

Abita Springs Trailhead Museum (ASTM) Board Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2023

Minutes taken by Martha Gruning

Members Present: Stewart Eastman, Martha Gruning, Niki Mendow, Melissa Smith, Felicia Walker

Absent with notice: George Long, Courtney Blicht, Ron Blicht

Visitors: Lauren Crout, Jason MacFetters, Keitisha Young

- Meeting called to order at 5:03 pm by Vice-President Martha Gruning
- Stewart moved that minutes of the November 2023 meeting be approved. Felicia seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.
- Financial report by Martha Gruning, Treasurer. Martha was unable to obtain a financial report from Town Hall. The balance in the account is roughly \$39,000-\$40,000.

Unfinished Business

- Preservation report: Melissa stated that she will focus on records management for the Museum. She reported that she has resubmitted a best practices report she prepared last spring to George for review by the Town. Melissa will also work on templates for loans as well as donor agreements. She will give these to George to present to the Town for review.
- Meeting with Mayor (George): George and Martha, together with three of the four board applicants {Kimberly Irizarry not present, met with the Mayor on December 11 at 4 p.m. Applicants introduced themselves. The mayor stressed that open lines of communication are crucial to the Museum's relationship with the Town. He encouraged board members to come by Town Hall to discuss any issues saying that the best time is 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. every other Tuesday before the Town meetings.
- Status of Docent activity: Martha reported that we have had more open shifts than usual probably due to the holidays. Martha asked that board members check the docent sign-up sheet regularly and fill in when possible. If each docent [including board members] worked one shift per month, all shifts would be covered.
- Cajun Dance volunteers: Martha provided background on the group of people who volunteer regularly to work the concessions at Cajun Dance once a month. They include Lynnette Soules, Jo Keiffer, Iris Salzer, Sandra Root, C. K. Griffing and Bryan Gowland. She explained that when they are short of volunteers, they request help from the board. When needed, the board members do step up to help. The dance dates are posted on the Museum website under the "Events" section. Martha commented that Town Hall does not seem enthusiastic regarding the monthly Cajun Dance. There seems to be a trend to monetize events for the public and this event is not as financially remunerative as it was before COVID. Pre-COVID each dance generated revenue of \$500-\$600. The post-COVID dance revenue is \$300-\$400.

Action item: Martha will provide contact information for Northshore Cajun Dancers to the new board.

New Business

- Board elections [Martha]: The current nominees present, Lauren Crout, Keitisha Young, and Jason MacFetters, stepped outside. Martha distributed the ballots. The current board voted and unanimously elected all four applicants. Martha invited them to step back in and informed them that they were all elected to the 2024 board.
- MOTION TO ADJOURN: 5: PM, moved by Felicia, seconded by Melissa. Motion approved unanimously.