

Friends of the Museums of Florida History, Inc.
MEETING MINUTES
10:00 a.m., Tuesday September 21, 2021
Room 307, R.A. Gray Building

Participants

Directors: Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair; Mr. Lester Abberger; Ms. Monesia Brown; Mr. Andrew Collins; Ms. Kathy Guilday; Ms. Lena Juarez; Dr. Dennis Moore

Staff: Mr. Trampas Alderman; 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 10:05 a.m.

II. Introduction of Board, Staff, and Guests

Ms. Rogers welcomed all board members, staff members, and guests attending the meeting. Ms. Rogers asked Mr. Alderman to introduce himself since he does not usually attend the board meetings.

III. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Rogers requested a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH AGENDA: Ms. Rogers

SECOND: Ms. Guilday

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

IV. Chair's Comments

Ms. Rogers wanted to thank everyone for sticking with the board and the museum during the past year. Ms. Rogers stated that now that the museum was open, she wanted to encourage board members to remain engaged since events and new exhibits would be coming soon.

V. Consent Items

Ms. Rogers inquired if there were questions about any items 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 June 10, 2021 quarterly board meeting

B. Financial Report through August 2021

MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT ITEMS: Ms. Rogers

SECOND: Mr. Abberger

MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

VI. Business Items

A. Financials

1. Endowments Progress Report

Ms. Rogers introduced Mr. Hilton to discuss the endowments. Mr. Hilton started with a broad overview of the economic outlook. Mr. Hilton stated that there had been market volatility in August and September largely due to some issues with a large real estate firm in China defaulting on payments, which led to fears that there could be a trickle down affect in the United States. Overall, Mr. Hilton stated corporate earnings have been good over the past few quarters and so the outlook

is positive. GDP is expected to grow over the final months of 2021. The biggest issue could be inflation, but the Federal Reserve expects any inflation to be temporary, although Mr. Hilton noticed that wage inflation can become a longer term issue. Unemployment is at 5.4% and is expected to drop to 4.7%. Mr. Hilton stated that this could cause interest rates to remain low for the next 18 to 24 months, which could impact the endowments.

Mr. Hilton then discussed each individual endowment. The Charles Knott Endowment currently is at \$172,501, which is up about 5.2% for the year. That account is invested heavily in bonds, which has tempered returns so far this year. The James Knott Endowment stands at \$245,191, which is up 10.8% year to date. The Cultural Endowment stands at \$637,551, which is up 0.5% year to date. Overall, Mr. Hilton stated that he thought the endowments were well positioned regardless of what happens and he remains optimistic about the long-term prospects. Mr. Hilton reminded board members that the annual distributions from the endowments for programming were made in early September.

Mr. Hilton opened up the floor to questions. There were no questions so Ms. Rogers thanked Mr. Hilton for his presentation.

B. Board Term Limit Discussion

1. Recommend change to Article VII, Section 7

Ms. Rogers asked staff to introduce the topic of updating the by-laws. Dr. Robinson reminded board members that several options for language to update the by-laws in relation to term limits were circulated after the June board meeting. The consensus of the board members was that the language up for vote at this board meeting was the best option. This would update the terms board members serve in two ways. First, board members would now serve two, three-year terms rather than three, two-year terms. Although board members would still serve six years total, the consensus was that three-year terms made more sense for a variety of reasons. Second, the board would be split so that half of the board would initially serve a two-year term and half would initially serve a three-year term. In other words, initial terms would be staggered so that people would not all expire at once. Dr. Robinson added that he would like to go ahead and deal with the initial terms by having people volunteer during the meeting if they felt comfortable doing so.

Ms. Rogers opened up the floor to discussion. Mr. Abberger stated that he thought the new by-law language made sense and he supported the changes. He did ask if there would be an opportunity for board members who have served for many years to transition to an emeritus status. Dr. Robinson stated that the by-law language does address that issue and would allow for board members to serve in an emeritus status. Ms. Guilday asked whether a board member could return to the board if they left for a few years, but wanted to return later. Dr. Robinson stated that a board member would be eligible to return to the board after an absence, but they would have to go through the approval process and be appointed by the Secretary of State again.

Dr. Moore suggested an amendment to the updated by-laws. Dr. Moore highlighted a wording issue with the proposed by-law language that made it unclear what allowed a board member to remain in good standing. Dr. Moore thought changing that sentence would clarify things and proposed a way to do so. Mr. Abberger agreed with Dr. Moore and thought the proposed update made the sentence clearer.

