

Minutes
Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees Meeting
September 22, 2017 9:00 a.m. - Lecture Hall

Members Attending:

Richard P. Bell, Eric Bond, David Bushman, Kevin Callanan, Erik Curren, Joseph Fitzgerald, Dianne Fulk, Clifford Garstang, Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., William Hausrath, John Higgs, R. Steven Landes, Frank Nolen, Kenneth Plum, Peggy Sheets, William Sibert, Emmett Toms, Paul Vames, Kenneth Venable, Frank Wagner

Members Absent:

Nwachukwu Anakwenze, Terry Austin, Benjamin Cline, Pamela Fox, William Stanley

Guests Attending:

Ned Ruby, Justin Reiter, Norman Smiley, Elizabeth Griffin

Staff Attending:

Eric Bryan, Acting Director, Merritt Schoonover, Director of Administration, Joe Herget, Marketing Director, Lydia Volskis, Senior Administrative Coordinator, Cliff Edwards, Facilities Manager, Andrew Richardson, Director of Education, Tom Hay, Director of Interpretation, Alexandra Szucs, Associate Director of Education, Mary Kate Claytor, Associate Director of Interpretation, Dorette Sobolewski, Research Coordinator

I. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Paul Vames called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and each attendee introduced him or herself. Mr. Vames congratulated new appointees Dr. Eric Bond and Mr. William Hausrath, as well as re-appointees Dr. Pamela Fox and Mr. William Sibert.

The minutes of the April 2017 meeting were approved as distributed.

II. AGENCY HEAD REPORT

Acting Director Eric Bryan reported that the Museum has turned in a strong performance over the past few months with a 13% increase in visitation over FY17. An especially good example is Memorial Day which was a “pay what you will” day and welcomed 2,700 guests. An important part of the visitation growth has been education visits and outreach programs; in FY17 the Museum reached a record 32,929 on field trips or at outreach programs. There has been a 119% increase in education visitors since FY2012. Mr. Bryan thanked the Foundation for their strong support for field trips and outreach programs via grants and special fundraisers throughout the year.

Mr. Bryan said that in considering the Museum's success in recent years, he realizes that while new exhibits are important and greatly enjoyed by the public, the Museum's staff and their training, knowledge and interpretive skills are what sets our Museum apart from others. When the Museum staff are empowered to engage in creative thinking, advance planning and risk-taking to try new ideas, good solutions and programs are the result. He is now encouraging that staff to keep the momentum going, and said that smart and enthusiastic staff need encouragement, attention, direction, and resources to continue to operate at a high level.

He introduced new Director of Interpretation Tom Hay, who has many years of experience in living history and management. Mr. Hay will conduct an assessment of current skill levels and resources and offer a plan for revamped basic and ongoing training for Winter and beyond. Mr. Bryan said that he and others will work to prepare comprehensive research content that is accessible to all staff and volunteers and can also be used in a variety of presentation platforms and media.

Mr. Bryan reported that 79 people took their Oath of Citizenship on Tuesday September 19th in the Cochran Pavilion. Museum employee Jean-Claude Hatungimana received his citizenship and offered a moving keynote address. Mr. Bryan thanked Delegate Bell for his role in acting as Master of Ceremonies for the Museum at the event. He reminded the Board that the Smithsonian "Museums on Main Street" exhibit on Waterways will be installed in the Visitor's Center from October 21 – December 23. There will be a special reception on Thursday October 20th for Members of both Boards and other invited guests; invitations will be sent next Monday. He thanked the Trustees for their support of the Museum, and the time that they spend on Museum projects.

A. Budget

Director of Administration Merritt Schoonover reviewed the Statement of Appropriations, Expenditures, Allotments, and Revenues for All Funds as of June 30, 2017. She reviewed several areas of interest and pointed out the \$60,000 in insurance revenue for the Irish Farm roof fire. That amount will appear in only the current fiscal year.

