

Friends of the Museums of Florida History, Inc.
MEETING MINUTES
10:00 a.m., Thursday, September 19, 2019
Gallery for Innovation and the Arts (First Floor)
R. A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Participants

Directors: Mr. Steve Birtman, Chair; Mr. Lester Abberger (on phone); Ms. Monesia Brown; Mr. Andrew Collins; Ms. Kathy Guilday; Ms. Lena Juarez; Ms. Laura Rogers

Staff: Ms. Lisa Barton; Dr. Jeana Brunson; Ms. Jennifer Kennedy; Dr. Thomas Robinson; Ms. Kaitlin Silcox

Guests: Mr. Scott Hilton, Wells Fargo Advisors

I. Call to Order

Mr. Birtman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

II. Introduction of Board, Staff, and Guests

Mr. Birtman welcomed all board members, staff members, and guests attending the meeting on the phone and in person. Meeting participants introduced themselves. Mr. Birtman made a motion to adopt the agenda.

III. Adoption of Agenda

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH AGENDA: Ms. Guilday

SECOND: Ms. Brown

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

IV. Chair's Comments

Mr. Birtman declined to make comments, saying he wanted to keep the meeting moving since he would like to keep the meeting to an hour or less.

V. Consent Items

Mr. Birtman inquired if there were questions about the minutes on the consent agenda. Ms. Brown asked if staff sent a letter to former Board member Sam Vickers to thank him for his service. Mr. Birtman stated they had and he had a card for Board members to sign with him, which would be sent to Mr. Vickers.

Note: Consent items up for vote were provided to the Board in advance via email.

A. Meeting Minutes from June 13, 2019 quarterly board meeting

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 13, 2019 MINUTES: Ms. Rogers

SECOND: Ms. Juarez

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

B. Financial Report through August 2019

Mr. Birtman asked if there were any questions or concerns on the financial reports. There were no questions so Mr. Birtman asked for a motion to approve the financial reports.

MOTION TO APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORT: Mr. Collins

SECOND: Ms. Rogers

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

VI. Business Items

A. Financials

1. Endowments Progress Report

Mr. Birtman asked Mr. Hilton to discuss the endowments. Mr. Hilton said the best way to describe the current climate was to look back. In prior months, interest rates were going up, but now rates were declining. Two rate cuts occurred since the last Board meeting. Shorter term rates are higher than longer term rates, which could lead to a recession.

Despite this, earnings have still been pretty good overall for the endowments. The Charles Knott account was up 9.45% at the end of June and was up 11.4% the day before the Board meeting. The James Knott account was up 14.79% at the end of June and was up 16% the day before the Board meeting. The Cultural Endowment is up 2.3% year to date. Mr. Hilton indicated that the Cultural Endowment is set up with fixed income CDs, which are staggered in 6-month, 12-month, and 18-month increments. Mr. Hilton indicated that the Cultural Endowment typically yields about \$14,000 in income annually, but that might change because interest rates for CDs are dropping.

Overall, Mr. Hilton thinks things are relatively positive, but he'll look at everything at the end of 2019 to see if anything needs to be rebalanced. Mr. Abberger agreed with that sentiment. Mr. Collins asked if lower yields would affect programming. Dr. Robinson stated that the Cultural Endowment funds are typically used to pay for accounting and auditing costs and if a new café tenant moved in, the income from the café would allow for less money coming out of the Cultural Endowment to cover those accounting and auditing costs. Dr. Robinson also pointed out that in this fiscal year's budget, staff was mindful of the current market situation and took out less money than normal to be cautious.

Mr. Birtman stated that he was pleased as much as he can be and asked Mr. Hilton when he thought he might rebalance. Mr. Hilton stated that would probably happen in January 2020.

B. Future Temporary Exhibit Update

Mr. Birtman called on Ms. Barton to explain about an upcoming temporary exhibit, which he thinks will be exciting, although will necessitate some fundraising. Ms. Barton told the Board that the Museum had signed a contract in the summer to bring a traveling exhibit, called *Spirits of the Passage*, from the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in Key West. The exhibit is designed around artifacts from the shipwreck of the Henrietta Marie, a slave ship that was sunk off the Keys. An earlier version of this exhibit did come to the Museum of Florida History many years ago, but the exhibit has been expanded and updated.

Ms. Barton stated there are about 100 artifacts in the exhibit, more than 30 interpretive panels, and there are sound stations and lesson plans that go with the exhibit as well. The exhibit has traveled all over the country and was most recently at the Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, Mississippi. Ms. Barton believes there are many opportunities for collaborative programming with community partners. The exhibit will come to the Museum from February to April 2022, which is a busy time for school groups. Ms. Barton said staff would rely on the Board for input and for assistance in covering costs of the exhibit.

