

**Culture & Heritage
Board of Commissioners Meeting
October 28, 2013
6:00 pm
Museum of York County**

Approved 11-25-13

Person Presiding: Chair, David Plexico
Members Present: Dennis Getter, David Duncan, Rick Lee, Ragin Craig, Carlos Bryson
Members Absent: Jonell Hagner
Ex Officio Present: Pat Veasey, Nancy Craig
Staff Present: Carey Tilley, Barbara Ardrey
Other: County Attorney Michael Kendree

The meeting was called to order by CHC Chair David Plexico at 6:10pm. (Commissioner Bryson was not present but arrived later.)

Plexico called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2013 meeting; Ragin Craig so moved; Duncan seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports and Information

Report from Executive Director

- See full written report included as an addendum to these minutes.

Tilley finished his report and answered questions.

(Commissioner Bryson arrived at this point in the meeting. He was introduced to the other Commissioners and welcomed.)

Committee Reports

- Finance Committee
 - Getter reported that there was no formal finance meeting but he presented two reports for Commission review.
 - Preliminary Revenue and Expenditures Report through June 2013, the bottom line being total revenues of 3.9 plus, with total expenditures of 3.4 plus, showing great control of expenditures
 - Preliminary through September with the same observation that we continue to be substantially under control.
 - Completed audit will show firm numbers.
- Governance Committee
 - Plexico reported on behalf of Governance Chair, Jonell Hagner.
 - There was no formal meeting but Plexico noted that the annual evaluation for Executive Director Tilley had not been completed. He then passed out Appraisal Reports to all of the Commissioners and advised that they need to be making some

determinations and that this matter would be revisited at the November meeting. Discussion followed. Attorney Kendree was asked if there was a rule about Ex Officio members participating in the evaluation process. He didn't know of any rule and noted that he felt as long as they were informed, it would be at the discretion of the Commission. There were also questions about the actual grading system. It was noted that Hagner suggested meeting on this prior to the November Board meeting.

- Collections Committee
 - Veasey advised that three Recommendations for Accession to the Archives were overlooked at the last meeting and need approval. She then reviewed those documents as well as three additional Recommendations for Accession and one for Extended Loan and noted that these had gone through the committee and were recommended for approval.

Duncan moved to accept all the recommendations; Lee seconded; discussion followed; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

- Veasey then presented the Collections Committee Charter and asked for clarification of the verbiage regarding terms for the members. Language approved at the August 26, 2013 meeting was revised slightly by eliminating several words for clarity— no material change – when presented at the September Board Meeting. A copy of the Charter with current language has been included in the board packet. The commission was asked to confirm the language with appropriate approval dates.

Lee made a motion to approve the language as submitted October 28, 2013; Duncan seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion followed on role of the Committee.

Old Business - None

New Business

- Approval of recommended Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday scheduling
 - Tilley advised that attendance numbers justify having the sites, except for McCelvey, open the day after Thanksgiving even though that is a County holiday.
 - This year with Christmas falling in the middle of the week, the County is giving employees the day before and the day after, as well as Christmas, and after looking at the numbers, they do not justify staying open. We are recommending that the museums be closed all three days.

Plexico made a motion to approve the holidays as recommended; Getter seconded; a vote was taken; the motion passed unanimously.

Plexico asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for receipt of legal advice, a contractual matter, and a personnel matter regarding compensation; Ragin Craig so moved; Getter seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Reconvened to Open Session

Plexico noted that the meeting was back in open session.

Ragin Craig made a motion to approve the salary adjustment for the planetarium manager not to exceed 8% above the base; Getter seconded; discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Plexico made a motion to select Patterson Pope as the successful vendor for the archives storage system at \$160,008.23; Ragin Craig seconded; no discussion; a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.*

Duncan moved to adjourn and Lee seconded.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Barbara Ardrey
Submitted by: Dennis Getter, Secretary/Treasurer

**Per York County requirements, The York County Council gave final approval of the contract with Patterson Pope at its meeting on November 4, 2013.*

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES OF CHC 10-28-13 MEETING
Culture and Heritage Museums
Director's Report
October 28th, 2013

*Mission: to communicate and preserve the natural and cultural histories of the Carolina
Piedmont, inspiring a lifetime of learning.*

CHC Commissioners

Once again I would like to thank you for your support and service. At the end of September we completed the first quarter of FY 2013-14. Visitation numbers to date have been very strong and we continue to operate in a financially sound manner. Staff has been very busy during the past three months and employees have performed admirably in the vacuum created by several position vacancies. Over the next several weeks we anticipate a very busy field trip season followed in December by our largest single event of the year – Christmas Candlelight.