She reviewed the Year-to-date Expenditures by Service Area for All Funds as of June 30, 2017. This chart shows the areas in which most Museum expenditures occur; the top expenditure is personnel costs. She noted that as funds allow, the Museum is able to hire extra wage staff and to give modest merit based increases.

The FY17 Revenue Status Report as of June 30, 2017 includes admission and annual pass sales totals, record annual pass sales in April of 2017, substantially increased private donations on "pay-what-you-will" days, the recent increase in cost for a student field trips, extra paid workshops and various other revenue sources. Overall revenue totaled \$783,900, an increase of 13% over last fiscal year's total of \$630,000.

Mrs. Schoonover continued by reviewing the FY2017 Diversification of Revenue by Percentage chart, which depicts the areas from which the Museum receives revenue. Diversification of revenue streams acts as a hedge against bad weather or slow visitation days. Delegate Landes

asked for clarification on the main revenue stream; Mrs. Schoonover said that visitation income is still the largest revenue stream. Senator Wagner asked about the timeline for the Museum receiving revenue from the front property development; Mr. Vames responded that it may be a year or two before the Museum realizes any income.

She reviewed the “Pay What You Will Days” Revenue and Visitation Comparison Chart, which compares the various “pay what you will” day’s donation totals with the general admission totals for those same days in the previous year. The “pay what you will” day’s show a strong revenue increase over the general admission days. Examples include Independence Day when the Museum hosted about 2,000 guests and garnered about \$7,000 in revenue from donations and concession sales, and the Lammas Fair Day in early August when the Museum welcomed 998 guests and took in \$2,600 in revenue. Mr. Vames noted that on Memorial Day in 2017, which was a “pay what you will” day, the Museum hosted 2,700 people – a record!

Mrs. Schoonover concluded her report by reviewing the Comparison of Monthly Revenue by Fiscal Year for All Funds as of June 30, 2017.

B. Capital Projects and Maintenance Reserve

Facilities Manager Cliff Edwards gave a definition of both Maintenance Reserve and Capital Funds. Maintenance Reserve funds are given by the state to agencies to pay for maintenance projects that repair, replace and extend the useful life of state-owned fixed-assets. This includes projects that correct safety problems. Capital Projects must be approved by the Governor and General Assembly and are sometimes funded by the state. These are projects involving new construction, substantial improvements and renovations, and major equipment purchases.

He reported that Museum projects which have recently been completed with Maintenance Reserve funds are upgrades to the traffic triangle at the top of the hill just outside of the Visitors Center, pest control treatments on all historic buildings, a new tram/cart parking dock outside of the Visitor’s Center and daub work on the English Farmhouse.

Future Maintenance Reserve Projects planned for completion later this year will include sill replacement on the German House, roof and siding (historic – on the gable ends) replacement on the 1820’s and 1850’s American Houses as well as roof replacement the 1850’s American Barn, new drainage, paving and regrading of the Octagonal Barn parking areas, and adding vendor electrical capacity and parking in the main parking lot (for food trucks etc...).

Future Maintenance Reserve projects planned for next year include HVAC replacement in Dairy Barn 1, and consideration of replacement of the roofs of both Dairy Barns. Some work may be dependent upon the final decision regarding the final design of the Crossing Gallery.

Ongoing and future capital projects include submission of preliminary drawings for the Early American Industries Exhibit (Mill) to the Bureau of Capital Outlay Management by October 1, with construction to begin in the Spring. Another capital project is the completion of the 1820’s Barn;

the barn already has a completed foundation and the building permit has been approved. Construction on the barn is expected to be completed in December. Lastly, pre-planning funds have been approved for the Crossing Gallery, and the Request for Proposal process is underway.

C. Marketing

Director of Marketing Joe Herget reviewed the visitation report, which depicted a year-to-date summary and a full year comparison of visitation totals. Delegate Landes asked about the causes of visitation increases, and noted that while the growing economy improves visitation numbers, it may not account for all of the increases. Mr. Herget said that diversification of programming and additional targeted marketing account for most of the increases. He continued that with more and improved products and services, stronger communications to target audiences the Museum should continue to see growth in both education and general visitation numbers. To date, FY18 visitation has increased by 24% over last year at the same time.

