

The Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC) met at 10:00 a.m. CT on January 8, 2024, in the Conference Room of Bill Haslam Center, with Chairman Bo Watson presiding.

Members Present

Ambassador Victor Ashe
Danielle Barnes
Cathy Cate
Chairlady Patsy Hazlewood
Michael Keeney
The Honorable Steve McDaniel
Scott Price
Phillip Renfroe (Phone)
Lottie Ryans
Chairman Bo Watson

Ex Officio

David Fox, Tennessee Historical Society Chair (Absent)
Ashley Howell, TSM Executive Director

Members Absent

Barbara Brown Street
Laura Travis

Participating Guest

Assistant Attorney General Amy Hollars

Participating TSM Staff

Sabrina Hooper, Deputy Director
Sharon Dennis, DHSMC Liaison

Call to Order

Chairman Bo Watson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., proceeded with roll call, detected a quorum present and presided over the following business.

Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Watson welcomed members, staff, and guests.

Mission Statements

In an ongoing effort to level set, Chairman Watson began by reading the Mission Statements of the Tennessee State Museum and the Douglas Henry State Museum Commission.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Watson identified the October 9, 2023, Quarterly meeting minutes draft emailed in advance of this meeting, also included in the meeting booklets, and entertained a motion to adopt the meeting minutes as written. Mr. Price moved to adopt; Ms. Ryans seconded. Upon

calling for further discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor of adoption of the October 9, 2023, Quarterly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Budget Report

Chairman Watson recognized Deputy Director Sabrina Hooper.

As of November 30, 2023, the Agency has spent 28% of its total State appropriated dollars.

Nongovernmental Earned Revenue Approximately \$5,000.

Current Services Revenue Approximately \$128,000 from store sales, event rental, and other small items like imaging.

Inter-Departmental Revenue Approximately \$8,000. - - \$410,000 reflects the Holocaust Commission revenue for which management issued an IU to the Department of Education.

Personnel

There were five HR transactions consisting of three hires, one promotion, and the resignation of a museum program coordinator.

The Department of Human Resources (DOHR) continues its commitment to enhancing the salary structure through implementing the Employee Proficiency Assessment (EPA) which is the second phase of the state-wide compensation study. Approximately half of the State Museum employees will receive increases effective January 16, 2024.

Executive Director's Report

Visitation in Person

The first six months of this fiscal year, the museum welcomed approximately 66,000 visitors, a 20% increase over the same period last year.

Additionally, the Museum served over 15,000 in tours of the Tennessee State Capitol engaging over 17,000 students, teachers, and other participants via in-service statewide.

Education

Last quarter, the Museum served 8,897 students in 118 tours in 26 counties.

In the first six months of the fiscal year the Museum served 73 counties via teacher workshops, tourism sites; traveling trunks, the State Capitol, and the State Museum.

Programs

Last quarter, the museum served 3,300 visitors in two days from the [Southern Festival of Books](#), 700 visitors in one day for [Haunted Museum](#), and 700 visitors in one day for [Carols, Cookies and Crafts](#). A [Lunch and Learn](#) program on the Belle Witch maxed the Learning Center capacity with 180 attendees and over 500 participants streaming. Local on 2 News aired a spotlight from a [Junior Curator Blog](#) on Underwater Ghost Towns that was cross promoted on Facebook and Instagram garnering over 1.5 million viewership with over 24,000 engagements.

Legislative Capital Grant

The Tennessee General Assembly appropriated an additional \$5 million to the State Museum, “for the sole purpose of providing grants to museums with a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or affiliated with a governmental entity, for capital maintenance and improvements.” The grant launched on July 1, the application process closed October 2, with the deadline for awards November 13. The final count revealed 170 applications from 70 counties which is one fewer than last reported due to receipt of two applications from one institution. \$12.5 million in asks reveals a universe of needs state-wide. A list of grantees and the amounts awarded was distributed to members along with a booklet of press coverage of the Grants October 1 through December 31.

Director Howell appointed a committee of seven staff with each bringing a skillset needed for reviewing and creating the criteria. The application was created and designed to be as uncomplicated as possible, while providing efficacy to deliver the information necessary for determinations by the committee. There is a mechanism in place for the recipients to report back to the committee on funds spent. Museum staff will visit the museums to affirm the work has been done. Focusses of the grants included roofing, HVAC, water mitigation, structural repairs, accessibility for ADA compliance, and capacity building to help increase services to the communities.

Of note, the committee detected five fraudulent applications all from the same IP address and reported its findings to the Comptroller's office.

Commissioners thanked the General Assembly for taking what could be a political process and making it apolitical.

