

HISTORIC ARKANSAS MUSEUM COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2023

Commissioners Present:

James Warren, Chair
John Greer, Vice Chair
Gordon Rather, Secretary
Frances Mitchell Ross, Chair Emerita
Rex Nelson
Vanessa Norton McKuin
Marshall Butler
Ann Jennings Shackelford

Commissioners Absent:

Kyle Wilson
Tracey Hendren

Historic Arkansas Museum Staff Present:

Stephanie Haught Wade, Executive Director
Joleen Linson, Assistant Director
Victoria Chandler, Curator of Collections
Ellen Korenblat, Community Engagement Director
Mark Mourier, Accounting

Visitor:

Jimmy Bryant, Division of Arkansas Heritage Director

Call to Order:

Commission Chair James Warren called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. The meeting was held via Zoom with an in-person meeting option as well.

Approval of Minutes:

Commission Chair James Warren requested a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2022, meeting as distributed. Commissioner Rex Nelson moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner John Greer seconded, and the motion passed.

Commission Chair James Warren requested a motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2022, meeting as distributed. Commissioner Rex Nelson moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner John Greer seconded, and the motion passed.

Special Announcement: Museum Director Stephanie Wade offered condolences on behalf of the entire museum staff to Commissioner John Greer on the loss of his mother, Angie Greer, and to Commissioner Ann Jennings Shackelford on the loss of her brother, Alston Jennings, Jr.

Financial Report:

Museum Director Stephanie Wade reported on the balance of state funds. As of January 3, 2023, the Historic Arkansas Museum state funds balance was \$1,301,171.91, and our financial reports show that everything is in good standing. Ms. Wade sent additional December budgets for the Conservation Tax fund and the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council fund to the Commissioners for review. These two funds reflect the majority of money available in the museum budget.

Museum Update:

Museum Director Stephanie Wade shared a chart with the Commissioners displaying year-end visitor numbers for 2018-2022. Total onsite and offsite visitors for 2022 were 26,181. Visitation numbers for December 2022 totaled 3,187. The museum store had \$14,020.61 in sales for December 2022. Ms. Wade shared a second chart with the Commission showing the museum store sales for the years of 2020, 2021 and 2022. Sales have continued to increase over the years. Commissioner Gordon Rather asked how the store determined actual profits. Community Engagement Director Ellen Korenblat stated that we just keep track of total sales. The items in the store are purchased from the artist, and then a markup is added before we sell to our visitors. Commissioner Rather inquired where this information is recorded and if the actual profit can be determined. Ms. Korenblat stated that there is not separate bookkeeping for the museum store outlining what products come in and what is sold per fiscal year. Moreover, when items are bought and sold does not necessarily happen solely within a fiscal year making it challenging to document in this way. Commissioner John Greer commented that he sees no liability or risk, and the store could continue to keep a simple record of inventory and sold items. Commissioner Rather concurred.

Director Wade stated that the new year is off to a good start with numerous planning meetings. There are several 50th anniversaries to celebrate in 2023: Museum Store, Mary Worthen Herb Garden, Trinity Gallery and Territorial Fair. Stay tuned for related events during the year.

Museum Assistant Director Joleen Linson reported on site and facilities. Natalie Fulton was selected as the new Security Supervisor, and her first day will be Monday, January 23, 2023. New flooring is scheduled to be placed in the living history office and the green room behind the stage. Carpentry repairs are being conducted on the grounds.

Museum Assistant Director Joleen Linson noted that Living History Saturdays are going well so far this month, and February's theme will be *Sew the Seeds of Love*. There will be programming and costumed demonstrations to include sowing seeds for a spring garden and hand sewing techniques by textile artists. As part of Black History Month, wedding traditions in the enslaved community will be discussed. Education staff Ian Beard, Kyle Burrow and Morgan Weithman are completing the Certified Interpretive Guide training next week at one of the state parks. Several staff have been selected to present at upcoming state conferences, including the Arkansas Museum Association and Arkansas Living History Association. Presentation submissions have been sent as well for the national Association for Living

History, Farm and Agricultural Museums conference in June 2023 in Ohio. Marianne Nolley will start part time on February 6, 2023, in the Education Department assisting Casey Marshall with School Programs.

