



The Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC) met at 10:00 a.m. on June 15, 2020, via Webex, with Chairman Thomas S. Smith presiding.

### **Members Present**

Thomas S. Smith, Chair  
Nancy Baker DeFriece, Vice Chair  
Harbert Alexander, Sr.  
Ambassador Victor Ashe  
Tina Hodges  
Walter Knestrick  
The Honorable Steve McDaniel  
Deanie Parker  
Scott Price  
Laura Travis  
Chairman Bo Watson  
Eleanor Yoakum

### **Ex Officio**

Robert Buchanan, Tennessee Historical Society Chair  
Ashley Howell, TSM Executive Director

### **Member Absent**

Chairman Susan Lynn

### **Participating Guest in Attendance**

Janet Kleinfelter, Deputy Attorney General

### **Participating TSM Staff**

Sabrina Hooper, Deputy Director  
Lauren Amos, Director Operations  
Dan Pomeroy, Director Collections  
Sharon Dennis, DHSMC Liaison

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Thomas S. Smith called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., proceeded with roll call, verified that a quorum was present via Webex and presided over the following business.

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Chair Smith welcomed everyone to the inaugural Webex Quarterly meeting and thanked commissioners for their patience in utilization of a new technology.

## **Approval of Minutes from the January 13, 2020 and March 13, 2020 Quarterly Meetings**

Chair Smith entertained a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 13, 2020 and March 13, 2020 meetings. Chairman Bo Watson moved to adopt both meeting minutes; Steve McDaniel seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the Chair called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

## **Budget Report**

Chair Smith welcomed Sabrina Hooper, the new TSM Deputy Director/Director of Administration who began on March 9, 2020 and recognized Director Ashley Howell to introduce Ms. Hooper to the DHSMC.

Ms. Hooper began her report noting her first duty as Deputy Director was to assist the Agency in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by working with the Department of Human Resources in developing and implementing a work-from-home strategy for 87% of the staff following the Museum closing.

In reviewing the budget report as of June 5, 2020, the Agency has spent 84% of its State appropriated dollars over a 10.5-month time frame. In utilizing the current forecasting tools, the percentage for the final 1.5 months indicates the budget closing to be on-track noting nongovernmental revenue from collection boxes and intergovernmental revenue earned from store sales and venue rental is calculated through the March 2020 closing.

Ms. Hooper concluded her report acknowledging five vacancies remain following the filling of the positions of Deputy Director on March 9, and IT Business Tech on May 4, and deferred to Director Howell to answer the question of whether there were savings in the budget due to the museums closure.

Director Howell shared there were savings with part-time staff who worked directly with the public along with some supplies savings; however, there aren't as many savings as one might anticipate. Approximately 40% of the budget is comprised of fixed costs related to the museum building and the Polk building expending FRF dollars which includes security contracts and facility maintenance via third-party contracts with state agencies. Another 46% is for personnel with the remaining for supplies, publications and website maintenance. In reviewing with Deputy Director Hooper every anticipated expense in this unusual time, the proposed budget cuts and next year's budget, Director Howell noted this fiscal year-end, although tight, is anticipated to close on budget.

## **Executive Director Report**

Carrying forward from the Budget Report, Director Howell continued to reflect on ongoing efforts with F&A to technologically separate the earned revenues of store and venue; two areas with room for growth. Event Rentals are scheduled to resume the end of August.

Director Howell announced since the last meeting of the DHSMC as a body in January, the museum received official "Reaccreditation" from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) for ten years. Also, the museum's exhibition, *Let's Eat! Origins and Evolutions of Tennessee Food* received an Award of Excellence from the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH).

### Reopening Timeline

Since the museum's closure to the public on March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 epidemic, management with the guidance of DOHR and General Services, enacted "work from home" (WFH) plans for staff effective March 17. During this time a major focus has been on project management for the Ratified exhibition on woman suffrage and increasing the museum's digital presence as a public service.

With guidance from DOHR, transition of staff into museum spaces utilizing split schedules has begun and will continue throughout the summer. DOHR has also provided guidance for public visitors to state buildings. Museum management has also reviewed guidance from Metro Nashville, Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM), and the State Economic Recovery Group.

The proposed reopening to the public is scheduled for Wednesday, July 1. This will be a phased reopening with some high-touch spaces temporarily closed including the Children's gallery and the Education suite. Guided tours will be temporarily suspended.

### Emergency Action Plan

Director Howell proposed a protocol for an Emergency Action Plan that would give the ability for the executive director, and in the executive director's absence the ability for the deputy director to close the museum specific to COVID-19 or another emergency action for 72 hours to allow for deep cleaning as deep cleaning procedures for a museum is unique and to determine next steps for the museum. Chair Smith paused the director's report for discussion.

Discussion clarified the emergency may be specific to COVID-19 or another emergency action and the DHSMC will be notified via email of implementation of the Emergency Action Plan.