Collection Storage Facility Update

- To-date, over 60,000 artifacts have been processed and are ready to move.
- The RFP for the packing and the move of the collection was awarded to Iron Mountain, Incorporated dba Crozier Fine Arts. The Crozier team is scheduled to arrive the week of January 22 for an in-depth walkthrough and analysis of the collection.
- As staff continues to monitor and mitigate issues in the Polk building, environmental issues topped the list last quarter. When ominous events arise either in Polk or other storage locations, staff must immediately stop scheduled activities and shift to mitigate any threat to the collection.

Artifact /Acquisitions Report

Director Howell began by noting, while TSM continues to prepare for the move, the team is slowly taking in quality acquisitions and highlighted a collection of 14 artworks purchased from the collection of A. Everette James. She also highlighted a donation of two William Edmondson limestone sculptures for which an exhibition organized by the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, is currently on loan at the Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane in New Orleans. Also donated are a 1941 signed, dated, photograph by Edward Weston depicting the State Capitol along with a signed "Fiftieth Anniversary Portfolio" featuring Weston's selected photographic works.

Nominating Committee

Chairman Watson announced his appointments to the Nominating Committee.

- Scott Price, Chair
- Ambassador Victor Ashe
- Cathy Cate
- Lottie Ryans

The Committee will meet prior to the April Quarterly meeting.

Vote Confirmation of Audit Committee (AFC) Selected by Chairman Watson

Chairman Watson proposed the following AFC slate for a vote confirmation:

- Laura Travis, Chair
- Ambassador Victor Ashe
- Danielle Barnes
- Chairlady Patsy Hazlewood
- Senator Bo Watson, ex-officio
- Ashley Howell, ex-officio

Chairman Watson moved adoption of the Audit Committee (AFC) appointments; Laura Travis, Chair, Ambassador Victor Ashe, Danielle Barnes, Chairlady Patsy Hazlewood, Senator Bo Watson ex-officio, and Ashley Howell, ex-officio; seconded by Ambassador Ashe. Upon calling for discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor to adopt the Audit Committee (AFC) slate. The motion carried unanimously with no opposition.

Annual Renewal of MOU with Operating Guidelines

In October 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Tennessee State Museum Foundation, the Douglas Henry State Museum Commission, and the Tennessee State Museum was fully executed. This MOU with Operating Guidelines was renewed by the TSMF as originally written on October 23, 2023. As the reciprocal relationship between TSMF, DHSMC and TSM continues to evolve, Chairman Watson acknowledged the symbiotic relationship that has developed between the Foundation and the Museum. Thomas S. Smith is the Chairman of the Foundation and a former DHSMC Chairman.

Following discussion, Chairman Watson moved to renew the MOU and Operating Guidelines as originally written, seconded by Mr. Price, and called for those in favor to adopt. The motion carried unanimously with no opposition.

Other Business

Museum Store

Noting Museum Store revenue is down while attendance is up, Director Howell was asked what the cause might be and if product fatigue might be a factor. Director Howell recognized the trend noting she and Director of Operations Lauren Amos have been looking at factors that initially drove the decline like supply chain issues post-COVID. Currently they are examining how to finesse popular products and price points. A direct competitor in the Farmers Market stocks many of the same products offered in the Museum store. Product mix is under consideration.

July 8, 2024 Quarterly Meeting Tentatively set for Memphis

The Lorraine Motel in Memphis is owned by the State of Tennessee and the National Civil Rights Museum (NCRM) is a lessee of the State of Tennessee and the Tennessee State Museum is the lessor. As part of the Statewide outreach, members responded affirmatively to tentatively

cite Memphis for the July 8, 2024, Quarterly meeting at the National Civil Rights Museum whose director has graciously offered to host the meeting.

Media Coverage

Two media booklets were distributed at this meeting.

No Public Comment

Announcements

Chairman Watson noted the regularly scheduled quarterly meeting dates:

April 8, 2024, July 8, 2024, October 14, 2024, January 13, 2025

The DHSMC meets the second Monday of the first Month of each Quarter. Dates are subject to change.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business for the good of the order, Chairman Watson entertained a motion to adjourn. Chairlady Hazlewood moved to adjourn. The Chair called for those in favor to adopt. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Main Motions Summary

Motion #1: Mr. Price moved to adopt the October 9, 2023 Quarterly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously with no opposition.

Motion #2: Chairman Watson moved adoption of the Audit Committee appointments. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Motion #3: Chairlady Hazlewood moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Senator Bo Watson

Chairman Douglas Henry State Museum Commission