

Heritage Alliance
Of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 21, 2023, 5:30 pm
Community Room, Visitors Center, Jonesborough, TN

Attending: Nick Andrews, Charlene Cleveland; Fred Counts; Dana Ensor; Hal Hunter; Meghan Kieta; Pat Wolfe, Mark Edmonds, Mike Floyd, Cari Jarman, Jack Van Zandt

Absent: Terry Countermine

Staff: Anne Mason

BCD: Kim Coker

The meeting was called to order by President Fred Counts at 5:31 PM.

No one had requested to speak to the board. Public Comment was closed.

President's Report: Fred Counts shared that the recent storm and possible tornado had seriously damaged the roof of the Salvage Warehouse. Temporary repairs had been performed but he suggested the Board look for ways to replace the roof going forward.

Fred asked that members send suggestions for the mayors' representative to him. He will then forward the suggestions to Mayor Grandy and Mayor West.

Fred said that there may be a need for the Chuckey Depot to have an official street address as WVRRHS is applying for a 501(c)3. The current official address is for Heritage Alliance. The general sentiment was that the Depot need an official 9-1-1 address.

Approval of Minutes: Secretary Hal Hunter presented the minutes of previous meetings which had been sent to the members prior to the meeting.

Minutes, May 15, 2023, Meeting, Cari Jarman moved approval, second by Nick Andrews. Approved w/o objection.

Minutes, May 31, 2023, e Meeting, Dana Ensor moved approval, second by Cari Jarman, Approved w/o objection.

Minutes, July 19, 2023, eMeeting, Mark Edmonds moved approval, second by Jack VanZandt, Approved w/o objection.

Financial Report: Treasurer Dana Ensor and Kim Coker, BCD presented the financial report for the period ending July 31, 2023.

The Certificate of Deposit with First Horizon Bank has been renewed with an update to the signers with Fred Counts, Dana Ensor and Anne Mason on the account. With this renewal the interest rate has changed from 0.03% to 4.25-4.50%. This will be due in 11 months.

Dana and Kim pointed out that income is down. Membership dues are \$2,000 below budget and lower than last year. Anne stated that she is working on another planned fundraiser which will add income. Anne will also send out reminders to members who have not renewed.

WLA Update:

Dana Ensor reported on the Workload Analysis that by shifting more items to volunteers we have reduced Anne's time down by 3 months. More work continues to bring the workload down to what one person can do. One suggestion is to move the Progressive Dinner up to avoid the holiday season.

Endowment:

Anne introduced the need to access the endowment funds to help with maintenance. We will need \$14,000 - \$15,000 to match state grants. Existing funds are not designated. Mark Edmonds moved to establish a fund, Second by Pat Wolfe. Motion was passed.

Collections Committee:

Anne requested that a collections committee be established to help oversee accession, de-accession and loans. The committee would include Anne, Amy and Joshua from staff, Charlene, Board Member, and possibly former director Deborah Montanti. Motion to approve was made by Mark Edmonds, Second, Mike Floyd.

Historic License Plate:

When the historic plate is selected, we will have to have 1000 applications before it can be officially issued. The fee will be collected with the applications and will need to be held in a designated fund. When the 1000 plate limit is reached then applications with the funds will be forwarded to the state. It was moved by Mike Floyd to create this fund. Second, Dana Ensor.

Anne and Chad Bailey are working on a Bonus Pak for enrollees and developing a sale pitch. Something tangible will be in the Bonus Pak TBD.

Executive Director Report:

2023 Attendance through June 30, 2023, = 13522

Increased by 528 over 2022

2023 Volunteer Hours 1,166.25

Chester Inn:

Successful tours have been added 7:00 PM on Thursdays and 3:00 PM for June-September corresponding to Brews and Tunes.

We have a temporary exhibit from Tipton-Haynes Historic Site split between Chester Inn and JWCHM. We are also assisting with a grant from Humanities TN for the Tipton-Haynes site.

Joshua Dacey has completed a course on exhibit design through AASLH. Miguel Parrilla, our summer intern, is planning an exhibit on French botanist Andre Michaux for a case in the museum.

A third de-humidifier has been added to the ground floor to help control the humidity,

The State paid to add a ramp to the board room in the annex. In October of last year, one of Storytelling's festival volunteers fell crossing between rooms due to the step down and broke her arm. Storytelling's insurance covered her medical needs. After this incident, the State decided to add a ramp to help with the transition.

The museum had a busy Jonesborough Days weekend. Samuel Bowen was able to complete his AmeriCorps project that weekend with an exhibit on textiles and energy efficiency in the Christopher Taylor House.

Chuckey Depot:

Amy Steadman DeWitt has joined the Exhibit Subcommittee. Samuel Bowen is also serving on that committee until his contract is up in December.