He reviewed several charts, the first showing a detailed view of visitation by groups such as general admission, school admission, and group admission as well as important events which brought strong visitation during particular months. Overall visitation increased by 41% in August, due largely to the success of the Lammas Fair, a new “pay what you will” day.

Mr. Herget reviewed a chart showing visitation usage and sales, as well as a chart highlighting several new mobile apps under consideration to enhance the visitor’s experience at the Museum. The new apps would give Museum daily site and program information, mobile brochures, maps and other customer friendly features.

He described the current marketing communications strategy to reach priority segments of the target population with frequency. These target groups for marketing are educators and school groups, regional families with children, niche audiences such as festival attendees, reenactors and artisans among others, and tourists who arrive at the Museum while traveling through the area.

This Fall and Winter, the Museum will use radio/television, printed media, social media and education mailers and newsletters to communicate with its target audiences. Upcoming programs, exhibition and events include the Smithsonian Waterways exhibit, Oktoberfest, Halloween activities, the Christmas Market and Holiday Lantern Tours.

Mr. Sibert said that purchasing an annual pass is an excellent way to support the Museum. Mr. Vames complimented the Museum staff for their creativity in planning and offering the new programs.

III. EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION REPORTS

Director of Education Andrew Richardson reported that FY17 was a great year for education field Trips and outreach programs; the Museum served a record total of 32,929 students and teachers. Most of the schools visiting are regional, but increasingly the Museum is hosting schools from Northern Virginia, Richmond, Tidewater and even West Virginia. School field trips and outreaches have increased from a total of 15,032 in FY12 to FY17's total of 32,929.

He reviewed a chart depicting feedback and responses from teachers on field trips, in which 98% said that their Museum experience was "Good" or "Very Good". He also presented a chart depicting feedback from teachers on their classroom outreach experience, in which 100% said that their experience was "Good" or "Very Good".

Mr. Richardson described the Charles Fund, a grant through the American Frontier Culture Foundation which supported 13,088 students in FY17 for field trips and outreach programs. Many of these students might not otherwise be able to visit the Museum. Overall the Foundation gave the Museum \$159,444 to support field trips and outreach program as well as bus transportation and in some cases lunches and gift bags. Of this total about \$65,000 was given by the Charles Fund and other grants and the rest was raised by the Foundation at various fundraisers.

The forecast for school group attendance in FY18 is strong, as recently reservations have been heavy and constant, with numerous new bookings in progress. As of September 20, about 14,700 have visited or are scheduled to visit during FY18. Fall Homeschool Day welcomed 769 visitors, and there are over 13,500 bookings for school field trips already throughout FY18.

Summer camps were successful in 2017, with the younger group (5-8 years) at 94% capacity and the older group (9-12 years) at 92% capacity. The Museum was able to offer 28 scholarships to area students who might otherwise not be able to attend. Funds are available for next summer as well with leftover funds from this year and funds from the September 9th Frontier 5k and Family Fun Day fundraiser.

Mr. Richardson described two special evening programs later in September when Augusta County students and their parents may visit the Museum between 5 and 8 p.m. for special activities and to receive free books. The event is sponsored by the Augusta County schools to promote reading. He also discussed the toddler program progress and the holiday workshops planned for later this year.

Education department plans for FY18 include continuing to distribute the new education poster/mailer, educator e-newsletter, education updates on Facebook, continuing work on SOL programs, as well as new program development and outreach programs to other organizations.