Visitation Numbers

The on-site visitation numbers in the first quarter of 2013-2014 represent a banner start to this year. Most significantly, overall first quarter visitation is the highest since 2007-2008¹. All three major visitation categories experienced significant increase over last year: General Admission is up 10%, Special Events Attendance is up 127%, and Groups Visitation is up 142%.

September marks the fourth consecutive month of positive visitation growth over the previous year. Eight of the past nine months have been positive.

The year-to-date totals reflect important recent high water marks for each site.

- The Museum of York County has had the highest number of visitors in the First Quarter that can be reliably documented (back to 2007-08).
- The Main Street Children's Museum has had the highest number of First Quarter visitors yet in its first three years since opening.
- Historic Brattonsville has served its highest number of First Quarter visitors since September of 2007.
- Although the total number of visitors at McCelvey is down due to the July 2012 concerts, the Research Room, which represents our daily activity, has served the highest number of visitors that can be reliably documented.

While it will be difficult to sustain this record rate of growth throughout the year, we do hope to post positive numbers each month and continue the upward trend. The tables below present a breakdown of the September and First Quarter Visitation numbers.

¹ Prior to 2007-2008, different software and methodology for calculating attendance was used. With the addition of the Main Street Children's Museum, it is possible that the first quarter of this year is our best start ever in total visitation.

September Monthly On-site Visitation Comparison

	Overall	MYCO	HB	MSCM	McCelvey
September 13/14	5,037	1,593	2,272	1,017	155
September 12/13	4,057	1,207	1,717	1,057	76
Change from Prev. Year	+980	+386	+555	-40	+79
% Change	+24%	+32%	+32%	-04%	+104%

First Quarter (Year-To-Date) On-site Visitation Comparisons

	Overall	MYCO	HB	MSCM	McCelvey
YTD 2013-2014	19,996	7,498	6,207	5,729 ²	562
YTD 2012-2013	16,032	5,680	4,568	5,022	762 ³
Change from Previous Year	+3,964	+1,818	+1,639	+707	-200
% Change from Previous Year	+25%	+32%	+36%	+14%	-26%
Avg. of last 5 yrs.	14,203	6,049	5,415	5141 ⁴	683
Change from Avg.	+5,793⁵	+1,449	+792	+588	-121
% Change from Avg.	+41%⁶	+24%	+15%	+11%	-18%

Visitation at Special Events at Historic Brattonsville

The Special Events at Historic Brattonsville in particular are off to a strong start in 2013-14. This trend is continuing into October. When the totals for the first six events held through October 19 at Brattonsville are compared to last year, there is an increase of 1,278 visitors. This represents growth of over 70% in this category.

² Main Street Children's Museum YTD Totals for 2013-14 include Countdown to Kindergarten total (500). Countdown was a first-time program not held in previous years.

³ McCelvey YTD Totals for 2012-13 include Southern Harmonies Concerts in July of 2012. These concerts were funded by a one-time grant. Daily Research Room numbers are up for the current year.

⁴ MSCM's first quarter average is for its first two years since opening.

⁵ Overall Five-Year Average includes MSCM which did not open until 2010. If MSCM is taken out, the combined increase of the other three sites over their five year average is 2,120 or just over 17%.

⁶ See Note above.

1. Independence Day (Total of 461):up 108%
2. Huck's Defeat (Total of 1,086):up 48%
3. Occupations of the Past (Total of 175): up 140%⁷
4. Sweat of our Brow (Total of 426):.....up 53%
5. Piedmont Pottery Festival (Total of 446).....up 21%
6. Spirits & Stories (Total of 484):.....up 120%

At the time of writing this report, we are awaiting verification of final numbers for the annual *Civil War Reenactment* held this past Saturday and Sunday. The preliminary totals indicate another rise over the 2012-13 attendance. Despite the cool start (morning low of 28°) on Saturday, it appears that we finished the weekend with c. 1,050 visitors. This total would represent a modest increase of c. 5% over last year.

Membership

Membership continues to be up in 2013-2014. Through the end of the first quarter income from membership is up 34% from last year. We are currently re-evaluating our system of calculating monthly and annual fluctuations in membership but preliminary indications suggest positive growth in the total number of members as well.

MYCO Roof

Work on the new roof for the Museum of York County continues with substantial completion scheduled for November 1st. There will still be a few loose ends to tie up over the next couple of weeks. While this improvement may not be exciting for the general public, it is vital to extending the life of the current facility.

