



Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees

Thursday, September 12, 2024 | 1:00 P.M.

Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Welcome** – Delegate Will Morefield

2. **Roll Call** – Kim Davis

Attending: Delegate Will Morefield, Senator Travis Hackworth, Delegate Amy Laufer (v), Senator Todd Pillion (v), Mike Cochran, David Matlock, Deborah Milton, Leo Priddy (v) for Kevin Byrd), Ruby Rogers, Julie Walters Steele, Aaron Sizemore, and Scotty Wampler.

v = *Virtual*

Absent: Delegate Sam Rasoul, Sharon Buchanon, Saul Hernandez, Bryan Horn, Dylan Locke, Dr. Adam Hutchison, Josh Hess, Amanda Pillion, Rita McClenny, and Ellen Reynolds.

Guests: Becky Nave and Tyler Hughes

Staff Attending: Kim Davis, Tina Murray, Ryana DeArmond, Paula Hurt, Jen Otey, and Tyler Hughes (The Crooked Road)

3. **Public Comment** – No individuals registered to present public comment during this meeting.

4. **Adoption of Agenda** – Presented by Delegate Will Morefield. Motion to accept the agenda by Senator Travis Hackworth. Second by Delegate Amy Laufer. Vote. Motion carried.

5. **Approval of Minutes from June 2024** – Delegate Will Morefield - Motion to accept the minutes from the prior meeting as presented by Ruby Rogers. Second by Julie Walters Stelle. Vote. Motion carried. abstains due to absence at last meeting.

6. **Executive Director Report** – Kim Davis

- **Special Recognition** - Moment of silence in honor of Sandy Ratliff. Sandy served on both 'Round the Mountain and Friends of Southwest Virginia Boards. Kim announced that both the Friends Board votes to provide a \$2,000 contribution to the Sandy Ratliff Fund (\$1,000 each from Friends of Southwest Virginia and Round the Mountain.)
- **New Employee Introduction** - Paula Hurt, Director of Finance and Administration.
- **Employee Positions**
 - Director of Marketing (currently open) – several promising applicants. Phone and in person interviews are being scheduled. Hope to hire by end of October.
 - Group Tour & Events Manager – new position. Posting later this year and hiring by January.
 - Artisan Engagement Specialist – new position. Posting later this year and hiring by January.



- **Grants - Round the Mountain**
 - Appalachian Regional Commission (Area Development) - Celebrating Southwest Virginia Arts - Grant Total: \$300,000
 - Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission - Celebrating Southwest Virginia Arts - Grant Total: \$100,000
 - Virginia Tourism Corporation – Marketing Leverage Grant – Grant Total: \$20,000 received the full award
 - Virginia Commission for the Arts – Impact Grant – Grant Total: received \$3,500. Artisan engagement focused.
 - Abingdon Arts Commission – 2025 Artisan Conference - 1st award cycle for this new organization – RTM received \$5,000.

- **Grants – Friends of Southwest Virginia**
 - Appalachian Regional Commission (Area Development) – Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Plan - Grant Total: \$300,000
 - Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission - Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Plan and Tourism Development initiative - Grant Total: \$250,000
 - Virginia Tourism Corporation – Marketing Leverage Grant – Grant Total: \$29,250. Group Tour initiative.
 - Virginia Tourism Corporation – DMO Grant – Grant Total: \$14,600

- **Requests for Proposals Posted**
 - Virginia State Coordinator for the Appalachian Downtown Developers Initiative Planning Phase Project - Complete
 - Big Stone Gap Pump Track and Skate Park - Complete
 - Gateways to Southwest Virginia: Outdoor Economy Plan for the
 - Powell and Clinch River Recreation Area and Foothills of the Blue Ridge - Complete
 - RTM Strategic Plan & Feasibility Study - Complete
 - ARISE Strategic Plan - Posted

- **Upcoming Requests for Proposals Posted**
 - Marketing Digital Access Management System
 - VisitSWVA.org website
 - Tourism Workforce Training Initiative
 - 2024-2025 National Marketing & Public Relations Campaign

- **Love Sign** – New sign is ordered and should be installed in October.

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- **Partnership Update**
 - Three new communities have committed funds.
 - Outreach in October for the partnership membership.
- The FY 2023 - 2024 Expenditure and Revenue Report was submitted to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly.

