

**Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees**  
**Executive Committee**  
**Draft Minutes December 6, 2017**

**Members Attending:**

Richard Bell, Joe Fitzgerald, Cliff Garstang, Kenneth Venable, Peggy Sheets, William Sibert, Paul Vames

**Members Absent:**

Pamela Fox, Emmett W. Hanger

**Guests Present:**

Ned Ruby, President, American Frontier Culture Foundation, Kim Metje, Abby Arey, Jeff Arey, Food Truck Battle/MaDee Project

**Staff Attending:**

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

**Call to Order and Welcome**

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

**II. Approval of November 2017 Minutes**

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

**III. MaDee project/Food Truck Battle Presentation**

Mr. Vames welcomed all attendees and introduced the representatives from the Food Truck Battle/MaDee Project who will make a presentation on the proposed next event in 2018. Abby Arey thanked the Museum for providing a venue for the event the past three years and thanked the Museum staff for their assistance. She described the origins and mission of the MaDee Project, which is an organization founded in memory of childhood cancer victim MaDee Boxler (Ms. Arey's sister) that supports other families in the community who are dealing with the stress of a child with cancer, and to give back to the community for the help they received during MaDee's illness. The Foundation also donates to two charitable organizations, the St. Jude children's hospital and CureSearch. It is a 100% volunteer organization, and all funds go to support the mission, and the Board of the MaDee Project has a majority family membership. Currently they are able to give \$500 to each family per month to help with living expenses; the foundation needs approximately \$50,000 per year in income to be able to sustain this level of support. Additionally they send \$1,000 to each family whose child passes away. Together with several other events, the Food Truck Battle income provides a large portion of their yearly total.

Ms. Metje explained her family's longtime involvement with the Museum and described what a great asset the Museum is to the community. She continued that it is also important for attendees

at the Food Truck Battle to be able to experience the Museum, especially if they have never visited. She said that when the vendors, attendees and sponsors are happy, then all is well with an event such as the Food Truck Battle. At the proposed 2018 event she would like to enhance the children's activities and areas at the festival. She has already met with representatives from TV3 in Harrisonburg, and Channel 4 in Charlottesville to begin marketing. TV3 will produce an ad for the event, and she hopes that this will reach into areas in the state where they Food Truck Battle has not been advertised previously. She will also work with the Harrisonburg Radio group, which will offer on-air Museum trivia, and she plans to use social media extensively to support the marketing efforts. She reported that she already has some sponsors for the event.

Mr. Vames asked if the staff present had any question, and shared a map of the proposed event layout. Ms. Metje described what will be placed in each zone; 6 trucks in each of three zones. She said that the beer tents will be moved farther back from the road, and that flag fencing will be used to more clearly define where participants can walk, especially those carrying alcoholic beverages. Festival organizers will use more volunteer road monitors and signage (which will larger and more at eye level) to avoid clogged roadways and groups of people standing on the roads. The monitors will also work to keep festival guests from entering the site exhibits if they are carrying alcohol.

Mr. Garstang asked how they will elevate the signage to make it easier to see? Ms. Metje responded that the signs will be attached to tall wooden tomato stakes, which will raise them to eye level.

Mrs. Arey said that festival planners will add extra security and possibly use an outside security firm to assist at the festival, and possibly provide traffic control on Frontier Drive. Ms. Metje said that planners want attendees to have fun but also to get home safely.

Mr. Vames asked Ms. Metje to describe the overall details of the event. She said that the event will start with VIP ticket-holders entering at 11:30 a.m.. They will be allowed to taste and vote on the food trucks in their area until 12:30 when general admission ticket-holders enter and ticket sales "at the door" begin. The events ends at 6:30 with "last call" for alcohol at 6 p.m. Mr. Vames noted that the festival planners would like a larger crowd than 2500, possibly about 3000, but Museum officials prefer to keep the number to about 2500, in order to maintain order and safety. He also asked how to prevent the Museum from becoming overwhelmed with more participants than can safely attend. Mrs. Schoonover said that the number of tickets sold can be controlled via the computer system, and Ms. Metje said that there will be only a certain number of pre-sales, and planners could limit the total number of tickets available. Ms. Metje noted that some sponsors were concerned that limiting the number of attendees might impact sales.

