

Friends of the Museums of Florida History, Inc.
MEETING MINUTES
10:00 a.m., Friday, April 2, 2021
By Conference Call Only

Participants

Directors: Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair; Mr. Lester Abberger; Mr. Steve Birtman; Mr. Andrew Collins; Ms. Kathy Guilday; Ms. Lena Juarez; Dr. Dennis Moore; Mr. Jon Moyle

Staff: Ms. Lisa Barton; Dr. Thomas Robinson; Ms. Kaitlin Silcox

Guests: Mr. Scott Hilton, Wells Fargo Advisors

I. Call to Order

Ms. Rogers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. Introduction of Board, Staff, and Guests

Ms. Rogers welcomed all board members, staff members, and guests attending the meeting.

III. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Rogers made a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH AGENDA: Ms. Juarez

SECOND: Dr. Moore

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

IV. Chair's Comments

Ms. Rogers pointed out that it has been an entire year since most businesses and organizations have shut down. Ms. Rogers stated that she has been pleased with the virtual programming the museum staff has offered in light of building closures. Mr. Abberger asked if staff could provide an update on the status of the building. Ms. Barton stated that there was no information on when the building will re-open to the public, but museum staff would let board members know as soon as they had any information.

V. Consent Items

Ms. Rogers inquired if there were questions about the minutes or the financial report on the consent agenda. There were no questions so Ms. Rogers asked for a motion to accept the minutes and the financial report at the same time.

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

A. Meeting Minutes from January 21, 2021 quarterly board meeting

B. Financial Report through February 2021

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY MEETING MINUTES AND THE FINANCIAL REPORT: Ms.

Rogers

SECOND: Ms. Guilday

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

VI. Business Items

A. Financials

1. FMFH FY 2019-2020 Audit

Ms. Rogers reminded board members that the annual audit was discussed at the January board meeting and there would not be another presentation of the audit. She also reminded board members that the two pieces of information that needed

to be added to the draft audit had been included in the final version. She asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Collins stated that he was glad to see the information that was missing from the draft audit was now included and he thought everything was good. There were no other comments.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FMFY FY 2019-2020 AUDIT: Ms. Rogers
SECOND: Mr. Abberger
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

2. Endowments Progress Report

Ms. Rogers introduced Mr. Hilton to discuss the endowments. Mr. Hilton stated that interest rates for long-term bonds were going up, which has an effect on mortgage rates. Mr. Hilton stated that interest rates are worth watching because they can have an effect on the stock market, but also the bonds and money market accounts that some of the endowments are invested in.

Mr. Hilton then discussed each individual endowment. The Charles Knott Endowment currently is at \$161,374, which is up about 0.3% for the year. That account is invested heavily in bonds, which has tempered returns so far this year. The James Knott Endowment stands at \$228,670, which is up 3.3% year to date. The Cultural Endowment stands at \$638,721, which is up 0.1% year to date. Mr. Hilton closed by stating the he remains cautiously optimistic for the rest of 2021, but he is not expecting quite the same rate of return as the endowments saw in 2020.

Mr. Hilton opened up the floor to questions. Mr. Birtman asked Mr. Hilton if the volatility of the bond market continues for the next few years, would it be possible to adjust the portfolio of the endowments to get a better rate of return? Mr. Hilton stated that it would be possible to adjust the portfolio if the fixed income bond market was deemed too volatile or risky or the interest rates remain low or inconsistent. For example, Mr. Hilton stated that there are high interest, short-term corporate bonds that could be utilized, but that did not seem necessary yet. Mr. Birtman asked if there were any markers worth paying attention to that would show short-term inflation was occurring. Mr. Hilton stated that energy prices are usually an indicator, although weather-related issues can make energy prices spike at times.

There were no other questions so Ms. Rogers thanked Mr. Hilton for his presentation.

B. Updating Check Control Measures

1. Recommended change to Article VII, Section 6

Ms. Rogers asked Mr. Collins and Dr. Robinson to discuss the work they have been doing on updating the control measures for checks. Dr. Robinson asked board members to refer to the document named "Check Research" that shows how many checks of \$1,000 or more were cut in a typical year. Dr. Robinson stated that this document shows how often a board member would have to serve as a signer on checks if the by-law language was updated to require a signature on expenditures of \$1,500 or more. Dr. Robinson reminded board members that currently, the by-laws require a board member, typically the Treasurer, to approve checks over \$1,000, but the approval is completed by e-mail and does not require a signature on the check. Dr. Robinson stated that if the by-laws were updated, there are probably about fifteen to twenty checks per year that would require a signature from a designated board member.

Mr. Birtman asked if there was a specific reason why the staff decided to pursue this change. Dr. Robinson stated that the impetus was not anything the FMFH was not doing or any gaps in controls, but as part of the process of the CSO moving into the Division of Historical Resources, the thought was that the by-laws of the FMFH should be updated to be more in line with other DHR CSOs. Ms. Barton added that the other impetus was making sure the control measures were similar to other non-profits.

Mr. Collins added that he thought adding the control measures was a good idea because it is a standardization of operating measures that is seen with other organizations. Mr. Collins added that since the bulk of the checks are under the \$1,500 threshold, the operational reality of the day to day would probably not be affected greatly.