Mr. Richardson gave staffing totals for both full-time and part-time staff, and noted that the available staff must cover eleven exhibits, work with school groups, and conduct special programs. He also reviewed the Museum's collection of farm animals. Mr. Sibert reminded the group of the teacher from Henrico who stated that her students enjoyed the Museum more than Jamestown. Mr. Richardson thanked the Foundation for providing funds for disadvantaged students to visit the

Museum, and said that all Board Members should support the Foundation in its work. Mr. Vames asked what types of things can be done to support the Foundation; Mr. Reiter replied that fundraisers, grants and donations are all good options.

Mr. Richardson said that the long-term goal for student attendance is 40,000, but that for the next year, he is hoping to host about 35,000.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

No items of Old Business were discussed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report from the Foundation

American Frontier Culture Foundation President Ned Ruby reported that the Foundation is on solid financial ground, and that the Finance and Executive Committees are working hard to plan for the future. The new FASB (Financial Accounting Standards Board) accounting rules for all non-profits go into effect in 2018 and are mandatory; the Foundation has implemented these rules this fiscal year, a year earlier than required. There will now be only two “pools” of money, restricted and unrestricted. This will allow the Foundation to redistribute small amounts of leftover funds from previously designated and finished projects.

In other Foundation news:

- The Foundation did not meet its Annual Fund goal this year, but raised an amount equal to last year’s goal.
- The annual Beach Party is the Foundation’s premier fundraising event, and this year netted \$37,500. Many Foundation Board Members assisted in planning the event.
- Foundation Board Members also sold adult beverages at the American Roots Music Series this summer, also as a fundraiser.
- The real estate committee may have located a tenant for 216 Frontier drive; the committee especially thanks Alan Garrison and Boyce Brannock for their work on behalf of the Foundation.
- Mr. Reiter thanked Mr. Ruby and the Foundation Board Members for their work; the Board now has 21 Members, and all are able to serve on a committee.
- Mr. Reiter said that Mr. Richardson asked if the Foundation could fund an outreach program to all 3-5th grades in Campbell County; the Foundation was able to raise the funds with help from local Campbell County business leaders. This could be the model for bringing former Foundation Board Member Ed Eisenhart’s vision to fruition, that of having

every school child in the state of Virginia be served by the Museum either on a field trip or outreach, free of charge. The Foundation might be able to work within localities to secure funding for such trips. Mr. Reiter estimated that it may take several years for the project to come to completion. Mr. Callanan asked if the Foundation would build an endowment or seek funding each year for the project; Mr. Reiter said that he would likely seek funds on an annual basis.

- Mr. Reiter reported that the Foundation often struggles to compete for grants, as it has substantial assets.
- Mr. Reiter announced the capital campaign for the English Farm Barn; detailed information is available in the Fall newsletter.
- The Foundation's goal is always to serve the outcome, not specifically the profit totals, and is focused on the needs of the Museum.
- Senator Hanger asked if the students attending the Museum as a part of Foundation grants are included in the visitation totals. Mrs. Schoonover replied that they are included and described how the grant funds are distributed and accounted for. Senator Hanger said that the Museum is very fortunate to have the Foundation's assistance and said that it would be good to be able to show within the reports how many students attended on Foundation grants.

VI. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

At 11 a.m. Mrs. Sheets said:

I move that the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia enter closed session for:

Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community, pursuant to the exemption in Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(5), and related to the potential sale or lease of real property conveyed by the Museum to the American Frontier Culture Foundation.

AND

Discussion of personnel matters pursuant to the exemption in Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1) pertaining to the resignation of the Executive Director and appointment of an interim Executive Director.

Delegate Landes seconded the motion, there was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously. Guests and staff Members left the room at 11 a.m.

At 11:28 Mrs. Sheets said:

I move that the Board enter open session.

The motion was seconded by Delegate Landes, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Guests and staff re-entered the room at 11:28.

Mrs. Sheets said:

Whereas, the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3712, that the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge:

(1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law, and

(2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened

were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Sibert, there was no discussion and each Member affirmed verbally that no other matters had been discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Friday April 20th, 2018 at 9 a.m. in the Lecture Hall

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.