



The Douglas Henry State Museum Commission (DHSMC) met at 10:00 a.m. CT on January 13, 2025, in the Bill Haslam Center conference Room with Chairman Bo Watson presiding.

Members Present

Ambassador Victor Ashe (phone)
Danielle Barnes (phone)
Cathy Cate
Michael Keeney
The Honorable Steve McDaniel
Scott Price
Phillip Renfroe
Lottie Ryans
Laura Travis (phone)
Chairman Bo Watson
Derita Coleman Williams

Ex Officio

Anna Durham Windrow, Tennessee Historical Society Chair
Ashley Howell, TSM Executive Director

Members Absent

Barbara Brown Street

No Participating Guest

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.

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 14, 2024, 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. Ambassador Ashe moved to adopt; seconded by Mr.

Price. Upon calling for discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor of adoption of the October 14, 2024, Quarterly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Budget Report

Chairman Watson recognized Deputy Director Sabrina Hooper.

November 30, 2024

- State Appropriations: 35% of total State appropriated dollars were expended; a slight increase of 7% over this time last year
- Non-Governmental Earned Revenue: approximately \$3,204 for donation boxes and other solicitations
- Current Services Revenue: approximately \$137,000 from store sales, event rental, and other small items like imaging
- Inter-Departmental Revenue: approximately \$13,050 for State agencies. \$410,000 is a pass-through expense designated for the TN Holocaust Commission.

Finance, Ways and Means

House question responses were submitted Friday, January 10, 2025.

Senate question responses are due Thursday, February 13.

HR Transactions last Quarter

One (1) hire, one (1) promotion, three (3) resignations.

Executive Director's Report

Collection Storage Facility Update

- Construction is on-time and scheduled for completion in one week to ten days
- Crozier Fine Arts is here, has hired a Nashville team and is in the process of training
- Mechanical conditioning will begin in January
- Artifact packing of the collection in Polk has begun and will be moved first due to environmental concerns. Critical artifacts temporarily stored at Rosa L. Parks in the *Art After 1900 Gallery* will follow.
- Management and staff continue to scrutinize all exhibit files, artifact files, and miscellaneous files in Polk in determining what to move to the new facility, what to move to TSLA, and what to shred.
- Instead of a ribbon cutting, Director Howell asked Members to consider an open house later in the year, to show how artifacts are cared for, organized, and properly stored.

Visitation

- From July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, TSM has welcomed over 68,000 visitors with a 2.2% increase over the same period last year.
- General attendance is stabilizing.
- Some factors affecting attendance are the timing of the school schedule due to holidays, an end to a Metro Nashville STEM program, smaller class sizes.
- Capitol tour attendance may be affected due to renovation at Legislative Plaza and the closing of the Motlow Tunnel two weeks ago; a main gateway for walk-in visitation, as well as the bus parking on MLK Jr. Boulevard has been rerouted.
- Tourists play a vital role in attendance. The "Trolley" company that used to drop off/pick up at Farmers Market has changed drop off locations.

Education

- This fiscal year the Museum served over 16,000 people with tours at the Tennessee

State Capitol and engaged with over 15,000 students, teachers, and other participants statewide, serving 76 counties with K-12 programming. This includes the Traveling Trunks program.

- This fiscal year, 167 trunks served 11,569 students in 39 counties, which represents a decrease in the number of students served by 22%. This decrease is not necessarily due to the number of trunk reservations, it is due to smaller class sizes that reduce the number of students.

Chairman Watson asked if each time a person visits either digitally, physically, or remotely is that an impression used as a metric to calculate overall visitation? Director Howell advised management does calculate that number and it is included in her written report. As an example of how those metrics work, during COVID, TSM experienced an increase in virtual tours, a decrease in in-person tours; however, management observed the numbers to essentially shift and inverse of each other following COVID. TSM is now experiencing the stabilization of virtual field trip numbers in Traveling Trunk reservations. A member noted that without virtual tours before 2020, there may have been as many impressions as possible during COVID, they just looked different.