A new exhibit called "Appalachian Crossroads" all about the three railroads that converged to make Johnson City will debut on August 31st and be up through February 2024. It will have an opening reception on September 2nd from 1:00-3:00.

The Chuckey Depot will host a fundraiser concert called "Tunes, Tales, and Rails" at Lincoln Park at 4:00 pm on Saturday, September 9th.

Christopher Taylor House:

There is \$2,495.97 in the Christopher Taylor House restricted fund. This money can be used for further repairs to the log structure.

The front stairs to the building need to be replaced. The Town has yet to replace them, but we have provided them with a materials list.

Volunteer weaver Jan Turner is working on white and orange hand towels this year.

Jonesborough/Washington County History Museum and Archives (JWCHMA):

Amy Steadman DeWitt joined the staff on June 6, 2023 as Collections Manager and Museum Coordinator and has been hard at work on the archival backlog.

We are currently working to deaccession problematic items and deal with them accordingly. This will free up storage space for items that pertain to the history of Washington County.

There is a great grant opportunity through the Tennessee State Museum for capital improvements. We are putting in for new carpet, new lights, and new cases at the JWCHM. The grant is due by October 1st. If received, we will have until June 30, 2024 to spend the money. This is a non-matching grant.

The Heritage Alliance has had a collection of Native American items for thirty years now. These items were never accessioned. Previous curator Kathy Mays said someone from NAGPRA came and looked at the collection in the 1990s and said the museum could keep the items and they did not need to be repatriated, but we have never found any paperwork to this effect. We are going to do the process again. We especially want to be sure that we do not have any ancestral, human remains in the collection or funerary items. We would like to repatriate the bulk of this collection because it takes up so much room in our storage space and is not appropriate for the museum we have. **UPDATE: We had a professor of anthropology at ETSU conduct a study of our items. He determined we only have one human tooth in our collection. It will need to be repatriated ASAP. I am working through that process now.**

Oak Hill School:

The new gutters have been installed by Erwin Aluminum on the schoolhouse.

We are in need of another schoolmarm or a schoolmaster for Oak Hill School. Deanna Carey is very gracious with her time, but we can't expect her to do it all. This is a paid position. Amy might be interested in doing this as well.

We have several homeschool groups scheduled for the fall and two Homeschool Days on September 7th and 18th.

Increasing the visibility of the program with the public schools in this area is an ongoing goal.

The fan under the schoolhouse died over the summer but Gordon Edwards is going to replace it when the temperature cools down.

The Storytelling Festival will be using the schoolhouse again for the festival for the kids' stories and the Swapping Ground. They have agreed to help pay the electrical bill this year after it was elevated last year due to the heat having to be on overnight for three nights.

Duncan House:

During the Christmas freeze, the pipes in the bathroom burst sometime between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Bailey's Plumbing replaced the hot water line in the kitchen and bathroom. A lot of the water went under the floor through a hole in the bathroom wall. Fred has agreed to patch the holes. There might be some mold issues from the water leaks. Not sure of this yet.

The Heritage Alliance received the full grant amount for our NSDAR grant to repaint and repair wood at the Duncan House. The grant is for \$10,000 and the Heritage Alliance will match another \$10,000 of that. The total project is estimated to cost around \$20,000.00. Chris Basar was going to do the work but is no longer able to do the work as anticipated. He has had a conversation with J Ross painting, and they are amenable to taking over the project for the same cost. Chris will remain on as quality control. The project is slated to start right after the Storytelling Festival.

The THC grant to replace the 1970s standing seam roof is still pending. We will not know about that grant until June, 2024. If accepted, the HA will provide \$4,000.00 to the project. **Update: The status has changed to "approved pending contract." I have yet to receive word about this, though. I will attempt to make contact with the state again regarding this grant. 4**

The very active leak in the research room in the 1970s roof needs to be patched as we wait for news on the grant. We also have an active leak in the front porch roof again. It has been patched more than once, too.

Architectural Salvage Warehouse:

Sales at the warehouse are going well and we are getting steady donations of materials.

~ The Warehouse, especially the roof, is in need of repair work. If we're going to offer these building materials, we need to keep them as safe as possible. The work

on the roof could cost up to \$2,000.00, but it needs to be done. A suggestion would be to redirect revenue from the Warehouse away from educational programs and to Warehouse repair.

Minor repair has helped but does not address the larger problem of the roof which is in need of major repair or replacement.

Other Notes and Update:

The performance of Nancy scheduled for June 24 had to be canceled due to Covid. A performance with ETSU will be scheduled soon.

The Taste of Tennessee will be a weeklong festival this year from September 17-23. Details are being posted on the Taste of Tennessee Facebook Page and the Heritage Alliance page and website. Anne will be making several TV appearances and partnering with Create Appalachia. A TAC Grant and \$500 sponsorship from JAMSA Will help with signage. Volunteer assistance will be needed for the event, especially on September 17th and 24th.

