

**Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees**  
**Executive Committee – Administration Building Conference Room**  
**Draft minutes**  
**February 13, 2019 9 a.m.**

**Members Attending:**

Clifford Garstang, Peggy Sheets, William Sibert, Paul Vames, Kenneth Venable

**Members Absent:**

Richard Bell, Pamela Fox, Emmett Hanger

**Staff Attending:**

Megan Newman, Eric Bryan, Lydia Volskis, Andrew Richardson, Joe Herget, Justin Reiter

**Call to Order and Approval of October & November 2018 Minutes**

Board and Committee Chair Peggy Sheets called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. The minutes of the October 2018 and November 2018 meetings were approved as presented.

**III. Agency Report**

Executive Director Megan Newman reported that she and several staff and Board Members met recently with the Early American Industries (Mill) exhibit architect, and that ground-breaking on the project may be this summer. Mr. Sibert, who was present at the meeting, said that he was pleased at the thorough and detailed presentation given by the architect.

Dr. Newman pointed out that the financial reports are mainly for financial analysis, and no particularly insightful regarding visitation. She said that museum staff will be making an effort to clarify some of the visitation reports so that they give a clearer indication of “heads” versus revenue.

The Museum has not heard from the real estate division regarding the shared services MOU with the Foundation, so we have done some local research and made our own estimates on the likely rent for the space the Foundation uses. Museum staff estimate that rent on that space would not exceed \$800 a month, based on local comparisons. Museum staff who assist with Foundation events and projects (and who have already been recording their time) would be billed at \$15 per hour, an average of a variety of staff member salaries. Dr. Newman said that both of these expenses would likely total \$15,000 per year or less. After we have recorded this information for an entire year, we will have a clearer picture of the number of hours state staff spend working on Foundation projects.

Museum staff are busy giving demonstrations, conducting tours and working on site making repairs and cleaning. Dr. Newman said that due to safety issues and lack of occupancy permits, the three

semi-permanent exhibits (the West African site, the 1740's cabin and the American Indian site structures) are presently off-limits for staff and guests to go inside. They may peek into the structures and view what's inside from the door until we are able to reinforce the structures, and obtain the necessary permits. Mr. Vames asked who is conducting the surveys and issuing permits; Dr. Newman replied that Cliff, Chris and Ray from our staff are examining the structures to plan upgrades and that the state will issue the permits. Dr. Newman also pointed out that these reinforcements and improvements will likely help with ongoing maintenance. Mr. Sibert remembered the issues which arose when the Bowman house was reconstructed; in that no modern engineer would certify a building with a rock foundation as the house originally had for over 100 years. Instead, we created a concrete foundation with a rock facing. Museum staff have reached out to vendors who supply alternative materials which might be used, but which maintain the historic look of the sites. No items will be used that look "fake" or harm the appearance of the sites. Dr. Newman noted that we don't want the sites to be just handsome backdrops.

## **A. Education and Interpretation**

Director of Education Andrew Richardson reported that through the end of January the Museum has hosted 17, 805 school visits, outreaches and other educational groups such as the toddler programs. Reservations have increased a bit over last year at this time and stand at 12,000 through the end of June. Reservations are still coming in and Mr. Richardson estimates that the Museum will meet last year's total.

Registration will open soon for spring Home School Day which is set for March 29. Summer camp reservations have opened for the 2019 season, and some advertising has started.

Mr. Richardson continued that Museum staff will present some community outreaches at Kids Matter Day in Staunton and the International Festival in Charlottesville, both on May 11. Museum staff will also present at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War's (New Market Battlefield) Home School Day. He said that there are several outreach programs scheduled for next week. Dr. Newman said that she and Museum staff have recently received several inquiries about community outreach programs. Mr. Richardson said that he is working with two pre-schools in Virginia Beach to plan a full day of outreach programs, and he also described a recent full day of outreach programs at Falmouth Elementary in Fredericksburg. He described the Physical Education outreach program which focuses on historic games, and which can be offered to larger groups of students. This program was recently offered to Stuarts Draft Elementary students. Mr. Vames asked where most outreaches take place; Mr. Richardson replied that Museum staff now travel all over the state, from the Valley to Piedmont, Southside, Richmond, Northern Virginia, Tidewater and Southwest regions. He makes personal contact with teachers who have booked outreach programs in the past. Mr. Reiter said that the Foundation is searching for grants which can support outreach programs to certain areas of the state, such as the grants for Dinwiddie and Campbell Counties. Field trips also come from all over the state, and in some cases an outreach program led to a field trip the following year.