Chairman Watson concluded it may be helpful to members in the future to see a graph that shows physical attendance, virtual attendance and Traveling Trunk attendance to reflect total impressions. It would also be an interesting metric in the future for the Commission to see how many people who experienced the museum virtually, turned and converted that into a physical visit.

In addition, a member suggested it would be interesting to see the metrics comparing TSM to other museums in similarly situated cities and to other similar attractions in Nashville. Director Howell shared her participation in an AAM survey of museums throughout the country which covered budgets, attendance and programming to define current trends. She will parse that out and report in April.

Renovation of Legislative Plaza

- Legislative Plaza renovation is underway and will include relocation of the TSM Military Branch Museum (MBM) from the War Memorial Building, and a new Capitol Visitor Center Exhibit Space and Gift Shop. Museum management is currently working with the Department of General Services (STREAM) on operations, EOA Architecture on Store design, and Gallagher & Associates on content. Content includes the story we tell about government, civics, the MBM and the Capitol in a way that doesn't happen on the Capitol tours. And of course, product for store sales is upon management as well.
- The deadline for completion is prior to the January 2027 inauguration.

Exhibitions

- *Tennessee Furniture: Selections from the State Museum Collection* closes on March 17.
- *Photography in Tennessee: Early Studios and the Medium's First Century* opens late Spring.
- Artifacts related to the bicentennial of the Marquis de Lafayette Tour in Tennessee will be on display February through mid-May.
- A pop-up exhibition on the 100th Anniversary of the Scopes Trial later this year.

Capital Grants

- The Tennessee General Assembly has 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.”
- 157 applications from 67 counties were received with over 10 million in requests.
- 83 museums in 46 counties received grants totaling \$4,060,929. A list of grantees was shared with Commissioners in the October Quarterly meeting.
- The full 5 million has not been awarded for the purpose of carving out funds to allow museums in East Tennessee to assess damages and greatest needs from Hurricane Helene. TSM has connected with FEMA and is part of the State economic and cultural recovery group. The deadline closes this week.

Collections/Acquisitions Committee (CAC) Report

The CAC met earlier this day at 9:15 a.m. and approved the following proposed deaccessions to be presented to the full commission for adoption. The three groupings were submitted via email to Members in advance of this meeting in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2.

Proposed Deaccessions

Group 1: with Transfer

Director Howell described the following three (3) artifacts from the Stephen Quarles Collection for deaccession with transfer to Wilson County Veterans Museum where they are currently on loan: 2019.107.1, 2019.107.2, 2019.107.3.

Chairman Watson entertained a motion to adopt the three (3) proposed deaccessions from the Stephen Quarles Collection with transfer to Wilson County Veterans Museum where they are currently on loan: 2019.107.1, 2019.107.2, 2019.107.3. Moved by Ms. Ryans; Seconded by Mr. Keeney.

Upon calling for further discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor of the motion to adopt the three (3) proposed deaccessions from the Stephen Quarles Collection with transfer to Wilson County Veterans Museum where they are currently on loan: 2019.107.1, 2019.107.2, 2019.107.3. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Group 2: Deaccession of Institutional Archival Material

Director Howell described the following forty-seven (47) items for deaccession highlighted in green in meeting booklet 2 of 2: 603, 641-642, 652, 757-758, 772, 774-785, 799-810, 814-815, 897-910. These items will be retained, moved to and archived in the new TSM Collection Storage Facility.

Chairman Watson entertained a motion to adopt the forty-seven (47) items in Group 2, highlighted in green in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2: 603, 641-642, 652, 757-758, 772, 774-785, 799-810, 814-815, 897-910 for deaccession to be retained, moved to and archived in the new TSM Collection Storage Facility. Moved by Mr. Price; Seconded by Ms. Cate.