Picnicking with History at Knob Creek was a great event but did not sell out. The Summer Supper at the Bookouts was a success and sold out. Despite the rain it was a lovely event.

History Trivia Nights have been successful. It has been great having a partnership with Boone Street Market for food and McKinney Center for the concessions and hosting. We are partnering with them for the September Halloween Trivia Night.

A temporary marker for the cholera mass grave was placed by Foster's. We are working with the town on a permanent memorial marker.

The 2023 Progressive Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, December 2nd. Locations are February Hill, the Dupre/Phillips House, the McKinney Center, and the Anderson House. This provides 3 different houses from 3 different centuries. Tickets will go on sale after Labor Day for past attendees and in October for the general public.

Grant/sponsorships have been received from First Horizon Foundation and Renasant Bank for \$1500 and \$150 respectively.

Volunteers will be needed for February Hill, McKinney Center, and the Anderson House.

McKinney Center and Langston Centre Collaboration:

The virtual tour of Black History sites in Jonesborough was delayed last year. With sidewalk construction on East Main St being done, the current plan is to launch the tour in early October.

We are partnering with the Langston Centre, First TN Development District and JC Visitors Bureau to create a Black History tour of Johnson City. Funding for a research position was received from Blue Cross Blue Shield. Heritage Alliance hosted the application and conducted three interviews with the contract awarded to Dr. Daryl Carter from ETSU. He is well into the research and development phase with a goal of completion in December.

Staff Notes:

Amy Steadman DeWitt became our Collections Manager and Museum Coordinator in early June. She has become a great addition to the team, Her position is partially funded by the Chester Inn grant from the State of TN.

Joe Spiker created several new projects during his summer contract. These included the History Trivia Nights and a new web series called “What’s in the Box” on the Chester Inn’s You Tube Channel. He will be back to host the Halloween History Trivia Night on September 30.

Specialty License Plate:

The Heritage Alliance is partnering with the Jonesborough Genealogical Society on a specialty license plate for Historic Jonesborough. We presented the idea to the BMA at their February meeting because we want them to be supportive. Representative Alexander sponsored a bill in the General Assembly. It was approved and we now have until June 30, 2024, to create a design and sell 1,000 pre-orders.

We are in the design phase now. If this is successful, it will be a nice fundraiser for the Heritage Alliance and JGS. Three proposed designs are currently posted to the Historic Jonesborough License Plate Facebook group as well as our webpage. We are collecting public comment through the end of August. The Chester Inn design is in the lead. Our designer, as secured by Frank Collins, provided us with three, slightly tweaked Chester Inn designs which were revealed for additional comments on August 18th. We will be taking the final design to BMA for their blessing at their September meeting. Soft pre-sales will start at the Heritage Fair on Sept 1st and 2nd. We will make a big pre-order push after BMA next month.

Washington County Farm:

Gordon Edwards is working with Dr. Robert Jones to provide GPR services at the old County Farm. They are trying to determine if there's a second cemetery on the property. They are doing this at the behest of the County and the neighborhood.

Anne is currently researching the history on the farm through the Herald & Tribune, the County Archives, and oral histories. I will send a report to the County to have as they roll out an RFP for the farm in September.

We may help them get the farm on the National Register, clean up the marked cemetery that is in need of maintenance (Gordon offered to help with this), and/or help with future signage. That is all the HA can manage at this point.

2023 Programing:

The staff of Heritage Alliance with the help of many volunteers has much planned for the remainder of 2023.

History Happy Hour (6:30 p.m.)

September 21st – Topic change, Joshua Dacey will talk about the history of prison labor in the State of Tennessee

October 19th

November 16th

September 1st – 2nd – Heritage Fair in downtown Jonesborough

September 9th – “Tunes, Tales, and Rails” Chuckey Depot Fundraiser Concert at Lincoln Park

September 10th – DAR Constitution Week Bell Ringing at Oak Hill School

September 17th – 24th – Taste of TN Festival

- September 17th – Eats on Main Street Food Tour
- September 19th – Affrilachia Dinner at Langston Centre with Chef T of Union 41
- September 20th – Basic of Fermentation Sauerkraut Workshop with Katie Hoffman
- September 21st – Open Hearth Cooking Class for Kids at Exchange Place
- September 21st – Cast Iron Clinic with Katie Hoffman
- September 24th – Taste of TN festival and Take the Cake competition.

Future programs:

November – Reschedule “Nancy” performance at ETSU, date TBD.

November 10th – SRS Paranormal investigation of Chester Inn Museum

December 2nd -45th Progressive Dinner

December 11-17 – “A Christmas Carol” at Chester Inn Museum (maybe, decision will be made by August 19th)

Meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harold J. Hunter,
Secretary