Dr. Robinson alerted board members to the document titled "Updating By-laws" showing the proposed updated language in the FMFH By-laws. Dr. Robinson highlighted that the changes would include the requirement of a board member

signature on checks over \$1,500. Dr. Robinson added that staff did write the updated by-law language in a way that was flexible so that if time was of the essence with a check, the board chair could approve the expenditure by e-mail if the Treasurer or another designated board member was not available to serve as the second signer.

Ms. Rogers asked if there was any more discussion on the proposed by-law change. Mr. Collins wondered if there were two signature lines on the check but some of the checks were only signed by one person, would the check still clear the bank? Dr. Robinson stated that Ms. Silcox was assisting the Friends of Florida History and they have one signature line on their checks and two people sign on the one check line to avoid the issue that Mr. Collins asked about. Dr. Robinson stated that he would look into the issue further.

Ms. Rogers stated that she did not think it was a hardship on staff or the board to coordinate the signing of the checks so she thought it was good idea to move forward with updating the by-law language.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGE TO ARTICLE VII, SECTION 6 OF THE FMFH

BY-LAWS: Mr. Abberger

SECOND: Mr. Collins

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

C. Update on *Spirits of the Passage*

Ms. Barton let board members know that staff have been able to nail down dates for when the *Spirits* exhibit would be on display at the Museum of Florida History, although the dates are flexible in case anything unexpected comes up to delay the exhibition. As of now, the exhibit will be at MFH from February 17 to May 9, 2022. Those dates would be in the middle of legislative session and during what is normally a busy school tour season. The closing date would also allow for Florida History Day participants to view the exhibit. The next step is to start to flesh out the programming schedule for the exhibit so that programming costs could be included in the FY 2021-2022 budget that the board will approve in June. Ms. Barton stated that currently staff is planning for an opening reception, perhaps a preview reception for members, at least three evening programs, including a screening of a new documentary on the slave trade, and normal monthly programs such as History at High Noon and Second Saturday. Ms. Barton added that if schools are allowed to go on field trips in 2022, there has been discussion of providing subsidies to area schools for groups to come tour the exhibit.

Dr. Robinson added that one of the things that the education staff have discussed is to present programs that discuss slavery from different perspectives. In that vein, some potential programs could include music, foodways, archaeology, sociology, and things beyond history. The education staff wants to highlight slavery as not just static, but something that still reverberates to this day.

Mr. Birtman stated that he loved the idea of focusing on north Florida schools. Mr. Birtman thought it would be a good idea to work with area partners and local people when discussing program planning. Mr. Birtman added that he thought getting Florida State and Florida A&M involved would be helpful as well. Dr. Robinson agreed with Mr. Birtman and said that staff are trying to reach out to area partners and want to partner with as many organizations as possible in the state and region. Dr. Robinson added that Dr. Moore was able to get a meeting with FSU's Civil Rights Institute to discuss the exhibit and have them on board as a potential partner.

Dr. Moore said that he was excited about the prospect of some of the plans and agreed with Mr. Birtman's idea of reaching out the local universities to get them involved in whatever extent they can. Dr. Moore also suggested reaching out to the International African American Museum in Charleston and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Dr. Moore thought those institutions would at least spread the word if nothing else.

Ms. Guilday stated that she would like to see something that would appeal to a younger audience. Ms. Barton agreed and said that a lot of fourth graders come to the museum because they are studying Florida history and also added that the *Spirits* exhibit comes with an educational module that has already been developed. Ms. Guilday thought focusing educational materials for the fourth graders would be a good idea because she thinks they will come in large numbers.

Mr. Birtman asked if there were marketing materials that would allow board members to spread the word right now. Ms. Barton stated that she would need to check with department leadership before moving forward since the building remains

closed, but staff have been working on marketing and development materials related to the exhibit. Ms. Rogers suggested looking into grant opportunities to help support the education programs as well as the marketing aspect. Ms. Rogers also asked if there was a role for board members as the exhibit planning moves forward. Dr. Robinson stated he thought there would definitely be places where board members can help, from helping to spread the word, setting up meetings with potential partners, and eventually fundraising. Ms. Rogers stated that she thought setting up a brainstorming conference call with board members in the future would be a wise exercise.

D. Director's Comments

Ms. Barton stated that online programming is going strong and is getting a lot of views on social media. The education staff is also providing virtual tours for school groups. Ms. Barton reminded board members that Florida History Day judging will begin soon and plans are underway for a virtual 20th of May celebration with local partners.

E. Other Staff Updates

Ms. Silcox told board members that the MFH and New Capitol shops are open by appointment. Ms. Silcox stated that in March the New Capitol location had good sales numbers, so much so that they were stronger than the MFH location. Ms. Silcox added that the flag program is holding steady and has provided a bulk of the revenue since the building has been closed.

VII. Other Business

A. Upcoming events

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any upcoming events that were worth highlighting that were not already discussed. Ms. Barton said that there was a virtual evening program related to the anniversary of Florida becoming a United States Territory. Ms. Barton pointed out that the next program in that series would be April 22. That program would discuss free and enslaved African Americans in Florida during the territorial period. Ms. Barton stated people could sign up for the program on Facebook.

B. Wrap Up—Summary of Meeting Accomplishments

Ms. Rogers opened the floor for questions or comments. There were none. Since there were no questions and no members of the public on the call, Ms. Rogers suggested ending the meeting.

VIII. Public Comment:

IX. Adjourn

Ms. Rogers asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING: Ms. Rogers
SECOND: Ms. Juarez
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Presented by Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair

Dated: _____