7. Financials – Kim Davis

8. Financials – Kim Davis

- **'Round the Mountain**
 - Round the Mountain: Reviewed the June 31, 2024 Profit & Loss statements and the Balance Sheets that were distributed in advance of the meeting.
 - Partnership dollars higher than anticipated - budgeted \$14,000 and received \$25,000
 - Two VTC grants. A lot of dollars were expended out of Friends budget.
 - Expenses were lower for artisan conference, training, and marketing.
 - Profit of \$10,000.
 - Cash Position is a little over \$72,000. Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable are inline and cleared. Mostly intercompany transfers.
- **Friends of Southwest Virginia**
 - Rental Revenue is above budget \$68,000 actual vs \$45,000 budget.
 - Event Revenue is above budget \$37,000 actual vs \$15,000 budget.
 - Reserve Funds used for 2024 were \$15,000 actual vs \$50,000 budget. Used \$25,000 in 2023 so trending down on the usage.
 - Cultural Center Expenses are on track. Compliment to Tina for keeping maintenance expenses under budget - \$50,000 under budget.
 - Food/Café expenses were up but with added event revenue to offset.
 - Personnel expense over budget – did not charge finance and administration personnel expenses against grants since that employee did not work with the grants.
 - Profit for operations is about \$43,000.
 - Development – While revenue and expenses typically balance out, this year shows a loss because the income for CRVI and Rally was received in previous fiscal years, while the expenses occurred this year. It's important to note that CRVI and Rally funds are held as restricted funds.
 - Friends had an overall profit of \$3,000 for 2024.
 - Cash Position at \$150,000 in operating. Saving Position has a balance of \$451,000, \$162,000 of that is restricted. Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable are inline.

9. Deputy Director of Operations Update – Tina Murray

- **Building Updates**



- System Outages – Tina reported on several issues with optical networking terminal (fiber to the building). Impacted everything WiFi, geothermal system, fire alarm, security systems, etc. The diesel generator also went down. The fire sensor in the building was the problem and it has been repaired.
- Window Replacement is needed after the window shattered. The window is located on the top left of the building and is a curtain wall window – non-weight bearing. Façade must be removed to replace the glass.
- **Upcoming Event**
 - Made in Southwest Virginia **event is set for** November 9, 2024 from 10 am – 3 pm. This is the 3rd annual event, and currently 18 artisans are signed up. Free event for artisans.
- **Completed Events**
 - Fresenius Health Care
 - Emory University
 - A Celebration of Life
 - Opportunity SWVA Meeting
 - Whites Mill Preservation
 - The Financial Pathway
 - Mystery Bus Tour
 - *Virginia Rural Leadership Institute*
 - People Incorporated 60th Anniversary
 - Rotary Membership Summit
 - ARC - PDC Executive Directors Meeting
 - Delta Kappa
 - United Way of Southwest Virginia
 - Stone Mountain Black Lung Clinic
 - Virginia Highlands Festival Events
- **Other Updates**
 - **United Way’s OE (Endless Opportunities)** organization is building a Career Commons and the Cultural Center will be a part in partnership with VTC and Crooked Road – a mini-Heartwood will be constructed inside the “city” and house labs that will feature tourism & customer service training, outdoor recreation and event production. There will be a large tablet on a base which will have a touch screen where the students can create their own work of art. Projected over 30,000 young people will visit annually.

10. Marketing Update – Kim Davis



- Friends staff oversaw a press trip in August that featured outdoor recreation in the region. Activities included experiences on the New River, Clinch River, Creeper Trail, Blue Ridge Discovery Center, etc.
- **Earned Media** – Within the last year, Friends has received the following earned media due to a contract with Laurie Rowe Communications.
 - 416 Published Articles
 - 75,191,898,957 Total Impressions
 - \$695,580,944 Total Estimated Value
- **Southwest Tourism Summit & Tourism Awards** – Friends hosted the Southwest Virginia Tourism Awards during the summit and had participation from across the region with nominations. Event was a huge success.