## **B. Finance**

Eric Bryan gave the financial report in Merritt Schoonover's absence. He reviewed the Statement of Appropriations, Allotments, Expenditures and Revenues which depicts what the Museum receives in operating funds from the state, Maintenance Reserve Funds and our own projected revenue. He also called the Committee's attention to the Early American Industries (Mill) allotment.

Mr. Bryan recently completed a questionnaire concerning the Bond for Public Buildings; from which the Museum should receive about \$600,000 to care for and repair our buildings.

As of the end of January, our visitation numbers look good; many bill payments are being submitted so we will monitor the budget carefully. Mr. Sibert asked, of the \$2,000,000 left in Maintenance Reserve funds (of which \$1,600,000 is the Mill fund) how much of the remaining funds will we expend this fiscal year. Mr. Bryan responded that due to language in the appropriation act which is specific to the Museum, we are able to use some maintenance reserve funds for paving, roads etc.... Some Museums are able to use their MR funds on conservation efforts, so the Museum has had language added that will allow us to spend up to 20% for the conservation of art and artifacts. Currently roof and siding repair is underway on the American sites, in order to extend the building's useful life. Once these tasks are completed, the contractors will be re-tasked to replace the sill beam on the German Farm. Museum staff will also work to map the existing utility lines around the property and create diagrams for future use. Staff and possibly contractors will work on repairs to the three semi-permanent exhibits to as to eventually obtain an occupancy permit.

Mrs. Sheets noted that major repairs to the Dairy Barn roof are currently "on hold" but that some smaller repairs will be carried out.

Mr. Sibert asked about the materials currently used for chinking, Mr. Bryan responded that in addition to being a substance that has been used in other projects and places and which will look better, the differences in skill level of those applying the chinking are important, as the material should be applied so as not to catch or retain the water and eventually cause wood rot. He said that instead of siding, preservative is being used on the 1820's house to seal and safeguard the wood.

Mr. Reiter said that there is an anonymous donor who plans to give funds in 2021 to implement log preservation on all the buildings.

Mrs. Sheets reported on her and Dr. Newman's trip to the General Assembly recently to discuss Crossing Gallery funding and other Museum budget needs. They were able to speak with some Legislative Aides as well as some Legislators, and are aware that funding for both the Crossing Gallery pre-planning (about \$4,000,000) and Museum site security (\$250,000) have been included in the current budget draft. Mr. Bryan said that after Mr. Ray Hoaster, of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, we were able to articulate a plan for improving site security at the Museum including a twenty-four hour security presence on site. He said that Museum planners looked at other state contracts for help and information. The on-site security will manage all emergency situations. Mr. Bryan also said that for accreditation purposes, the Museum's collections storage areas need to be

more secure. Dr. Newman said that the Museum will have final decision on security staff placed here. Mrs. Sheets thanked Mr. Edwards and Mr. Bryan for their work on this issue.

Mr. Bryan commended Mrs. Price for her hard work and help during Mrs. Schoonover's absence, and said that he believes that all payments and bills are up-to-date.

Dr. Newman said that there will be one or more VMI mathematics (or other) student interns making data analysis of Store sales so far and other questions as well as helping to create a business plan for the Store for the future.

### **C. Marketing**

Director of Marketing Joe Herget reviewed the visitation report, and said that visitation did not increase, but stabilized over the winter. He said that in the near future, we will be reporting visitation and revenue numbers in a clearer manner.

He said that we are awaiting a software update for our main reservations system, Outbound. The upgrades will offer more tracking capabilities for guest information, and he also noted that there may be more capabilities in the system than we are currently using, so he will investigate.

Mr. Herget reviewed the Visitation Segment Breakout report, including the general visitation and education "drivers" – factors which affect visitation. He said that visitation has decreased by about 12% overall this year, and that the decrease can be attributed largely to several normally busy days with less visitation than usual. The days include Fourth of July, Labor Day Weekend when either very hot or wet weather dampened visitation. Mr. Vames, after examining the visitation report, noted that the 12% decrease in actual numbers is about 100 guests.