Upon calling for further discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor of the motion to adopt forty-seven (47) items highlighted in green in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2: 603, 641-642, 652, 757-758, 772, 774-785, 799-810, 814-815, 897-910 for deaccession to be retained,

moved to and archived in the new TSM Collection Storage Facility. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Group 3: Deaccession of Ephemera, Household and consumer products, Technological Equipment, Photographs and Negatives, and Newspapers

Director Howell gave an overview of the remaining nine hundred two (902) items for deaccession described in detail in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2. This is not a group that would necessarily transfer to another institution. Many items were owned and accessioned by former staff.

Chairman Watson entertained a motion to adopt the nine hundred two (902) proposed deaccessions in group 3 described in detail in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2. Moved by Mr. Price; Seconded by Ms. Cate.

Upon calling for further discussion and seeing none, the Chair called for those in favor of the motion to adopt the nine hundred two (902) proposed deaccessions in Group 3 described in detail in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

Artifact /Acquisitions Report

The volume of the Artifact/Object Acquisitions Report continues to be reduced in preparation for the move. Also noting the importance of deaccessioning in order to accession, Director Howell highlighted a whitework quilt made by Charlotte Robertson of Middle Tennessee that descended through the family to a descendent who offered it through Case Auctions.

Red Grooms Fox Trot Carousel Discussion

The Red Grooms Fox Trot Carousel was transferred from Metropolitan Nashville to TSM whereas the museum has been custodian for the last 21 years. Tennessee State Museum Foundation money was expended in 2019 to assess the condition and mechanics; however, a cost assessment for repair and restoration was not included.

In seeking a qualified partner, Director Howell is currently working through four options for consideration:

- Pre-response conference
- Schedule of Events
- Response or Prerequisite
- Technical and cost informational forms

Although not yet complete, a process to review an RFI with the Central Procurement Office is underway.

Highlights of discussion:

- One of the challenges is, an RFI for an estimate for repair and or restoration is deemed by Members incumbent upon the interested party, not TSM.
- The “end game” shall be determined/defined ultimately by the DHSMC. An RFI solicitation sent to a broad base of potential suppliers for the purpose of developing a strategy for preparing requests for proposals or requests for qualifications remains undefined with questions, “does TSM want to keep the Carousel, or loan the Carousel?” and “is the Carousel a ride or an art piece?”

Nominating Committee Appointments, Audit Committee Appointments w/Vote Confirmation

Calling for objection and seeing none, Chairman Watson rolled the announcement of the Nominating Committee slate and Audit Committee slate with vote confirmation to the next Quarterly meeting.

Media Coverage

Director Howell acknowledged the Quarterly Newsletter, along with Capital Grants covered extensively in the Media Booklet.

No Other Business

No Public Comment

Announcements

Chairman Watson noted the regularly scheduled Quarterly meeting dates:

April 14, 2025, July 14, 2025, October 13, 2025, January 12, 2026

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

Discussion ensued on possible locations for future out-of-town meetings. Members will ponder options including Northeast Tennessee nearby where Grants have been received, and Sycamore Shoals State Park.

Adjournment

Seeing no other business for the good of the order, Chairman Watson entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. McDaniel moved to adjourn; seconded by Chairman Watson. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention and the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

Main Motions Summary

Motion #1: Ambassador Ashe moved to adopt the October 14, 2024; Quarterly meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Motion #2: Ms. Ryans moved to adopt the forty-seven (47) items in Group 2, highlighted in green in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2: 603, 641-642, 652, 757-758, 772, 774-785, 799-810, 814-815, 897-910 for deaccession to be retained, moved to and archived in the new TSM Collection Storage Facility. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Motion #3: Mr. Price moved to adopt the nine hundred two (902) proposed deaccessions in group 3 described in detail in Meeting Booklet 2 of 2. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Motion #4: Mr. McDaniel moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously with no abstention.

Senator Bo Watson

Chairman Douglas Henry State Museum Commission