11. Development Update – Jen Otey/Kim Davis

- **Big Stone Gap Pump Track & Skate Park**
 - Three proposals received. After review of RFQs, the Selection Committee chose American Ramp Company which builds competition level tracks. The team is currently working on the contract. Plan to kick off the project in early November.
- **Outdoor Gateways Update** – Outdoor Economy Plan for the Powell & Clinch River Recreation Area & Foothills of Blue Ridge Area
 - The Steering Committee for both projects have been selected, one for the Lenowisco region and the second for the West Piedmont region.
 - Received five excellent proposals, and Destination by Design from Boone, NC was selected.
- **Appalachian Downtown Developers Initiative – Arise Project** – Approached to serve as Virginia lead as a partner. Billie Roberts out of Blue Field hired as consultants. The report is due in October.
- **Virginia ARC Area Development Grants** – Application deadline is December 20, 2024.

12. Old Business – Nothing to discuss

13. New Business

- Micheal Cochran discussed if the organization should consider producing Southwest Virginia license plates and showed a concept for the design. Kim shared that the organization would need 1,000 signatures to move forward. Board discussed if this is something the staff wanted to move forward with to look into the details and process.

14. Partner Update: ‘Round the Mountain, Ryana DeArmond

- **Current RTM Membership** - 203, with 169 juried members. Breakdown by county listing provided.
- **Fall Jury** – Submissions through Monday, Sept 22.



15. Partner Update: Virginia Tourism Corporation, Becky Nave

- 2023 results are in: It was a record year with \$33.3 billion in visitor spending, which is \$3 million more than last year. Daily visitor spending increased, and the tourism industry now employs 224,000 people—up by over 13,000.
- Southwest Virginia is the third-fastest growing region in the state, with \$1.3 billion in visitor spending—an increase of 3.8% from last year. Employment grew by 592 jobs year over year, with payroll reaching \$402 million, a 12.1% increase. The region generated \$110 million in state taxes, up 16.5%. Food and beverage accounted for 30% of visitor spending, while recreation saw the largest growth, rising from \$43.5 million to \$94.9 million. Casino communities experienced significant growth.
- The IBMA event will take place September 25–28, featuring 14 booths. This year’s event will highlight the 20th Anniversary of The Crooked Road, along with several other Southwest Virginia entities celebrating anniversaries. The IBMA Awards show will spotlight the Carter Family.
- The VA-1 Tourism Conference is scheduled for November 13–15 at The Homestead. The event will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of The Crooked Road.
- The Special Event & Festival Grant closes on September 26.
- The Microbusiness Grant closes on September 18.

16. Partner Update: The Crooked Road, Tyler Hughes

- The Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion is set for September 13–15, with The Crooked Road sponsoring 6-7 bands as part of the 20th Anniversary celebration.
- The Crooked Road hosted over two dozen concerts, celebrations, and events across the region to mark the 20th Anniversary, including celebrations at the Country Cabin in Norton, the Rex Theater, Blue Ridge Music Center in Galax, and the Blue Ridge Institute and Museum in Ferrum, among others.
- The Crooked Road has been featured on the Virginia Commission for the Arts tour roster for several years and has utilized nearly all available funding, with only \$400 remaining. We plan to focus on expanding The Crooked Road Tour in the near future.
- Celebrated the 10th anniversary of Dylan Locke and Heather Krantz’s ownership of the Floyd Country Store.
- IBMA is coming up, where we’ll host a showcase room for two nights, featuring 10 regional bands.
- The Crooked Road has partnered with Virginia Tourism for the VA-1 Tourism Conference.
- The Crooked Road was featured in a full story this summer in *Bluegrass Unlimited*, the leading bluegrass publication, in recognition of the anniversary.
- The Crooked Road recently highlighted on the Good Neighbor Podcast, based in the Tri-Cities, and on the Economic Development Show at WEHC at Emory & Henry College.



17. Regional Announcements

- Welcomed the new Friends of Southwest Virginia Board Chair, Aaron Sizemore.
- Reminder if there are items that need to be covered in the General Assembly next year to please connect with legislature this fall.

18. Approval of next meeting date – Delegate Will Morefield - Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. Motion to accept the next meeting date as presented by Senator Travis Hackworth. Second by Mike Cochran. Vote. Motion carried. abstains due to absence at last meeting.

19. Adjournment – Delegate Will Morefield

