



Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees

Thursday, December 11, 2025 | 1:00 P.M.

Minutes

- **Call to Order and Welcome** – David Matlock (serving in for Delegate Will Morefield)
The meeting was called to order by David Matlock, serving in the absence of Delegate Will Morefield, Chair of the Board.
- **Roll Call** – Kim Davis
Attending: Delegate James Will Morefield, Senator Todd Pillion (v), Leo Priddy (proxy for Kevin Byrd), Becky Nave, Hailey Allison, Aaron Sizemore, Ellen Reynolds, Leah Ross, Dr. Adam C. Hutchison, David Matlock, Rita McClenny, Ruby Rogers (v), Josh Hess (v), Sharon Buchanan (v)
v = *Virtual*

Absent: Senator T. Travis Hackworth, Delegate Sam Rasoul, Delegate Amy Laufer, Scotty Wampler, Michael Cochran, Saul Hernandez, Julie Walters Steele, Deborah Milton, Maggie Beal

Staff Attending: Kim Davis, Catherine Fox, Jessica Lawrence, Tracey Childress, Tina Murray, Erin Simons, Ryan Vaughan and Paula Hurt

Guest: Tyler Hughes

- **Public Comment** – No individuals registered to present public comment during this meeting.
- **Adoption of Agenda** – Mr. Matlock presented the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Rita McClenny and seconded by Ellen Reynolds. The motion carried unanimously.
- **Approval of Minutes from September 2025** – Mr. Matlock presented the minutes from the September 2025 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Aaron Sizemore and seconded by Rita McClenny. The motion carried unanimously.
- **Executive Director Report** – Kim Davis

Mrs. Kim Davis provided the Executive Director's Report. She formally welcomed Tracey Childress as the new Administration Manager, noting the transition of the previous staff member to a Planning District Commission role. Mrs. Davis reported that the position received more than 100 applicants and highlighted Ms. Childress's 15 years of administrative and nonprofit experience, including her expertise in group tour operations.

Mrs. Davis reflected on the past year, emphasizing the importance of recognizing organizational accomplishments. She highlighted completion of the Gateways of Southwest Virginia Outdoor Recreation Planning Project, continued Hurricane Helene Outdoor Recreation Recovery efforts, and completion of the Downtown Inventory and Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy in partnership with Virginia Main Street. She also reported on the successful launch of Blue Ridge Rising, a multi-state initiative along the Blue Ridge Parkway, the hosting of the Blue Ridge Rising Summit, and the groundbreaking of the Big Stone Gap Pump Track.

Mrs. Davis noted continued organizational growth through expanded staffing, strengthened grant and financial management practices, and improved training and onboarding. She reported that the 'Round the Mountain



Artisan Network celebrated its 20th anniversary, hosted an anniversary conference, expanded training opportunities, and increased artisan membership by 20 percent.

Marketing and public relations highlights included two media tours, a large-scale public relations campaign, and preparation for the fourth annual Tourism Awards. Leadership development achievements were also noted, including Mrs. Davis's graduation from Lead Virginia, Jen Otey's graduation from the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute, and her acceptance into the Appalachian Leadership Institute. Additional recognition included Made in the South Awards by Garden & Gun for Erin Simons and Laurel Ridge Studios.

Mrs. Davis provided an update on the staffing agreement with the Clinch River Valley Initiative, noting that the agreement was reviewed and approved by legal counsel and that the position is funded by the Anne and Gene Worrell Foundation, with posting anticipated in early 2026.

Mrs. Davis also reported that the organization has decided to move forward with establishing a second office location in Pulaski and is working in partnership with Pulaski County. She noted that funding for the space was previously budgeted and that discussions are underway regarding a potential visitor center presence and a second 'Round the Mountain gallery and retail space.

- **Financials – Paula Hurt**

Mrs. Paula Hurt presented the financial report for the period ending September 30, 2025. She reviewed cash position, receivables and payables, and year-to-date revenue and expenditures for Friends of Southwest Virginia and the 'Round the Mountain Artisan Network, confirming alignment with board-approved budgets and organizational priorities.

Mrs. Hurt reported that 'Round the Mountain operating cash totaled \$69,060, with accounts receivable of \$44,081 and accounts payable of \$1,693. For Friends of Southwest Virginia, operating cash totaled \$635,891 and savings totaled \$552,917. Accounts receivable totaled \$62,490, and accounts payable totaled \$92,813. Friends reported net income of \$21,702 for the period.

