

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee
Draft Minutes
April 11, 2018 9 a.m.

Members Attending:

Cliff Garstang, Joe Fitzgerald, Bill Sibert, Peggy Sheets, Paul Vames, Kenneth Venable

Members Absent:

Richard Bell, Pamela Fox, Emmett Hanger

Guests Attending:

Ned Ruby, President, American Frontier Culture Foundation

Staff Attending:

Eric Bryan, Interim Executive Director, Merritt Schoonover, Director of Administration, Lydia Volskis, Sr. Administrative Coordinator, Andrew Richardson, Director of Education, Joe Herget, Director of Marketing, Justin Reiter, Executive Director, American Frontier Culture Foundation, John Avoli, Commercial Development Coordinator

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Paul Vames, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

II. Approval of February 2018 Minutes

The minutes of the March 2018 meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Agency Head Report

Mr. Bryan reported that the first three months of 2018 have had a decline in attendance mainly sure to bad weather. Visitation decreased by 8% in February compared to last year and decreased by 12% in March compared to last year. However, Spring Home School Day on March 30 attracted over 1,000 guests and on Easter Saturday the Museum hosted about 875 guests. The Winter Outreach program to schools has also buoyed the attendance numbers over the winter. April is starting with strong visitation numbers; 575 guests visited on Easter Sunday.

This year's Lecture Series was a success, hosting between 50 and 70 people per evening. The first evening was cancelled due to bad weather, and will be rescheduled for May 25.

The Early American Industries Exhibit (Mill) has been funded for construction by the state and it is hoped that work can begin in October or November of this year. Pre-planning for the Crossing

Gallery will soon be underway; Mr. Bryan and others are working with Quinn-Evans firm to settle on their final price and what services the price will include.

A. Education and Interpretation

Mr. Richardson reported that to date this fiscal year the Museum has hosted 23,333 education visitors, with another 9,000 reservations yet to visit. He expects more reservations for the Spring and hopes to exceed last year's education visitor totals. He said that a string of bad weather days in March forced a number of schools to either cancel or reschedule for later in the Spring.

He reported that on Saturday April 21 a larger group of students from Newport News City Schools will visit as a part of a federal grant; he expects over 500 students to attend.

Wool Week is April 23-29th, and promises to possibly be the busiest week of the Spring school season.

Mr. Richardson has contacted the three local school divisions (Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County) and the Valley Community Services Board to ask their help in identifying students to receive summer camp scholarships this year.

Augusta County Schools would like to host another reading event like last year in late September; last year the Museum hosted about 1,500 guests for the two-night event.

Museum staff and animals will be attending several community based festival days over the next few months including "Kids matter" day in Gypsy Hill Park and "Explore the Outdoors" day in Chesterfield, VA.

Mrs. Sheets said that she visited the Museum during Home School Day and complimented the staff on a good job. She also said that she has attended several morning meetings with the interpretive staff and has recently listened in on several interpretive programs. Mr. Vames mentioned that his family members also visited the Museum on Home School Day and had an enjoyable time.

B. Finance

Director of Administration Merritt Schoonover reviewed the Statement of Appropriations, Allotment, Expenditures and Revenue as of March 31, 2018. She pointed out that fund 00239 is in a negative balance as payroll expenses were deducted just before month-end closing. She said that while visitation revenue had declined as it usually does over the Winter, revenue is increasing as Spring brings more visitors and schoolchildren. She noted that Facilities Manager Cliff Edwards is spending from the Maintenance Reserve Fund now that the weather has warmed and various projects get underway.

She reviewed the Comparison of monthly Revenue by Fiscal Year chart, and revenue has increased due to the Museum's raising of entrance fees and the VC merchandise resales, which increased by \$2,000 over last year.

The Fiscal Year 2018 Diversification of Revenue chart depicts how the Museum is diversifying its revenue stream to allow for revenue to come in even when bad weather impacts visitation. Annual Pass revenue decreased in March, but the Annual Pass sale in April should generate strong sales. Sixty four passes have been sold to date this year.

Mrs. Schoonover discussed the FY2018 Revenue Status Report and noted that Visitor Center merchandise sales at \$18,899 by the end of March. As of today the Museum has garnered \$21,000, of which \$12,000 is profit.

Mrs. Schoonover said that the Museum has raised \$372,120 so far in non-general funds in FY18, with three months left (April, May, June) which are all strong visitation and revenue months. Last year in FY17 the Museum raised \$461,206, but this included \$59,881 for the Irish Farm roof insurance refund. She believes that the Museum may exceed last year's non-general fund revenue if the next three months have good weather and strong visitation.

Mr. Garstang asked about the status of facilities rentals; Mrs. Schoonover said that most weekends in May and June are booked, and that new Private Events Coordinator Erin O'Connell is working on plans to fill the spaces on weekdays when reservations are generally slow. Ms. O'Connell is considering hosting an open house event for area brides to showcase the Museum's facilities as well as invite other vendors to set up displays.

C. Marketing

Marketing Director Joe Herget reported that overall visitation for the fiscal year to date has increased by over 20% over FY16, so even with bad weather this year, visitation has steadily increased. March visitation decreased this year due to bad weather and school visit cancellations. He reiterated that the Annual Pass program will feature a sale in April. He reviewed a chart depicting the Museum's progress towards a goal of 125,000 visitors, and reviewed Spring communications plans which include radio advertising and social media promotions.

IV. Old Business

No item of old business were discussed.

V. Foundation Report

American Frontier Culture Foundation President Ned Ruby reported that:

- The Annual Fund has increased to about \$80,000 towards a goal of \$120,000 by June 30
- McAvoli's Pub was a successful fundraiser, garnering \$17,850 (\$20 more than last year) towards Museum programs. Thanks to Peggy and Tom Sheets and Jeff and Kim Wood for hosting.
- The Spring Frontier Express newsletter will be mailed next week to the regular mailing list and all Annual Pass holders.
- Trustee Kenneth Venable is working with the Foundation on a non-denominational church service the weekend of the Igbo Conference; a flyer has been created to distribute to churches around the state later in the month.

Next week at their meeting on April 20th the Board of Director's will ratify the following:

- Approve an additional \$52,000 for the 1820's Barn work
- The new sound systems for the Lecture Hall and Pavilion
- Sale of some kitchen equipment from 216 Frontier Drive
- Approve \$20,000 for the A&E infrastructure proposal from the back of Mt Tabor to the Octagonal Barn
- Establish a new purchasing policy that includes check requests rather than a Purchase Order

Mr. Ruby invited all Members to the pre-Board meeting cocktail party hosted by the Foundation the evening of Thursday April 19th from 530-7 p.m. in the Lecture Hall of the Dairy Barn.

VII. New Business

At 9:35 a.m. Mr. Garstang 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.

AND/OR

Discussion of personnel matters pursuant to the exemption in Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A)(1) pertaining to the performance of the interim Executive Director and the selection of a new Executive Director.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Venable, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. All staff left the room at 9:35 a.m.

Chair requests any necessary staff and other individuals to remain; board convenes in closed session.

At 10:45 a.m. Mr. Sibert said:

I move that the Committee enter open session.

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

Mr. Garstang 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 Mrs. Sheets, there was no discussion and each Member certified verbally that no other matters had been discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Next Meeting Date

The next Executive Committee meeting is set for **Tuesday May 15** at 9 a.m. in the administration building conference room.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.