

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2023

Minutes taken by Martha Gruning

Members Present: Martha Gruning, Niki Mendow, Stewart Eastman,

Absent with notice: George Long, Courtney Blich, Felicia Walker

Guests present: Kimberly Irizarry, Gail Ledet, Monique Baus (TOAS)

Absent without notice: Calissa Folsie, Melissa Smith

- Meeting called to order at 5:02 pm by Vice-President Martha Gruning

- Niki moved that minutes of the May 2023 meeting be approved. Stewart seconded the motion, which was approved.

- Financial report by Martha Gruning, Treasurer
Account balance is \$43,672.92 as of August 16, 2023. The expenses do not look accurate based on 30/70 split. Cajun Dance has not rebounded to pre-Covid levels. Cajun Dance shows \$1,453 of revenue and no expenses. Martha will check both discrepancies with Stacy at Town Hall. Archiving project expenses continue and we are trying to increase that to move the archiving project forward. We will be submitting our budget to Town Hall in September.

Unfinished Business [based on George's notes]

- Archives report - George met with Mayor and Janet at their request for an update on the Archives. They were concerned about whether or not work was getting done and whether or not it was worthwhile to continue due to concerns about long term costs. George attempted to reassure them it was worthwhile. They would also like to see scanning of documents they recently received that were donated to the Town. Rachel has offered to make a presentation to them about what she's been doing and what it takes to make an entry into the catalog system.

- Meeting with the Mayor - At that same meeting, George explained the Buuck family's request for a show of their father's work. They were familiar with his work and were very enthusiastic about the value of such a show.

- Museum renovations/display cabinets - George continues to work on installation of the bottom cloth and lighting. It will be ready in time for Stewart's steins. Stewart has started publicity on Facebook page for his event. He could not access the Museum Facebook page. He will also publicize printed material in pubs. Niki will be meeting with Felicia to plan other aspects of the exhibit.

Ideas for future exhibits are listed on Google Drive. A jewelry exhibit is among ideas suggested.

New Business

- Ray Buuck exhibition - October 6-8 and 13-15 during regular hours with a reception on 10/5, 6-8pm. Need volunteers for reception similar to En Plein Air but food and drink will be provided by the family. They will need our support and oversight. Courtney is not available but George is. A full page ad will run in Live Oak magazine that was designed by the family and George said it looks good. He asked the St. Tammany Art Association board president if they would help promote it and she agreed to include it in their email newsletter. The family has access to our media contacts list and is working hard at it. They will all be in attendance and consider this event to be their way to honor their father's legacy. No vote was taken to approve this event due to lack of a quorum.
- Shakespeare in the Park - Naomi O'Donnell is the production manager for the fledgling Northshore Shakespeare Company and will direct their first production, Measure for Measure. She and George met with the folks at Town Hall on August 4th and received overwhelming support. The Museum would be hosting the event and would get a percentage of ticket sales. What percentage has not been discussed but they might not break even on this first venture and there would be no financial gain for us or them. We would provide volunteers to serve as ticket takers and provide general support to their production team. We will need a committee to help oversee this support. George will help with promotion. The 3-6 actors will require access to the museum during rehearsals

and for costume changes before and during performances. Rehearsals would occur 6-10pm September 11-14 and performances on the evening of September 15, matinee on the 16th, and evening of the 17th. Times of performances are to be determined. Those listed on their proposal that I sent you earlier are not accurate. The play runs approximately 90 minutes. There is no intermission. Janet, Dan, and Town event staff discussed the possibility of having a food truck present to serve beverages. That possibility is being explored by them. Logistics for that would be handled by them. No vote was taken to approve this event due to lack of quorum. Martha noted that it may be very warm. Performance dates are not firm due to music at the Abita Brew Pub and the Farmers Market. Two evening performances and one matinée. Stewart expressed doubts as to whether the Museum should become involved in ticket sales and providing volunteers because we have had difficulty finding volunteers for Museum events. He does not think it fits the Museum mission. We will discuss this at the September 20th meeting.

- Sandwich board and tabloid sized sign - George is exploring options for a new light-weight sandwich board sign to replace the heavy one we are now using. Ideally, the new one would allow changing the board for the various exhibitions and events that the Museum sponsors.
- Docent report: After discussion with more than one docent, George believes we need to buy a new sandwich board sign to replace the heavy, awkward one. They make them with plastic that folds. It would also allow us to change the message. George asked one of our docents, Kimberly Irizarry, to consider serving on the Board and she was receptive. We also have a new docent, Clinton Cognevich, a native of Abita Springs. He has reviewed the handbook. George has added board meeting dates to the docent signup schedule and invited them to attend the meetings.
- A new refrigerator was ordered by Town Hall and will be set up. The old one has died.
- George [Martha when George is unavailable] has been sending a weekly no-pressure email to all docents and board members letting them know of upcoming events and how many shifts remain to be filled. Stewart asked that we

find a second volunteer if possible for the shifts during which the Beer Stein show is on display.

- Stewart attended the Choctaw Fair. He noticed that the game of stickball was very important in Choctaw culture. He noted that we do not have any references to the game in our displays. He suggested that we might purchase two sticks and balls for around \$80 and modify the Choctaw display. We would have to check with Mary Davis who designed the displays to check the feasibility of this modification.
- MOTION TO ADJOURN: 5:34 PM, moved by Stewart seconded by Martha. Motion approved.