Mrs. Hurt emphasized the organization's strong cash position, positive net income, and continued adherence to sound financial management and grant compliance requirements. She also provided an update on the FY 25 audit conducted by Bostic Tucker, noting that fieldwork is underway and that the interim compliance audit for the Big Stone Gap Pump Track was completed successfully.

- **Deputy Director of Operations Report**

Ms. Tina Murray provided an operational update for the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center & Marketplace. She reported completion of facility maintenance projects, including repairs related to a sprinkler system leak, flooring repairs, and conference room paint upgrades. Ms. Murray also highlighted a robust schedule of programming and events, including group tours, educational programming, seasonal events, and community activities. She further reported her role in coordinating planning efforts for the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference held in November.

- **Marketing Update – Ryan Vaughn & Catherine Fox**

Mr. Ryan Vaughan and Ms. Catherine Fox provided a comprehensive marketing update. Mr. Vaughan reported on public relations results for the current campaign period, including 186 published placements, more than 10.7 billion impressions, and an estimated media value exceeding \$68.7



million. Regional and statewide campaigns generated significant traffic to partner sites and VisitSWVA.org.

Ms. Fox provided updates on ongoing initiatives, including market research, photography and videography projects, website redevelopment across multiple organizational platforms, and implementation of a digital asset management system.

- **Development Update** – Kim Davis and Catherine Fox
Mrs. Davis and Ms. Fox provided a development update. The Board received a presentation from Place + Main Advisors regarding completion of the Downtown Inventory and Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy. Mrs. Davis reported that the Big Stone Gap Pump Track was completed ahead of schedule, with the skatepark expected to be completed by December 19 and a ribbon cutting planned for spring.

Updates were also provided on Hurricane Helene recovery efforts, including trail assessments and High-Definition Stream Survey data collection on the New River. Ms. Fox reported on progress related to the Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Assessment and Development Initiative and provided an overview of recent and pending grant applications.

- **Old Business**
None.
- **New Business** – Kim Davis
Mrs. Davis provided an update on the governance review between Friends of Southwest Virginia and the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation. Legal counsel Freddie Mullins completed an initial review, and a short-term Joint Governance Committee has been established to review findings and identify areas requiring clarification. No decisions or votes were taken. Any proposed recommendations will be brought back to both boards for consideration.

Mrs. Davis also provided an overview of anticipated priorities for 2026, focused on regional planning, recovery, marketing, digital infrastructure, workforce development, and long-term organizational sustainability.

- **Partner Update:** ‘Round the Mountain, Kim Davis & Erin Simons
Mrs. Ellen Reynolds, Chair of ‘Round the Mountain and Mrs Davis provided an update on the ‘Round the Mountain Artisan Network, including membership and program activity. The network currently includes 241 members, with 175 juried members, representing a broad geographic distribution across Southwest Virginia. Staff highlighted continued growth and engagement across the region.

Updates were also shared on the Community Mural Initiative, which is advancing in multiple communities, including Wytheville, Galax, Pulaski, and Big Stone Gap, with support from the Appalachian Regional Commission and local partners. These projects are intended to support placemaking, community identity, and creative economy development.

Staff also noted ongoing marketing and outreach efforts tied to the 20th Anniversary of the ‘Round the Mountain Artisan Network, aimed at increasing visibility, participation, and regional impact.



- **Partner Update:** Virginia Tourism Corporation, Rita McClenny
Ms. Rita McClenny shared that long-time Virginia Tourism Corporation Vice President Chris Cainfield is retiring and expressed appreciation for his many years of service and contributions to the tourism industry. She also provided an update on the December 18, 2025 groundbreaking event in Damascus celebrating the Virginia Creeper Trail. Ms. McClenny announced that passports for the VA250 commemoration are now available for pickup at all Virginia Welcome Centers and noted that Tourism Day on the Hill will take place January 26–27, with registration now open.
- **Partner Update:** The Crooked Road, Tyler Hughes/Leah Ross
Mrs. Leah Ross, Chair of The Crooked Road, expressed appreciation for the staff’s hard work and continued dedication. Mr. Tyler Hughes provided an update on current initiatives, including the installation of wayside panels, the addition of new events, participation in festivals, and expanded children’s programming. He shared that five new affiliate locations will be announced in January and noted that the Board has transitioned from 47 members to a more streamlined group of 19. Mr. Hughes also reported that the newly launched mobile app has been very successful, with advertising opportunities now available, and that The Crooked Road is working with East Tennessee State University to develop service-learning opportunities.
- **Approval of next meeting date**
Thursday, March 12, 2026
- **Adjournment** – Delegate Will Morefield, Chair