McCelvey Annex

Work on the McCelvey Annex continues with substantial completion still currently scheduled for December. We have received bids for the shelving. Since this is a contractual matter, we will be discussing a recommendation to be made to the County Council in Executive Session.

HB Brick House

A construction fence is up and work has begun at the Brick House at Historic Brattonsville. We expect work for this phase (roof and mortar) to be completed in December. We have funds through the York County Hospitality Tax program to begin work on the Restoration of the Front Porch and will be undertaking the groundwork for this second phase in the coming weeks.

HB Huck's Defeat Battlefield

Funds are in place for work on the interpretation of the Huck's Defeat Battlefield. We are currently finalizing contracts for commissioning original artwork for the wayside signage to be installed along the trail. Current projections show the overall expenses for the project to be on target; however, we do anticipate additional cost in the artwork with savings on the design and manufacture of the signage. We also anticipate that the cost of the technology tour component of the project will be less than originally projected.

⁷ *Occupations of the Past* is currently still counted as General Admission and is not reflected in the Special Events growth shown in the totals.

Piedmont Pottery Festival

The *Piedmont Pottery Festival* was held on September 28th with a strong attendance of 446 visitors. Leading potters from the region offered their unique brand of ceramics to the public. Our volunteers and staff added to the success of the event with special activities of brick making, cooking, and blacksmithing in addition to special tours of the Colonel Bratton House and the Homestead House.

Family Night at the Museum

On October 8th, the Museum of York County hosted a *Family Night at the Museum* for families from Rock Hill's Title I elementary schools. We had 282 visitors including members of 51 families who visited for the first time. The event was so popular, we have been asked to host a second event on November 5th.

Spirits and Stories

In only its second year *Spirits and Stories: Historic Brattonsville by Twilight* (October 19) is becoming one of our more popular events at HB with 484 people in attendance. The event featured guided tours every ten minutes that recreated scenes from the 19th century Plantation. Children's activities, concessions by the Friends of HB, and acclaimed storyteller, Tim Lowery created a wonderful atmosphere that was well received by the visitors.

Civil War

This past weekend we partnered with the Sixth South Carolina Volunteers to offer our annual *Civil War Reenactment*. Although the number of soldiers was down this year, the group was hearty - withstanding the first frost of the year as they camped on site in preparation for the event. The visitor turnout was strong with a preliminary total of 1,050 guests that exceeded last year's attendance by 49 visitors. Sales in the gift shop were up by 44%.

America Recycles Day

Our next major event, *America Recycles Day*, will be held at the Museum of York County on November 14th and 15th. Currently, 466 fifth grade students are scheduled to attend over two days. A free public event is scheduled for Sunday, November 17 with an anticipated 350+ visitors for an afternoon of fun and educational activities.

Southern Sound Series

We will be announcing our 2014 *Southern Sound Series* in early November. This year's line-up features four Grammy-winning acts from the fields of Bluegrass, Americana, and Traditional Folk music. The first concert will be in January. We will be working with the Friends of McCelvey, our long-time series sponsors, on the announcement date.

Personnel Changes

- HB Education Manager: We are proud to announce that Karen Cox began today as our new Education Manager at Historic Brattonsville. Ms. Cox has been a dependable leader among our HB Interpreters for several years and will bring significant experience, innovation and a solid work ethic to her new position.
- Planetarium Manager: Carole Holmberg will be joining the CHM as our new Planetarium Manager beginning Monday, November 4th. Ms. Holmberg brings extensive experience

in planetarium operations and management to the job. Most recently, she served as the Planetarium Director for the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium in Fort Myers, Florida.

- Community Relations Coordinator: We will be completing interviews for the Community Relations Coordinator position tomorrow. We are very encouraged by the quality of the candidates.
- Visitors Services Associate: We will soon begin the process of interviewing candidates for the part-time Visitors Services Associate position at Historic Brattonsville. We hope to be making a selection in the next couple of weeks.
- Maintenance Worker: We are reviewing applicants for the part-time maintenance worker position at Historic Brattonsville. The position has been reposted a second time.
- Interpreter HB: With Ms. Cox moving to the Education Manager Position, we will need to identify her replacement. We hope to post the position this week.
- Development Associate: We are currently in the process of revisiting projections on contributed income. We will delay filling the position in this department until we can establish that projected income can justify the expense.

Conclusion

This report has hit the highlights of the work happening at the museums. The staff is also working diligently with other significant projects as well as the daily work of offering quality experiences to the public. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, thoughts, or comments. I believe we are on a solid path and I thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

(submitted electronically)

Carey L. Tilley
Executive Director