

Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees
Executive Committee – Lower Octagonal Barn
Draft Minutes
September 16, 2025 2 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Katrina Callsen

Guests Attending: None

Staff Attending: Butch Smiley, Cliff Edwards, Lydia Volskis

I. Call to Order and Welcome Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Board and Committee chair Peggy Sheets called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

II. Approve April 2025 Minutes Mrs. Sheets

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as distributed.

III. Agency Update Mr. Butch Smiley

Mr. Smiley reported that The Museum is ready to submit its capital budget request to Richmond. This includes requests for funds to relocate the West African and Native American sites, complete the full loop road, address salary compression, and add ten new positions for the new gallery's care and use.

He continued that attendance has been a bit less than at the same time last year, however this was expected due to the construction project, and not holding the Adventures at the Museum event which brought in several thousand guests.

Mr. Smiley said that he and Fiscal Director Chase Chandler recently had a good meeting on the Quarterly Management Report with the Secretary of Education and her team.

The draft Calendar of Events for 2026 is almost finished and will be presented to the Committee at their next meeting.

He said that the reconstituted Teacher's Advisory Committee met for the first time here at the Museum in July, and the Museum received some great feedback from the teachers. They will meet again in early 2026.

Mr. Smiley noted that most school administrators support field trips, but often face various challenges such as transportation, testing schedules and student behavior.

He said that Mr. Edwards will give a report on changes to rental fees and construction progress.

V. Foundation Report Senator Emmett Hanger

Mrs. Sheets gave the Foundation report on behalf of Senator Hnger. She said that the Foundation has extended the contract for the DeJarnette property through December and noted that the developer is working with the city on various points. She also said that there is another interested developer should this group decide against developing the property. The Foundation will restructure its staffing, and plans to run an annual fund campaign beginning in October. Ann Rogan, Foundation grantwriter, has recently completed a \$100,000 grant to the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation and will learn if it is successful in November. She is working on several other grants. The Foundation recently received a grant form the Nelson County Community Foundation of \$3000 to allow students from that area to come to the Museum on field trips. Mr. Vames asked about the timeline for the Foundation to raise \$5 million for the gallery. Mrs. Sheets said that 2 million is raised/on hand already and that there is no set deadline.

VI. Old Business

Mrs. Sheets

A. Construction and Mill update

Mr. Cliff Edwards

Deputy Director Cliff Edwards reported that construction of the new gallery is on time and is staying within budget. The back walls of the gallery are nearly done and about half of the waer lines have been placed. The foundation for the maintenance building has been poured and the new portion of the main parking lot should be finished in October. He complimented Kjellstrom and Lee, the contracting firm, for their work and for good communication. Later in the Fall the temporary ticket office/trailer and trailer bathrooms will arrive and be placed so that renovation can begin on the current visitor's center.

He reported that changes are recommended to the fee structure and pricing of the Museum's rental spaces, to align them with other local venues and gain a stronger income stream for the Museum. The Museum will no longer do tent rentals and reserve the use of tents for our own events. Those renting a space can contact several local companies if they need to rent a tent. He said that the fee structure would be reviewed at the October 10 Board of Trustees meeting. Next year he recommends a review of general admission process to the Museum. Mr. Landes made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ruby, that the new fee structure be presented to the Board of Trustees in October. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Business

Mrs. Sheets

Mrs. Sheets reported that longtime Board of Trustees and Foundation Board Member Ron Capps has resigned as he and his wife have moved to the Atlanta Georgia area. Mrs. Sheets asked Mr. Landes if he would fill the role of Interim Vice-Chair until the next Board election and he agreed. She reported that four new Trustees have been appointed by the Governor and will attend orientation soon. They are" Michael Lawson, Steven Wilson, Carolyn Bragg and John Bowers. Mrs. Sheets previewed the draft agenda for the October 10th Board of Trustees meeting and described topics to be discussed.

She reminded the Committee that Mr. Smiley would be retiring on June 30, 2026, and said that she will form a small committee to screen applications and then send several final cansisates to the Executive Committee. She will work on the job description and other support materials during the Fall with the plan to advertise the position just after the new year. It is possible the Museum will need to have legislative language approved to allow the Foundation to supplement the limited state

salary, in order to attract a good candidate pool. Mr. Landes suggested that she speak to the legislators on the Board so that they can be of help. Mrs. Sheets said that she will cover the topic broadly at the October meeting. Some discussion followed.

Mrs. Sheets said that there will be several updates to the collections policy for the Board to approve, and that Curator David Puckett will have a summary ready. David will also present a list of items for deaccessioning.

VIII. Closed session (if needed)

Mrs. Sheets, Committee

No closed session was needed.

IX. Next Meeting (November 12 or 13)

Mrs. Sheets

The next Committee meeting is set for Wednesday November 12 at 2 p.m. in the lower Octagonal Barn.

X. Adjournment

Mrs. Sheets

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.