Chair Smith entertained a motion to authorize the executive director or in the absence of the executive director, the deputy director to execute the Emergency Action Plan; to close the museum for up to 72 hours at their discretion following any positive testing of COVID-19 or another emergency action with email notification to the DHSMC. Chairman Watson seconded the motion. As there was no further discussion, Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

### One-Year Strategic Plan

Director Howell explained due to the tornadoes in early March followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the preparation of a 12% cut to the operating budget, the prior discussions regarding the next three-year strategic plan has been deferred. A proposed one-year strategic plan was emailed in advance of this meeting for review.

First, the new collection storage facility sustained major damage by the March tornado. There will be a shift in timeframe from moving the collection to planning for the collection move. With the pause in acquisition already underway, the proposed one-year strategic plan focuses on engagement with the collection.

Second, the plan addresses digital programming adding a kids section to the TSM website that includes a junior curators blog, story time in partnership with the Governor's early literacy

foundation and support for teachers through digital learning. These advancements have increased traffic greatly. In addition, there is a portal to sign up for the newsletter and an online portion of the Women's Suffrage Centennial exhibition with stories tied to all 95 counties.

Third, in looking at the various functions of the museum, contingency planning is paramount. A 12% cut to the operating budget is significant as 40% is related to FRF (Facility Revolving Fund - through General Services) expenditure with state agencies which is non-negotiable. FRF includes all security contracts and facility maintenance contracts for the Rosa L. Parks and the Polk buildings. 46% is for personnel (salaries and benefits), 14% is for traveling trunks supplies, office supplies, website maintenance and publications including the newsletter.

Chair Smith called for discussion which included the impact of COVID-19 on event rentals, museum capacity for public viewing and events and the impact a 12% budget reduction will have on the overall services and programs. Following discussion, Chair Smith entertained a motion to adopt the proposed One-Year Strategic Plan 2020 Update. Chairman Watson moved to adopt the plan; Ms. Hodges seconded the motion. Chair Smith called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Director Howell concluded her report by thanking the DHSMC for its support and shared her enthusiasm for the upcoming exhibition openings in August of TSM's *Ratified! Tennessee Women and the Right To Vote* and the TSM and TSLA's *To Make Our Voices Heard: Tennessee Women's Fight For The Vote* created for the Official Committee of the State of Tennessee Woman Suffrage Centennial which is scheduled to open in more than 85 counties across the state.

The Chair thanked Director Howell for her report and moved on to the next item which was already discussed; the museum will reopen following Metro Nashville Guidelines on Wednesday, July 1, 2020. In closing Chair Smith encouraged all to visit [tnmuseum.org](http://tnmuseum.org) and review all the portals discussed today that include a tremendous amount of new content showcasing the expansion of social media and ongoing statewide outreach.

### **Other Business**

The building naming legislation has passed in the Senate and is on the House of Representatives calendar for this day.

Outgoing commissioner Robert Buchanan who serves as ex officio to the DHSMC by virtue of office as President of the Tennessee Historical Society introduced David Fox, the new THS president beginning July 1. He then thanked members for their friendship for the past six years.

Chair Smith recognized Ambassador Victor Ashe who moved to express appreciation to Bob Buchanan by the full Commission for his six years of service as an ex officio member and to wish him well in the future. The Chair called for a second. With multiple seconds, the Chair called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Chair Smith thanked Mr. Buchanan and welcomed Mr. Fox to the DHSMC. Mr. Fox expressed his desire to learn more about the organization and to make sure that the organizations work very collaboratively and productively together.

## Public Comments

Chair Smith called for public comment. There was none.

## Announcements

Chair Smith announced the upcoming Quarterly meeting dates of October 12, 2020, January 11, 2021, April 12, 2021, and July 12, 2021.

## Adjournment

Chair Smith entertained a motion to adjourn. Chairman Watson moved to adjourn; Ms. Yoakum seconded the motion. Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

## Main Motions Summary

**Motion #1:** Moved by Chairman Watson to adopt the minutes from the January 13, 2020 and March 13, 2020 meetings. Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**Motion #2:** Moved by Ambassador Ashe to authorize the executive director or in the absence of the executive director, the deputy director, to execute the Emergency Action Plan; to close the museum for up to 72 hours following any positive testing of COVID-19 or another emergency action, with email notification to the DHSMC. Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**Motion #3:** Moved by Chairman Watson to adopt the proposed One-Year Strategic Plan 2020 Update. Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**Motion #4:** Moved by Ambassador Ashe to express appreciation to Bob Buchanan by the full Commission for his six years of service as an ex officio member and to wish him well in the future. Chair Smith called for a vote on the motion which carried unanimously with no abstentions.

**Motion #5:** Moved by Chairman Watson to adjourn the meeting. Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

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Thomas S. Smith  
Chairman Douglas Henry State Museum Commission