strong experience in synthesizing and distilling a large amount of information from different perspectives into actionable plans
- Cost of services
- Financial and organizational stability within the consulting organization

### **References and Project Personnel**

Each bidder shall submit two references for similar projects they have completed. These references shall include a brief summary of the project and a contact name (LMHS is planning on following up with all references).

Bidders shall submit the names, curriculum vitae, and projected roles of each person that will be part of the project.

### **Project Costs**

Each proposal shall include the projected cost of the project and details supporting development of the project cost estimate. Individuals hired for this project are considered contract employees and not historical society employees. No sick leave, vacation, or medical benefits are provided for this work. Contracted individuals will be responsible for their own state and federal income taxes.

### **Proposal Evaluation and Selection Process**

- Shortly after the submission deadline, the Joint Committee comprised of a representative from each of the six partner historical societies will review all proposals. At its discretion, the Joint Committee may elect to conduct interviews with prospective consultants as part of the selection process.
- The Joint Committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:
  - Consultant's Statement of Solution
  - Project understanding, approach, and coordination methods
  - Previous experience with similar projects
  - Bidder and sub-contractor qualification, technical expertise, knowledge, and experience
  - Schedule and Work Plan
  - Fee Proposal
  - Any other factor(s) that might aid in selecting the best candidate.

- Upon approval by the Joint Committee, the successful candidate will be notified and a consultant agreement will be finalized by the President of the Wayzata Historical Society, lead representative for the grant. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified after the consultant agreement has been executed. Work on this project is projected to commence no later than Monday, August 31, 2020.
- The Wayzata Historical Society and/or the Joint Committee reserves the right to cancel the RFP at any time, or for any reason that is in the best interests of the organization. The Wayzata Historical Society and the Joint Committee also reserves the right to reject proposals based on the evaluation of submitted materials, to accept other than the lowest cost proposal, and to negotiate the specified dollar amount or any portion thereof. The selection of the successful bidder is not based solely on low bid, but on the candidate that will best accomplish the objectives of the project.

### **Proposal Submission**

Consultants/firms shall submit 6 (six) copies of their proposal to:

Wayzata Historical Society

620 Rice Street

Wayzata, MN 55391

Sealed submissions shall be received no later than 4:00 PM CST on August 17, 2020. All proposals must be signed by a duly authorized individual. Submitted proposals will not be unsealed until after the deadline. No public bid opening will be held. No applicant will be compensated for submission of a proposal or for any time or services provided as part of the proposal, evaluation, or negotiation process. Faxed or emailed submissions will not be accepted.

**RFP Contact**

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:

Aaron Person

763-486-3134

Aaronjperson630@gmail.com

**List of Acronyms**

BOD – Board of Directors

LMHS – Lake Minnetonka Historical Society (the placeholder name of a potential consolidation of the participating historical organizations)

MNHS – Minnesota Historical Society

RFP – Request for Proposal

Organizations participating in the study:

DHS – Deephaven Historical Society

ELMHS – Excelsior Lake Minnetonka Historical Society

MHS – Minnetonka Historical Society

MLM – Museum of Lake Minnetonka

WzHS – Wayzata Historical Society

WHS – Westonka Historical Society