He reviewed the Annual Pass program summary, pointing out that annual pass sales have increased with the use of promotional discounts, and overall pass revenue has increased by 19%. He also said that the Museum will offer fewer pay-what-you-will days this year.

Mr. Herget gave an event update, calling attention to the Spring Lecture Series, Wool Days and Spring Home School Day as events happening over the next couple of months. He also highlighted some events planned for later in 2019.

### **IV Foundation Report**

Foundation Executive Director Justin Reiter reported that:

- The Annual Fund has raised \$90,000 so far, and that a couple of bequests have been left to the Foundation in support of the Museum.
- Sponsorships are coming in for the McAvoli's Pub fundraiser on March 15<sup>th</sup>
- Blue Ridge Beverage renewed all sponsorships for the upcoming year's events; the Beach Party, McAvoli's Pub, Oktoberfest and the new May event. Next year their corporate giving model may change

- The Foundation received the first installment of \$25,000 from the Charles Fund
- Spring newsletter prep is underway, and will feature an article on the West African Farm
- The Foundation recently submitted a grant application to support the Spring Lecture Series

Mr. Reiter said that Executive Director Megan Newman asked the Foundation to assume management of the summer camp scholarship fund. He met with Chris and Misti Furr, in whose late daughter's memory the scholarship fund is set up, and discussed details of fundraising to support the fund. An event will be planned which will include informational tents by UVA Children's Hospital, the SPCA and the Foundation; the event will be a "summer camp sampler" day for parents and kids to try some activities which might be included in summer camps. The event will be planned for spring of 2020.

Mr. Reiter said that the McAvoli's Pub will transition to a more traditional St. Patrick's Day event after this year.

Mr. Avoli will lead the last Italy trips for the Foundation this summer, and the Foundation is exploring travel packages with reputable travel agencies to offer in the future to benefit the Museum.

Mr. Sibert asked about the status of the new Museum signs in and near the traffic circle. Mr. Reiter responded that plans are underway and that the project has been put out to bid.

## **V. Old Business**

### **A. Status of Shared Services MOU**

(Covered previously)

### **B. Status of CISA MOU & general report**

Kenneth Venable reported that the Igbo Conference has a new Chairman, Felix Nagi (?), from Atlanta, and that he is very professional and organized. Mr. Venable continued that he will work with Dr. Newman on an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and has been in communication with Dr. Anakwenze. Mr. Venable informed Mr. Nagi that we will not make the hotel arrangements for them, but did send them the contact information so that he can quickly be in touch with the hotels to make arrangements. He also alerted them that they must communicate with Dr. Newman regarding any major details of the event. Dr. Newman noted that the group still owes a balance from last year, although they have submitted a deposit for this year. She said that staff who are familiar with the event should identify other operational needs and expenses such as porta-potties etc. The date for the event is July 19-21, 2019.

Mr. Venable continued that Dr. Anakwenze will be here at the April 12 Board of Trustees meeting, and he will speak with him then about plans for the event; he hopes that several other key Igbo planners will be able to come to Staunton that day or weekend and hold an in-person meeting

about the July event. Mr. Venable hopes to educate the Igbo planners about what funding the West African site needs for its long-term care.

Mr. Garstang asked about the status of the Gold Star Memorial. Dr. Newman responded that it has become apparent that such a project on state property is overly complicated due to the review process. It has been suggested that the project -planners approach the Foundation for a possible site on property they own. Dr. Bond will act as Committee Chair, with Delegate Bell's retirement and will schedule a meeting this Spring. Dr. Newman also noted that she has been asked how the Museum came to select this particular Foundation to place the monument, and said she would investigate.

Mr. Garstang asked about the status of the facility rentals contract; Dr. Newman responded that Ms. O'Connell has prepared a draft and will finalize the document in the near future. Mrs. Sheets pointed out that now Ms. O'Connell reports to Mr. Herget and that they will both have input on the final version.

Mr. Garstang also asked about progress in recruiting a new Director of Interpretation Dr. Newman responded that the job is currently open and that once closed in mid-March candidates will be selected and interviews will begin.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. Closed Session (if needed)**

At 10:25 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. Garstang, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. All staff Members and guests left the room at 10:35 a.m.

At 11:05 noon, 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 Mr. Venable, there was no discussion, each Member affirmed verbally that no other matters were discussed, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **VII. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 20, 2019 at 9 a.m. in the administration building conference room.

#### **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.