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any other questions or comments. Ms. Brown and Mr. Abberger both volunteered to serve initial two-year terms. Ms. Rogers requested to approve the by-law language, but with the updates that Dr. Moore proposed to the language that had been circulated by email.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED BY-LAW LANGUAGE: Ms. Rogers
SECOND: Dr. Moore
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

C. *Spirits of the Passage* Update

Ms. Rogers called on the staff to provide any updates they have on the *Spirits of the Passage* exhibit that is scheduled to open in February 2022. Mr. Alderman stated that he joined the meeting to discuss the educational programming for the exhibit. While the programming was still working its way through the approval process, Mr. Alderman thought these

programs would be approved. Mr. Alderman stated that the programming was going to be centered on the people and culture to put a face on the slave trade, rather than just focusing on slavery as an institution or particular events tied to slavery.

Mr. Alderman stated that the programming would start with an opening reception featuring remarks from Dr. Madeleine Burnside, who wrote the book on the exhibit and was integral to the creation of the original version of the exhibit. There will be a History at High Noon in February featuring an archaeologist that is working at Prospect Bluff. March will feature a Second Saturday with focused tours for children, a documentary screening on the third Thursday of the month as an evening program, likely in partnership with area organizations, and a History at High Noon featuring an underwater archaeologist. In April, staff is looking at holding a West African Culture Day on April 16, possibly in partnership with Florida State University's Civil Rights Institute. Also in April, there will be a keynote speaker or panel discussion as an evening event. The run of the exhibit will end in early May in conjunction with Florida History Day's open house at the Museum of Florida History.

Mr. Alderman asked if there were any questions related to the programming. Dr. Moore stated that he did not have a question, but he wanted to add that he thought the programming looked and sounded excellent. Ms. Rogers suggested working with FSU's Film School and WFSU to partner on events. Ms. Rogers also told staff they should use the board as a way to spread the word and bring people into the building once programming becomes finalized.

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any updates on funding. Dr. Robinson stated that staff had received a pledge of \$5,000 for programming related to *Spirits of the Passage* from a donor in Orlando. He added that staff would continue to push fundraising for the programming, which was budgeted at \$25,000. Ms. Rogers thought once the programming was finalized, sponsorship would probably become easier because there would be specifics to sell.

D. Other Staff Updates

Ms. Rogers asked staff if they had any other updates beyond what had already been discussed. Ms. Barton let board members know that over 12,000 people had come to the museum since it re-opened, the Summer Reading Program was very successful, and in-person events such as Second Saturday and History at High Noon are going strong again. Ms. Barton informed the board that the café is temporarily closed due to a staffing issue, but they hope to reopen soon.

Dr. Robinson added that thanks to the strong visitation that Ms. Barton highlighted, the donation box income was much higher than anticipated. Dr. Robinson stated that in accordance with requests to try to recruit new board members, advertisements for open board seats are going to be running with Leadership Tallahassee, the Institute for Nonprofit Innovation and Excellence, the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce, and the Council on Culture and the Arts. Ms. Rogers stated she was happy to hear that and said that she had a contact at Leadership Florida who could spread the word as well.

Ms. Silcox let board members know that the shop has been doing quite well compared to previous years. Sales have been back on level with 2018 and 2019. Ms. Silcox stated that he has been successful in recruiting new staff members and is now fully staffed. She added that the shop has been focused on selling current inventory rather than adding much new inventory, although she did state that new books had been acquired in relation to some upcoming programs. Ms. Rogers thanked Ms. Silcox and reminded board members to recommend the shop to friends and remember the shop when looking for gifts.

VII. Other Business

A. Upcoming events

Ms. Rogers asked if there were any upcoming events that were worth highlighting that were not already discussed. Mr. Alderman stated that there was an evening event on October 21 related to *Beyond the Vote* that would feature scholar Peggy MacDonald.

Dr. Robinson stated that he wanted to add two things he forgot to mention earlier. First, grants were awarded for 20th of May and Florida History Day. Second, Dr. Robinson said that he recently received a call from former board member Sam Vickers and Mr. Vickers wanted to say hello to everyone.

B. Wrap Up—Summary of Meeting Accomplishments

Ms. Rogers stated that the only thing she wanted to say at the end of the meeting was to remind board members to make sure they are members of the Friends and to encourage others to join. Ms. Brown asked Dr. Robinson if he could send reminders by email. Dr. Robinson stated he could and would send Ms. Brown's renewal reminder electronically. Ms. Silcox stated that people can pay for their memberships through the shop's website as well.

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. Brown
MOTION PASSED WITH NO OBJECTION

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Presented by Ms. Laura Rogers, Chair

Dated: _____