

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee – Education Studio
Draft Minutes
January 22, 2025 10 a.m.

Members Attending: John Avoli, Steve Landes, Ned Ruby, Peggy Sheets, Paul Vames,

Members Absent: Katrina Callsen, Ron Capps,

Guests Attending:

Staff Attending: Butch Smiley, Cliff Edwards, Lydia Volskis, Dorette Sobolewski

I. Call to Order and Welcome Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Board and Committee Chair Peggy Sheets called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

II. Approve October 2024 Minutes Mrs. Sheets

The October 2024 meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

III. Agency Update Mr. Butch Smiley

A. Calendar of Events 2025

B. Director of Interpretation position

Mr. Smiley reported that year-to-date attendance is 30,441, a bit less than last year at this time, however the Museum did not hold Oktoberfest due to construction planning. In March and April the Museum will host about 3,000 students from Newport News on several dates. He continued that Museum staff are currently conducting interviews for the Director of Interpretation position.

Mr. Smiley said that the Museum has received formal approval for the gallery building permit and that Mr. Edwards would share more information later in the meeting. He reviewed the Calendar of Events for 2025 and asked that the Committee approve the calendar. Mr. Avoli made a motion that the Committee approve the Calendar of Events for 2025, the motion was seconded by Mr. Landes, there was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Gallery and Mill permitting process Mr. Cliff Edwards

Mr. Edwards reported that we have the gallery building permit and will meet with Kjellstrom and Lee this Friday to discuss next steps. The, within the next couple of weeks we will participate in a pre-construction meeting with all stakeholders in the project. Estimated start date is early March.

He continued that the Mill project is progressing, and the building permit is expected soon. The cost of the Mill construction is about 2.3 million which covers construction, and a project manager position. He has bids, and is ready to award the contract and proceed.

Mr. Edwards said that the brush clearing project on the front property has been affected by the weather, but that it will begin again soon.

Mrs. Sheets said that the press release will wait until we have started construction, and several other details are in place. She hopes to possibly use the April Board of Trustees meeting to launch the press release.

Mr. Ruby asked how the Mill will enter the timeline; Mr. Edwards said that it will be constructed during the same time as the Gallery, but with a different contractor.

V. **Foundation Report**

Senator Emmett Hanger

- A. Capital Campaign Progress
- B. Smithsonian Affiliation Application
- C. Visit to JYF re temporary gallery exhibits

Mrs. Sheets reported on behalf of Senator Hanger and said that Foundation employee Ann Rogan is concentrating more on grant-writing than events and has recently written grants for the Trailblazers Fund to the Perry Foundation, the Shenandoah County Foundation, and the Old Point National Bank for the Newport News field trips. She has also recently collaborated with Dorette Sobolewski to apply for a \$10,000 history grant for between 11-13 architectural panels/signs for the 1850's site.

They have also collaborated on a Virginia Humanities grant for several more scholars to support the gallery content, particularly concentrating on the West African and American Indian sites.

Ms. Rogan has also planned grant applications to the Community Foundation for multi-year use as well as Dominion Energy, both for Trailblazers field trips. The Charles Fun renewal grant application will also be due soon; this grant is on a three-year cycle.

Mrs. Sheets continued that once the benchmark of all Foundation Board of Directors Members supporting the capital campaign is met, Ms. Rogan can apply for more grants. About seven new sources have been identified.

The Capital campaign has raised \$1,446,000 so far with no advertising. The Annual Fund has raised \$53,000 and runs through the end of June. The Development Committee is working to plan the 20th anniversary Golf Tournament at Ironwood in May 2025.

Mr. Vames asked how much it costs to host one child on a field trip. Mrs. Sheets said that it varies, =depending on the type of program etc. and noted that most schools receiving aid apply it to transportation costs.

Mr. Avoli asked about the status of loans or gifts of objects from Mr. Gordon Barlowe. Mrs. Sheets said that several staff will visit him next week and look at some objects. We will also offer his new book in the Museum Store.

VI. Old Business

Mrs. Sheets

A. Permanent Gallery content update

Ms. Dorette Sobolewski

Director of Research Dorette Sobolewski reviewed elevations of the exhibit, beginning with the place she ended at the September Board of Trustees meeting. She began with Section 7 “Building a Nation” and continued through the end of the exhibit. She also reviewed the timeline for exhibit progress, which lasts through August 2025, with fabrication beginning in the Fall. Mr. Vames asked about the timeline of the gallery content, and Ms. Sobolewski said that it is chronological.

Mr. Landes asked how many objects will be included in the exhibit with the panels and other information. Ms. Sobolewski responded that about 66 items will be included. Mr. Landes asked if there will be built-in flexibility to add or change or remove parts of the exhibit as needed. Ms. Sobolewski said that there will be flexibility and noted that the staff have emphasized to design team PRD that this is a necessity.

Mr. Smiley said that this is why the adjacent, changeable exhibit space is important, as the Museum will be able to host traveling exhibits and exhibits from other groups and organizations.

Mrs. Sheets said that she, Ms. Sobolewski and Ms. Ann Rogan from the Foundation recently traveled to visit with staff of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation to learn about their changing exhibit space. She continued that Ms. Rogan is currently investigating how the Museum might become a Smithsonian affiliate organization.

VII. New Business

Mrs. Sheets

A. Reminder of Financial Disclosure

Mrs. Sheets reminded everyone that they should complete their financial disclosure forms before the end of the month and said that Ms. Volskis will be available to help as needed.

VIII. Closed session

Mrs. Sheets, Committee

A. Real Estate Committee report

The Committee determined that there was no need for a closed session.

IX. Next Meeting (February TBD)

Mrs. Sheets

The next meeting is set for Wednesday February 26 at 10 a.m. in the Lecture Hall.

X. Adjournment

Mrs. Sheets

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.