Ms. Barton turned it over to Dr. Robinson to discuss the fundraising plan. Dr. Robinson stated that the Department of State paid the first installment of the rental fee. There is still an outstanding final payment for the rental fee, which is \$37,500. Staff is proposing that the FMFH covers \$25,000 of that. Dr. Robinson stated that staff is currently budgeting \$15,000 for educational programming so the total cost to the FMFH would be \$40,000.

Ms. Brown asked if something could be provided to the Board to give a better idea of the fundraising plan. Dr. Robinson stated that he was working on a fundraising packet and could likely provide that at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Guilday thought getting local partners, such as Florida A&M University, would be ideal. Ms. Brown agreed, stating that she thought FAMU, Florida State University, and Tallahassee Community College on board, as sponsors or program partners, should be explored.

Ms. Brown asked how the cost of this exhibit compares to other past exhibits. Dr. Brunson stated that the cost for the Napoleon exhibit was much larger, but exhibits that are produced in-house, such as the recent surfing exhibit, tend to be a little less costly. Ms. Guilday asked when the final rental agreement payment was due. Ms. Barton stated it was due in January 2021.

Mr. Birtman stated that at the next Board meeting he would like to see a fundraising plan to discuss. He also suggested that this should be a standing agenda item at the next few Board meetings. Mr. Birtman added that everyone on the Board would need to assist with this in some way, whether it was identifying potential donors or helping spread the word.

C. Florida's History Shops Point of Sale System Update

Mr. Birtman asked Ms. Silcox to discuss the History Shops updating their point of sale system. Ms. Silcox stated that she had narrowed the options down to two systems, which could be found in the Board notebook. There were positives and negatives for each, but she felt a cloud-based system called Vend was the best option due to its flexibility and risk factor. She also thought Vend is similar to what the History Shops currently use so the transition would be somewhat seamless. Dr. Robinson added that he and Ms. Silcox discussed the proposed switch with the Department of State's IT staff and the IT staff felt a cloud-based system was the best option.

Ms. Silcox if any Board members had any questions about the switch of systems. Ms. Brown asked what the difference in cost will be. Ms. Silcox state that we currently pay \$1,200 per year for tech support for the current POS system and that cost would not carry forward. Ms. Brown asked what could be done better with a new system. Ms. Silcox stated that inventory and sales would be much easier with a new system. Ms. Silcox also thinks that generating reports for each of the three FHS stores would be easier and more convenient.

Mr. Birtman asked if a new POS system would help with remote sales. Ms. Silcox said that the new system would help with remote sales and is actually one of the main benefits to the new system. Ms. Silcox did inform the Board that some new hardware, such as chip readers, would have to be purchased for the new system.

Ms. Silcox stated that she and Dr. Robinson had discussed how to absorb the cost of the new POS system. They decided that cuts in some areas, such as office supplies and payroll, which was overestimated in the budget, would help absorb the annual costs associated with the new system. There were no more questions and the consensus of the Board was to defer to management and move forward since there were no strong objections.

D. Updates on café

Mr. Birtman asked Dr. Robinson if he could give an update on the café. Dr. Robinson said that he was happy to inform the Board that there was a proposal from the owner of Klassic Katering and the Valhalla Grill to open a café in the vacant space, tentatively named Café de Leon. Dr. Robinson stated that the owner has already provided a sample menu and discussed ideas for catering.

Mr. Birtman stated he had a couple of questions. He asked if there was a way to get buy in from people in the Gray Building so people who work in the building come down to the café. Dr. Robinson stated that the Dean of FSU's Law School has asked to know when the café opens. There was also the possibility of sending an email to all DOS employees and the café would be promoted on social media. Mr. Birtman asked where things stood in terms of collecting rent from the café. In other words, Mr. Birtman was curious if the Friends enticed the owner with discounts and, therefore, the rent would be lower than what previous tenants paid. Dr. Robinson stated that no discounts were offered and the rent structure would be the same as previous tenants.

Ms. Rogers asked if the letter of agreement would be annual, every two years, or open-ended? Dr. Robinson stated that the letter of agreement with the previous tenant was open-ended, but staff were leaning toward doing an annual or two-year agreement and he was open to input from the Board. Mr. Birtman stated he thought staff should decide the length of terms but just wanted to make sure staff was doing everything to make the café was successful. Ms. Guilday suggested placing a “coming soon” sign on the café door to help generate attention and staff agreed that was a good idea.

(At this point in the meeting, Secretary of State Laurel M. Lee entered the meeting to honor Dr. Brunson, who was retiring at the end of the month.)

VII. Other Business

A. Upcoming events

Because food from the potential café vendor arrived and the meeting was running longer than expected, Mr. Birtman requested that the Board skip over the upcoming events section of the agenda, unless there were any objections. There were none.

B. Wrap Up

Mr. Birtman asked if there were any questions before he wrapped up. There were no questions.

VIII. Public Comment:

IX. Adjourn

Mr. Birtman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING: Mr. Collins
SECOND: Ms. Guilday
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Presented by Mr. Steve Birtman, Chair

Dated: _____