

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at the Museum

Minutes taken by Courtney Blicht, Secretary

Members Present: Martha Gruning, George Long, Courtney Blicht, Calissa Folse, Niki Mendow, Jimmy Nelson, Stewart Eastman, Felicia Walker

Absent with notice: Geralyn Lips (Emeritus), Marian Roper, Michelle Milner, Ron Blicht (Emeritus)

Absent without notice: Bryan Gowland (Emeritus)

Visiting:

- Meeting called to order at 5:07pm by President George Long
- Felicia moved that minutes of the March 2022 meeting be approved. Stewart seconded the motion, which was approved.

- Financial report by Niki Mendow, Treasurer

Account balance \$36,111.52 as of March 31, 2022 but waiting on Venmo payments from Busker Festival to be posted. Niki sent Stacy Ludwig meeting dates so she can receive reports before the meeting. Niki will coordinate the Purchase Order process. Giving Stacy the approximate expense expected, then attach receipts. Courtney clarified that exhibit budgets were established in 2021 and do not require approval from Town Hall.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will send Stacy our 2021 budget for her information.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will look into a payment made to Mary Davis that was returned by Mary to Town Hall because she returned the item to the store.

Unfinished Business

- Dale Hauck: George created and sent to media a press release.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will distribute publicity postcards to local businesses. She will follow up on the pricing of items donated to be auctioned.

ACTION ITEM: Stewart will create a Facebook Event after George sends him the Dale Hauck bio.

- En Plein Air: (April 29-May 1) Courtney reported that volunteers have been recruited.

- Follow up on Bogalusa Museum contact: George spoke to Deborah Blumfield, director. They discussed the possibility of a northshore museum network. Martha clarified that there was also a Cassidy Museum, owned by the town which features pioneers and American natives. The Cassidy Museum is temporarily closed. George also discussed the possibility of sharing email addresses for promotion of events by either the Bogalusa Museum or ASTM.

- Stewart contacted the poet laureate of Baton Rouge suggesting an event in June. He was to clarify if the poet was available on a Sunday afternoon at 4pm.

- Stewart said he will contact Tom Aicklen, director of the Lacombe Heritage Museum, for more museum connectivity and mutual support.
- Farmers market vendors follow up: George will discuss with Town Hall procedures for use of our bathroom during the market.

New Business

- Storytime and Interactive Nature Series: Calissa is waiting on info from the event presenter regarding Storytime project. She wants to create a list of artists in Abita to enhance local support of events and connectivity. She created a form in Google Drive under Exhibits and Projects called the Abita Springs Artists Directory.

- Podium costs: estimated at \$1,685 based on photo of a design presented to the contractor, David O'Brien. It will be made of sinker cypress, the same as the display cases that he made for us. Martha and Jimmy agreed that the price is good. Martha spoke to Dan Curtis, explaining that the display cabinet budget had money available to use for creation of the podium. Dan agreed. Niki suggested ASTM logo be displayed on the podium.

MOTION: Allocate \$1,685 for construction of podium. Motion by Martha, seconded by George. Motion passed.

- Walking tour booklet: Stewart showed us a booklet from 1986 prepared by the Abita Springs Junior High School. It included descriptions of old homes and interviews with some owners. His idea is to develop a new one. George has done research on the development of a software application for cell phones to be utilized on such tours. Stewart donated the booklet to the Town and will donate one to ASTM.

ACTION ITEM: George will make copies of the booklet and Niki will provide a P.O.

- George says we have 1,700 email addresses on our contact list and an upgrade of the MailChimp will be required when we surpass 2,000. Estimated to occur in mid-2023. Cost would be \$34/month or \$408/year. Current plan is free.
- Choctaw lecture series: Stewart suggested a regular summer series. Tom Aicklen has connections with Choctaw and referenced displays at the museum in Fontainebleau State Park.
- Songwriter's Circle: Martha said setting up concessions at this event took a lot of effort for attendance by only 35 patrons. Gross sales was \$216. Unused products will be moved to Cajun Dance inventory.
- Docents: George showed us the sign up sheet with shifts needing to be filled. Courtney suggested a social event for them to bring potential docents into the fold. It's important to create opportunities to socialize with them outside of regular docent duties. Martha has begun rewriting the docent handbook and will discuss with Mary Davis summaries for our permanent exhibit.

- Tech upgrade and microphone cost: George and Kerry have tested a mic system to be used during presentations at the museum. George explained the cost includes a wireless system (\$261), replacement of three speakers in the ceiling (\$250 per speaker), and Kerry's installation fee (\$500). The question is who pays for it? Us or the Town? More research is needed to discern the need for this upgrade. Martha suggested that Kerry give us all a lesson in how to utilize the existing music system so we can have music playing inside or outside the museum on a regular basis.

MOTION: Courtney motioned, Stewart seconded, ASTM board approve purchase of one wireless microphone at the cost of \$261 to be utilized with our current sound system. Motion passed.

- Board meeting time: 5pm start was discussed and it was decided that future meetings will continue to begin at 5pm. However, it is understood that one board member has difficulty attending on Tuesdays.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will ask the Town if our meeting day can be moved to another day of the week in order to make this accommodation for our board member.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Next board meeting is scheduled for 5pm on Tuesday, August 30. Summer break.

Upcoming events of note:

June 11: Concessions at Cajun Dance

October 1: Concessions at Songwriter's Circle