Mr. Bryan said that we accommodates about 1000 in the pavilion for Oktoberfest. Ms. Metje responded that the Food Truck Battle, people will be spread out more over a larger area. Mr. Garstang asked how the number of tasting tickets (460) was set. Ms. Metje responded that the food trucks donate the food for the tasting, so with eighteen trucks, this is about 25 portions per truck. Mr. Venable asked what the alcoholic beverage limit is per person; Ms. Metje said there is no limit at present, but attendees must buy a beer ticket before receiving a beer, and that there is a limit of four tickets per person each time they visit the ticketing table. She said that the Swoope volunteer fire department members who pour the beer are trained to watch for those who may be too

intoxicated. Under Virginia ABC law, the limit is one beer per hour, so for a six hour festival the limit would be six beers.

Mr. Arey noted that security will be in the parking lot near closing time to monitor those leaving for anyone who may not be able to drive. He also said that for the upcoming festival, planners will arrange with local groups who provide free rides to those who may not be able to drive their own cars, and that festival planners will be circulating and watching the crowds for issues as well. Festival planners will also eliminate sales of wine by the bottle. Mr. Garstang asked how the wine vendors felt about this; Ms. Metje said that they have no concerns. Ms. Metje reported that she had spoken to the police officers who worked last year's event, and they felt that the event had gone well.

Mr. Vames asked about the band selection for the upcoming event; Ms. Metje responded that planners will schedule more dance and beach-type music, and that the volume will be lowered. Mrs. Arey noted that each year planners have learned from the event in order to make improvements in the next year's festival, and to address concerns of all stakeholders.

Mr. Venable asked if the festival carried liability insurance; Mrs. Arey responded that they do have such insurance for 1 million dollars, at the request of the Museum and the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. Vames asked about the possibility of using wristbands with either hole-punches or marks to on the bands to keep track of how many alcoholic beverages each person consumes. Mr. Richardson said that he had experienced such a arrangement at another local event and felt it worked well. Mrs. Arey pointed out that if a person is determined to flaunt the rules, he or she is likely to be able to find a way to do so. She hopes any such behavior will be offset by extra security. Eliminating wine by the bottle sales and the free ride home program.

Mr. Sibert said that the two wonderful organizations – the Frontier Culture Museum and the MaDee Project – should be able to work out all the details in a satisfactory manner. He said that the Museum's two greatest concerns appear to have been addressed; controlling the amounts and location of alcohol, and reducing the volume of the music. He said that careful monitoring is needed to reduce any negative impact on regular Museum visitors. Mrs. Arey said that the MaDee Project is also conscious of its reputation and wants to have a positive festival as well. Ms. Metje said that the increased focus on children's activities at next year's event may also change the composition of the crowd.

The representatives of the MaDee project and Food truck Battle thanked the Committee for asking them to make a presentation, and left the meeting.

Mr. Vames reiterated that the event must work well for all stakeholders, especially the Museum, as host site. He pointed put Mrs. Sheets earlier observation that the event planners do not have too many local choices of locations to host this size of an event. Mr. Garstang observed that although festival planners have addressed concerns raised by the Museum, 3,000 is a large number of people for the Museum to manage at one time, and wondered if timed tickets were an option to consider to control the crowd flow. Mr. Vames said that the Committee will have to consider both the event

and the Museum, to strike a balance between site capacity and the needs of the fundraiser. He said that strong monitoring and plenty of monitors are key to the success of the event, and that the event needs at least four law enforcement officers circulating for the duration of the event, both in the event venue and in the parking areas.

Mr. Avoli stated that he has observed that the Food Truck Battle is an event at which attendees stay for the duration, rather than coming and going as is the case at some events. He suggested that a limit of 2,500 attendees is important for logistics, safety and parking. Delegate Bell agreed and noted that festival planners could raise their ticket price a bit and recoup the amount, as it is a popular event. Mr. Garstang asked why participants stay longer for this event; Mr. Avoli responded that they enjoy the different bands in the lineup, and like to sample food from a variety of food trucks.