Curator of Collections Victoria Chandler presented the Exhibits, Collections and Arkansas Made report. Ms. Chandler shared a recent acquisition of a painting by Louis Freund, regionalist painter. In the 1930s, Mr. Freund was back home in Missouri and traveled the Ozark region in Arkansas, when it is thought that this scene was painted. There are very few works from this time period by Louis Freund, so it is exciting to add this to the collection. Louis, and his artist wife Elsie, were tremendous supporters of the Historic Arkansas Museum and donated numerous works to the collection in the early 2000s. A new exhibit, *Mismatch: Eliseo Casiano and Abigail Smithson*, is opening in the Trinity Gallery on February 10, 2023 in conjunction with 2nd Friday Art Night. Appraisals are being conducted by Jennifer Carman on several key items in the collection to make sure insurance coverage is adequate. Ms. Chandler also talked with Liz Norton about conservation work on several paintings recently acquired.

Museum Community Engagement Director Ellen Korenblat reported that several additional staff are working to cover the museum store as the hiring freeze set forth by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders has delayed filling the museum store manager position. Ms. Korenblat thanked Mark Mourier and Tricia Spione for their help in covering those hours plus working their current positions. The CALS Galleries at Library Square will be closing in 2023, and Ms. Korenblat thinks it is even more critical that our store be staffed and operational to support Arkansas artists. The next 2nd Friday Art Night will be Friday, February 10, 2023 with a Valentine themed event. Live music is by *Love Notes*, a trio of John Willis, Jessica Mylonas and Phillip Rex Huddleston. They will perform songs of love and loss. The Education Department will showcase Victorian calling cards showing the early years of Valentine's Day as the holiday boomed in the 1840s. The Trinity Gallery exhibit opening will also be a fun part of the evening.

Historic Arkansas Museum Foundation:

Museum Community Engagement Director Ellen Korenblat reported that the annual Louise Loughborough Volunteer Appreciation Party will be held Tuesday, February 14, 2023 from 4:00-6:00pm. This event has typically been a luncheon, but it was decided to change the time to see if more people will be able to attend at the end of the workday. Membership monies brought in \$3290.00 since the last Commission meeting. At the last Board meeting, Mary Claire Hill, Molly McNulty, and Gregory Simril were elected to the Foundation Board. Ms. Korenblat is also working to fulfill Gala auction purchases. At the last 2nd Friday Art Night, Jonathan and Courtney Warren were treated to a VIP experience as part of a package they won at the Gala's silent auction.

Other Business:

Museum Director Stephanie Wade will be out of the office next Monday through Wednesday serving as a peer reviewer for a museum accreditation site visit on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. The visit will be in St. Cloud, MN at the Steans History Museum.

Museum Director Stephanie Wade reminded the Commissioners to submit their Statement of Financial Interest forms by January 31, 2023 to the Secretary of State's office. Ms. Wade sent the required form

and instructions in an earlier email to the Commissioners. Staff member Sherry Stevenson is a notary public if her services are required.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Museum and the Foundation was updated by Commissioner Kyle Wilson and sent to the Commissioners for their review. The updates were minimal and included the necessary date changes and inclusion of social media accounts as a way for the Foundation to promote events such as the Candlelight Gala. Commission Chair James Warren requested a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Gordon Rather moved to approve, Commissioner Marshall Butler seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The MOU will now be sent to the Foundation Board President, Erin Finzer, and the Secretary, Chance Tharp, for their signatures.

Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting of the Historic Arkansas Museum Commission will be held Friday, February 17, 2023, at 12:00pm via Zoom. Museum Director Stephanie Wade will send instructions to join the meeting. Lunch will be provided in the Loughborough Conference Room, and Commissioners who are comfortable attending in person are welcome to do so.

Adjournment:

With no other business to discuss, Commission Chair James Warren adjourned the meeting at 12:29 pm.

Gordon S. Rather, Jr. Secretary