

Heritage Alliance of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia

Board of Trustees Meeting
November 24, 2025, 5:30 pm
Conference Room, Visitors Center, Jonesborough, TN

Attending: Nick Andrews, Charlene Cleveland, Fred Counts, Gordon Edwards, Dana Ensor, Janice Hammett, Cari Jarman, Meghan Kieta.

Staff: Katie Edwards, Executive Director.

Excused: Mark Edmonds, Chelsea Summey, Frank Collins, Chris Kudera.

Absent: None.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Gordon Edwards at 5:30 pm. A quorum was present.

Public: No public comments given or requested.

President's Report:

Gordon Edwards delivered brief opening remarks. The first business item from "Old Business" was struck from the agenda, with Gordon confirming that Chris Kudera had been approved as the town representative for the Heritage Alliance Board of Trustees. This occurred at the November 3rd BMA Meeting. He also made the board aware that with the approaching annual meeting we would have a changing slate of officers.

Secretary's Report:

The minutes of the September 29th Board Meeting were approved by common voice consent:

- **Motion:** Fred Counts motioned to accept the minutes as submitted, Nick Andrews seconded. Gordon added that the budget passed was reflected in this set of minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

Dana Ensor presented current financial information (FY 24-25, ending September 30, 2025).

- The association is in good shape currently. The current assets of the organization, between checking and savings accounts - \$359,408.26. This balance reflects a healthy flow of income for the Heritage Alliance, and will provide a solid foundation for challenging fiscal times ahead.
- The Executive Director continues to have a large amount of accrued vacation time that she was encouraged to use.
- Contract Labor costs were significantly higher from an unexpected hire of the organization's furloughed AmeriCorps employee; this line item has been increased for 2026 to reflect this new position.
- The fundraising goal of \$8000 for memberships was met and exceeded by \$540 for the year. Donations were nearly double the projected level, leaving the organization with a favorable balance of \$13,270.49 over the projected balance budgeted at the beginning of the year.
- **Motion:** Financials were accepted into the record as presented, with Dana Ensor motioning and Fred Counts seconding.

Old Business:

- The Use Agreement between the Heritage Alliance and the International Storytelling Center continues to be on hold due to staffing changes at Tennessee's State Historic Preservation Office and the International Storytelling Center.
- Gordon updated the board as to the Jonesborough BMA's purchase of the AMEZ Church on West Woodrow Avenue, with closing taking longer than usual due to title issues with the property, with any future lease of the building by the Heritage Alliance being discussed at a later date.
- Gordon also updated the board as to the performance of the organization's CD accounts. With no encumbrance or risk incurred, the decision was made between the President and the Executive Director to move \$100,000 from CD's into the organization's savings account. Gordon reiterated the ability of the Executive Director to move assets into savings with no board action required.

New Business:

- Gordon Edwards presented a motion to authorize the Executive Director (or designee) to make application for the First Horizon Foundation 2026 Grant. Application to include for "Jonesborough Days Festival" activities and "Christmas in Olde Jonesborough" activities. A third option, at the Director's discretion, could be considered for a fall season activity. Gordon further added that, should funds be awarded, the Executive Director or designee shall be authorized to expense up to the total grant amount, those said funds, keeping proper record thereof. 50% of the funds shall be distributed, as a donation, to the town of Jonesborough for their specific use on the designated restricted subjects based upon any grand award.
 - **Motion:** Dana Ensor moved to approve the motion as presented, Fred Counts seconded the motion.
 - Gordon also refreshed the memories of the Board of Trustees as to the four categories of grants.
- Nominating Committee - 2026 Slate of Officers for the January 29 Annual Meeting
 - Gordon Edwards informed the board of the need to form a nominating committee to nominate new board members at the Annual Meeting in January. Gordon suggested himself, Fred Counts, and Zac Jenkins as the committee to nominate trustee candidates for membership approval at the annual membership meeting. Per the bylaws, the nominating committee must be chaired by the President (Gordon Edwards), a current trustee (Fred Counts), and one active board member or past trustee (Zac Jenkins).
 - **Motion:** Dana Ensor moved to approve the motion as presented, Charlene Cleveland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Executive Director Katie Edwards presented the Director's Report.
 - Katie announced the receipt of a check from the Mooneyhan Foundation to the tune of \$15,700.
 - Year-to-date attendance of all Heritage Alliance activities: **31,645**.
 - **852** students and chaperones have attended programming at Oak Hill School.

- The average student in Tennessee receives only 15 minutes of history education a day. Katie and Hannah have rededicated their efforts in redefining the Heritage Alliance's role in history education to improve student access to history.
- The Chester Inn is now the number one most visited State Historic Site in Tennessee!
- Katie also updated board members on changing exhibits at our museums.
- An update was presented to the board concerning the status of Hannah Rogers' employment agreement. President Gordon Edwards presented a motion to authorize the Executive Director to offer up to an additional 8 work hours per week to Hannah Rogers, payable at her regular rate of pay. This authorization extends through the FY25-26 period. This authorization does not make any other changes to Hannah Rogers' employment agreement and applies only to her and not the position. Funding for this change is made based upon an award from the Mooneyhan Foundation received in November 2025.

Motion: Fred Counts moved to approve the motion as presented, Cari Jarman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- For the meeting's final New Business agenda item, Executive Director Katie Edwards was excused from the meeting so that the Board of Trustees could discuss and vote on end-of-year bonuses. A 2025 Bonus of \$750 was awarded to Executive Director Katie Edwards, with a \$500 bonus awarded to Ryan Nedrow and \$250 for Hannah Rogers. The motion passed unanimously.

2026 Meeting Dates:

- The following dates were presented to the Board:
 - January 29, 2026 5:00 PM Annual Membership (Trustees)
 - January 29, 2026 7:30 PM Annual Board & Elect Officers
 - February 23, 2026 5:30 PM
 - May 18, 2026 5:30 PM (3rd Monday due to holiday)
 - August 24, 2026 5:30 PM
 - September 18, 2026 5:30 PM – Budget (4th Monday too close to end of Sept)
 - November 23, 2026 5:30 PM
- **Motion:** Dana Ensor moved to approve the motion as presented, Charlene Cleveland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Counts, Secretary