Mr. Vames asked if the Committee recommended that the Museum require armbands for attendees to monitor alcoholic beverage consumption; Mrs. Sheets said that even if some manage to skirt the rules, requiring the armbands shows due diligence on the part of the Museum. Mr. Fitzgerald also pointed out that it is unlikely that all 2500 participants will drink too much.

Mr. Vames stated that after consultations with all parties, the Food Truck Battle will remain on Labor Day weekend, as this date works logistically for a variety of reasons. He noted that the Museum staff and Board will be as helpful as we can to make the Food Truck Battle a success, but that we must do what is best for the Museum. He said that the event is a great public relations event for the Museum as well.

Mr. Bryan said that this year we will have extra space behind the Irish farm for vendors and activities. He said that another important point is that planning ahead is crucial and as Museum staff spend a considerable amount of time interacting with Food Truck Battle planners, there should be some limits on these interactions, such as no phone calls, texts or emails after business hours to staff, and no sudden surprises in terms of extra activities or changes to the plan all parties have agreed upon. He also noted that the Museum's logo and name should be included on all of the Food Truck Battle's marketing.

Mrs. Sheets complimented the staff for their patience in dealing with the event planning. Mr. Venable noted that as we cannot control the arrival of busses or other groups for the event, we can however control the number of tickets; when they are gone, the event is closed to any more attendees.

Mr. Ruby asked if the Foundation could have access to names and addresses of attendees, in order to add them to fundraising mailings when soliciting funds to support the Museum.

Delegate Bell said that the MaDee Project is a wonderful organization, but that the festival must be managed within the framework of what works for the Museum.

Mr. Vames asked the Committee if they were comfortable with "green-lighting" the event for 2018, with the parameters of 2,500 maximum total attendees, wristbands limiting alcoholic beverage

consumption to four drinks per person, and no additions or expansion of the event without working closely with the Museum. Mr. Bryan will add these points to the Memorandum of Understanding both parties will sign. Mr. Vames reiterated that these points are non-negotiable and that this should be made clear.

#### **IV. Agency Head Report**

Mr. Bryan reported that November had strong visitation numbers, an increase of 12% over last November. Overall visitation numbers are up 20% over last year at the same point. The Museum hosted over 2,400 people over two days of the Christmas market and garnered over \$5,300 in donations. He said that December visitation is a bit slow so far. Holiday Lantern Tour preparations are nearly complete and many nights are almost sold out. The Waterways exhibit has closed and has been sent to its next exhibit location in Winchester. Museum supervisors are finishing new employee work profiles for the upcoming year, and are finalizing the winter training schedule and winter outreach plans.

Construction on the 1820's Barn is planned for the early in 2018; Mr. Sheets donated the labor to prep the logs, and Facilities Manager Cliff Edwards is in contract negotiations with a contractor to complete the construction.

Preliminary plans for the Mill project were submitted before Thanksgiving and its location and "footprint" has been staked out. Mr. Bryan met with John Garber, the lead architect on the project and also discussed plans to extend the road from the New World sites up to the Mill and village sites and out to the parking lot passing close to the Octagonal barn. They also discussed site and utilities plans for the village and mill sites and vicinity. He reported that Mr. Edwards has posted a Request for Proposal for the Museum's Crossing Gallery, and that there have been about a dozen inquiries.

The 2018 Spring Lecture Series has been set for March 20 and 27 and April 3 and 10 and will focus on Entertainment in the Early Republic. Each Lecture begins at 7 p.m. in the Lecture Hall of the Dairy Barn.

Mr. Sibert asked if there is any way to measure the response or impact of the Waterways exhibit; Mr. Bryan responded that the Visitors Center staff counted those who came through just for the exhibit and noted that there were not a huge number.

