

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee – Administration Building Conference Room
Draft Minutes
December 10, 2019 9 a.m.

Members Attending:

Ned Ruby, Peggy Sheets, William Sibert, Paul Vames. Ken Venable

Members Absent

Pamela Fox, Cliff Garstang, Emmett Hanger, Emmett Toms

Guests Attending:

Mark Schorsch

Staff Attending:

Eric Bryan, Lydia Volskis, Joe Herget, Davis Tierney, Andrew Richardson, Cliff Edwards, Susan Grable, Beth Scripps, Megan Newman

Call to Order and Welcome

Peggy Sheets called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed attendees

Approval of November 2019 Minutes

The minutes of the November 12 meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Agency Report

Dr. Megan Newman

Executive Director Megan Newman reported that while we still have the holiday lantern tours to present, staff are beginning to transition into winter work mode. This includes using the time for trainings, mentoring, planning ahead for the upcoming school season and maintenance activities. The visiting team for our reaccreditation application will be here in March so there will be some planning for that as well. The team will want to meet with some Members of the Executive Committee while they are here.

Mrs. Sheets said that she and Dr. Newman will plan an overview of upcoming projects for the Legislators on our Board when they gather in Richmond for the next General Assembly Session. The upcoming session is a sixty-day long session. They will also be in contact with Secretary Atif Qarni regarding our initiatives. Dr. Newman will be in Richmond on Wednesday for various agency head meetings and a reception at the Governor's mansion.

A. Education and Interpretation

Director of Education Andrew Richardson reported that for the fiscal year to date 12,206 education and outreach visitors have been served, and that approximately 1,000 others have not yet been counted as those schools have been billed and the students will be counted when payment arrives. Dr. Newman said that we are working to come up with a solution that works within our existing reservations and point of sale systems to allow for updated reporting and a clearer connection between visitation and revenue.

Mr. Richardson continued that Lantern Tours will begin this Thursday and all preparations are on track. The Museum will also host a Winter Home School Day this Friday; this event has not been successful over the past several years due to weather and extremely cold temperatures. If this year is again unsuccessful we may choose to just offer Spring and Fall Home School Days in the future.

Mr. Richardson is busy making school reservations for the Spring season.

Director of Interpretation Davis Tierney reviewed a one-page summary of plans for the Interpretation Department this winter. He, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Puckett prepared the plan, and he will prepare a more detailed version for distribution to everyone soon. The overview divides staff activities by public activities such as the every-other-weekend mini events on site and private “in-house” activities such as tram and other operational trainings.

B. Finance/Budget update

Operations Manager Eric Bryan reviewed the Museum’s operating Budget by Service area as of 12/9/19. He reminded the group that the funds listed in the 00239 fund are funds that, in part, have not been earned yet. He said that due to the transition in the Fiscal Technician position some reports and tasks have been slower than usual. He also reported that Cardinal, the state’s accounting system had been taken offline for four days, which is unusual and caused further backlogs.

Director of Finance Susan Grable said that she will begin preparing reports using the same template that has been used, but is open to suggestions and requests from the Committee regarding new information to add or a different format.

Mrs. Sheets said that Ms. Grable has a great deal of state finance experience and that she has asked Ms. Grable to give continuous feedback and risk assessments on all of the agency finance functions as she gets to know the systems. Mrs. Sheets said that new technology may be needed to address some of the agency’s challenges and that the Committee will be supportive of these needs. Mr. Sheets noted that many staff are doing a number of other jobs and tasks in addition to their primary responsibilities. Ms. Grable pointed out that even though the Museum is a small agency, we still have the same mandates and requirements as a large agency in terms of finance and technology

.and other areas. Dr. Newman said that there is always the possibility of a budget amendment for some requests during the session in 2020.

C. Marketing

Marketing Director Joe Herget reviewed the marketing and visitation reports with five months of data for the current fiscal year. He reviewed the segment breakouts and reiterated Mr. Richardson's point that we will try to ensure that reports are as timely as they can be even with some schools remaining uncouncted until they have paid their bill.

He continued that the Holiday Market has been scheduled for one day instead of two days this year which might mean a bit less visitation on that weekend but in the long term will result in a stronger event. We hosted thirty-two artisans this year on a nice sunny day and hope for more next time. He received positive feedback from the vendors this year.

Lantern Tours are 96% sold out with only about 50 tickets remaining.

Mr. Herget reviewed other sections of the Marketing report including a review of social media activity and the draft calendar of events for 2020.

IV. Foundation Report

Foundation Director Beth Scripps reported that:

- The Annual Fund is proceeding well and she is seeing some higher giving levels in some quarters
- The Winter newsletter is at the printer and will be sent next week; this theme is "Connections"
- She is working on school transportation and field trip grants with Mr. Richardson and on site Wifi plans with Mr. Richardson and Mr. Edwards.
- The Foundation is planning a reception for Shenandoah Society Members before the first Lecture Series event.
- Golf Tournament sponsorship letters will be sent in January for the May 1, 2020 event

Mr. Vames said that someone told him that they'd enjoy more social events for the two Boards as has been done in the past. Mr. Sibert wondered about an informal newsletter or social media listings on this topic.

Mr. Sibert complimented the recent annual Holiday party as being enjoyable and well done.

V. Old Business

A. Crossing Gallery update

Facilities Manager Cliff Edwards reported that the Museum and Department of General Services team interviewed five firms vying for the Crossing gallery contract. One firm was selected and will be posted by the end of the week; DGS will negotiate with them regarding the details of the contract. The contract to build the Mill is out for bid; bids are due back by early January. He will meet with Shentel soon regarding the installation of fiber-optic lines into the Museum; Dr. Newman pointed out that these new telecommunications lines will be a plus for the new building as well. He thanked Mr. Sibert for his reflections on the rocky soil in this area and how this will impact construction.

Mr. Sibert asked if Mr. Edwards expected any delays in the bid process for the Mill; Mr. Edwards said that he did not. Mr. Sibert continued that we should begin the process soon for planning the inner working of the mill, such as obtaining the millstone and other complex tasks. He suggested that we take advantage of the timeline to do some other preparatory work. Dr. Newman said that SPOOM (Society for the preservation of Old Mills) is interested in our project and will be helpful. Mr. Ruby asked if there is an end point to the Mill plan; Mr. Edwards said that there is not now but that there will be. Mrs. Sheets said that Mr. Bryan is working on a furnishing plan for the Mill and that this can be used to plan work for our woodworking volunteers as well as for fundraising. The Foundation will have two major fundraising focus points, the Mill and the Crossing Gallery.

Mr. Ruby asked if we have had any contact with other restored mills up and down the Valley; Mrs. Sheets said that we have not yet but plan to do so. Mr. Vames reminded the group about a recent offer to donate some mill works; Mrs. Sheets will follow up.

Mrs. Sheets said that we must also begin to plan narratives and other content for the Crossing Gallery's permanent exhibits; Dr. Newman noted that all of the firms interviewed have program development staff within their company which will be very helpful. Mrs. Sheets thanked all the staff for the nice party and thanked Ms. Volskis for organizing the event.

VI. New Business

A. Closed Session

At 10:04 a.m. Mr. Sibert said:

I move that the Executive Committee of 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.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Venable, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. All staff and guests left the room at 10:05.

At 10:30 a.m. Mr. Ruby said:

I move that the Committee enter open session.

Mr. Venable seconded the motion, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Vames said:

Whereas, the Executive Committee of 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 Executive Committee of 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 Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Sibert, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is set for Tuesday January 14, 2020

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.