#### **A. Education and Interpretation**

Director of Education Andrew Richardson reported that the Museum hosted about 13,900 student and other education visitors to date this year. He also said that from December 1 through June 30, 2018 there are over 8,600 students scheduled, for a total of approximately 22,500. Reservations will continue, especially after the holidays as teachers plan for Spring field trips. Ronald Reagan Middle School, a large school in Northern Virginia, cancelled their trip for June 2018, and Mr. Richardson is working to re-schedule their visit. He also reported that Winter Home School Day on December 9 has only about 36 pre-registrations, and that the weather may be very cold so it may not be a heavy visitation day.

## **B. Finance**

Director of Administration Merritt Schoonover reviewed the revenue report and noted that revenue is down this year compared to last fiscal year by about \$3,000. She also reported that November facilities rentals increased by \$3400 over last year, but that overall rental income has decreased slightly from last year, most likely due to weather conditions. Annual pass sales have declined a bit also. She reviewed the Revenue Status report which shows that admissions revenue has increased, and that merchandise sales have almost reached the estimate for the entire fiscal year; merchandise sales are up \$10,000 over last year. "Pay-what-you-will" days income is recorded as donations, and total over \$12,000 so far this fiscal year. September and October showed a decrease in general income of about \$13,000 over last year.

## **C. Marketing**

Director of Marketing Joe Herget reported that the Museum has had double digit growth in 12 of the last 13 months. He said that this year we will have two less Lantern Tour evenings due to how the holiday falls this year, and will have two less pay-what-you-will days as we have consolidated the Christmas Market into two days this year instead of three weekends. He reiterated that November visitation increased by 12% and that year-to-date visitation has increased by 20%. He reviewed a chart depicting plans for attracting 125,000 visitors a year to the Museum, and an overview of marketing communications strategies. He also presented a draft 2018 Calendar of Events.

Mr. Vames asked Mr. Avoli to update Legislative Board Members about the Museum's growth and success over the past year or two.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **A. CISA (Council of Igbo States in America) Festival**

Mr. Bryan reported that CISA has received the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the revised schedule devised by the Museum. Mr. Venable has been in touch with the President of CISA who has said that they will return the signed MOU this week. Mr. Venable added that CISA has retained an attorney to help them work through the MOU as well as address concerns regarding

their 501C3 status. The organization is also working to update and streamline their website and to create a current brochure about their mission.

## **V. Foundation Report**

American Frontier Culture Foundation President Ned Ruby reported that all Foundation Committees have met recently.

The Development Committee is working on a new concept for the 2019 Annual Fund, as well as a new fundraiser – a progressive dinner. They are also working on Board and donor cultivation, a new event for the Fall of 2018 and plans for the annual Beach Party in August of 2018.

The Finance Committee reviewed the recent audit report from Elmore and Hupp and the Foundation received the highest level of results. The Foundation ended the year with a \$50,000 budget surplus.

The Executive Committee met to review the performance of the Foundation Executive Director.

The Annual Fund has raised about \$30,000 so far towards its goal of \$120,00 by the end of June 2018.

Mr. Reiter met with potential donors in Charlottesville for field trip and English Barn support. He and grant-writer Ann Rogan will travel to Lynchburg next week to meet with potential donors to the Campbell County Schools free field trip and outreach initiative.

## **VI. New Business**

At 10:45 a.m. Mrs. Sheets 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**

*For discussion of personnel matters pursuant to the exemption in Va Code Chapter 2.2-3711(A) (1) pertaining to the appointment and performance of the Executive Director.*

Mrs. Sheets' motion was seconded by Mr. Garstang, there was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously. All other attendees left the room at 10:45 a.m.

At 11:45 a.m. Mrs. Sheets said:

*I move that the Executive Committee of the Board enter open session.*

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

Mrs. Sheets 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; and*

*Whereas, Virginia Code § 2.2-3712 requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;*

*NOW, BE IT RESOLVED 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. Venable and each Member affirmed verbally by roll call vote that no other matters had been discussed.

#### **VII. Next Meeting Date (s)**

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 9 a.m. in the administration conference room.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.