

## Fort Concho Museum Board Minutes

March 16, 2021

### I. OPEN SESSION

A. **Call to Order** - President Roger Banks called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. at the Fort Concho Stables Hall, 210 Henry O. Flipper Street. The Stables Hall is large enough to allow for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocols as the coronavirus pandemic continues. The governor lifted facemask requirements on March 10, 2021. Persons in attendance wore proper facial coverings according to their comfort level and maintained at least six feet separation during the meeting in accordance with CDC guidelines.

B. **Determination of a quorum** – Site Manager, Bob Bluthardt established that a quorum was present with ten members in person and one member appearing by telephone.

Members present at 3.34 p.m.: Roger Banks, Sherley Spears, Joyce Lowe, Lisa Marley, Brandon Allen, Donald Barnhart, Dave Schaller, Kathy Keane, and Major Don Barger appeared in the seat for the Goodfellow AFB US Army 344<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion, formerly held by LTC Brian Ryan. Dr. Jason Pierce arrived at 3:36 p.m. Yukio Kuniyuki appeared via telephone.

C. **Approval of excused absences** – Lori Barton and Curtis Milbourn were absent. Kathy Keane moved to excuse those who were absent. Sherley Spears seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

D. **Introduction of guests** – No guests, but there was an introduction of our new board member as well as staff presentation.

President, Roger Banks, introduced Donald Barnhart. Don is retired and has a history of public service. He has served on the city's Parks and Recreation and City Events boards. He is presently a member of the Zoning Board and the Mayor's Police Department review committee. We are happy to welcome him to the board.

Bob introduced Leslie Marshall who came on staff November 1, 2019. Leslie is the Animal Program Coordinator and assists with maintenance and administrative duties. She has improved the stables immensely and made improvements to the entire program. Leslie reported that she is now riding Mac the mule. Cory provided a period authentic saddle for her to use. Now it is possible to have someone ride Mac next to the wagon. Leslie plans to have Mac, the wagon and a float in the rodeo parade. She said that she has replaced ground all around the stables. Over time, cleanings created large holes. From now on, outside users will bring their own shavings, which should help prevent ground removal. Roger commented on Leslie's prowess with parade floats. She said that the rodeo float would be "artillery themed." The sign will say, "Come to Fort Concho. You'll have a blast!" Staff and board agree that the theme is a good one and Leslie is a valuable addition to the fort's staff.

E. **Presentations** - None.

F. **Public Comment** - None.

## II. CONSENT AGENDA

**1. Consideration of approving the February 23, 2021 Minutes** - Sherley Spears moved to accept the minutes of 02/23/2021. Dave Schaller seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**2. Treasurer's Report** - Treasurer, Lisa Marley, presented the following:

February wasn't too good because the fort was closed 6-7 days for the winter storm. There was bad weather about 25% of the month, but the gift shop did relatively well. It is the time of year where visitation and gift shop receipts will increase. We are at about one-third of our membership goal as more memberships came in during the past month. We will begin charging admission fees next month. Year to date rental income is below the normal, but as coronavirus restrictions lift, we expect rentals to increase. The cancellation of the 2020 Christmas at Old Fort Concho continues to affect numbers. The total site income of \$391,773.00 and our year to date expenditures of \$375,000.00 leave us \$16,600.00 in the black. Kathy Keane moved to accept the treasurer's report. Brandon Allen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**3. Site Manager's Report** -Bob Bluthardt, Site Manager, referred board members to the report in their packets.

Bob turned the floor over to Sherley Spears for a report on Buffalo Soldiers Day held on Sunday, February 28, 2021. Ms. Spears said that about 75 people attended and there were more folks watching on Facebook Live. Henry Crawford's presentation was well received, especially the replicas, artifacts, books and uniforms, which were displayed for viewing. Mr. Crawford will again be presenting at the July Buffalo Soldiers Day and will assist with special presentations at Christmas at Old Fort Concho.

Bob advised that the Living History event on March 6<sup>th</sup> marking Women's History Month was a great success. About 150 people attended. The event received lots of good press as well.

The city has now lifted all capacity restrictions for city buildings and we are back to pre-COVID conditions. The Quartermaster's building, Commissary, Barracks 6 will all accommodate up to 200 people. Officer's Quarter 8 can handle up to 75 and the Stables Hall will hold up to 600. Food Service is the key element of accommodating pandemic safety protocols at this time. The Frontier Days and Christmas events will err on the side of caution for all food service. For Frontier Days, the Lions Clubs will serve the pancake breakfast items in to-go containers. Milk and juice will be in cartons. Volunteers will fill and serve coffee in covered cups and give out sugar and creamer in packets. Tables will seat six instead of the usual eight to provide more spacing for social distancing. In addition, most events will be outdoors in the fresh air and will allow better social distancing. We will plan for 2021 Christmas at Old Fort Concho based on the experiences and lessons of Frontier Days.

April brings a return of the Speaker Series, which will be in the Stables Hall this year. Also in April, admission fees return. Donations have been good as people contributed in lieu of admissions. Our fees are relatively nominal in the \$1.50 to \$3.00 range, but we will see increased income.

Leslie Fisher, with The Cowboy Jubilee, will present a "teaser" Concert event on Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup>. We will receive rental income for the event, which will utilize the set-up from the Regional Cavalry Competition for seating. The 'main event' will be October 7-10, 2021. More details to follow.

### **III. REGULAR AGENDA: PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENTS**

**4. Fort Board Nominations Update** – Bob reported that there are two slots open on the board.

**5. Consideration and Approval of Collections** – None to report today. Bob mentioned that he and Cory Robinson, Curator of History, would be traveling to look at two wagons offered by two potential donors. The factors, which determine acquisition of any object, are: 1) storage, i.e., where can we put the item? 2) Is the item historic or original? 3) What is the condition of the object? As for a wagon(s), space is going to be a key consideration. Items have to be stored properly to prevent deterioration.

**6. Discussion of Fort Concho's Participate in San Angelo Gives Program of May 4, 2021** – After discussion and approval of the board, Bob will ask staff to obtain quotes on shelving units that fold, expand, and allow storage of twice the materials in half the space of regular book shelving. We will get quotes and set a goal. We will update our San Angelo Gives online profile to include photos and possibly a video to encourage donations. In the past, we have gotten donations in the \$5,000-7,000.00 range, but this year we may be able to double that with such a worthy use for the money.

**7. Update on Barracks/Mess Hall 3-4 Project** – Roger reported that three items on the list are complete. The San Angelo Area Foundation is currently working on the remainder. They are working through issues with the architects. April 15<sup>th</sup> the bids are set to go out and everything is running on time. Bob gave a brief history of the use and zoning of Fort Concho land. He reported that the new plat and zoning map is on file with the County Clerk. He then showed and passed around the new map.

**8. Discussion and Approval for Joint Board Meeting with San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts** – After discussion, the board agreed to hold a joint meeting with the SAMFA board. The board approved the following topics for discussion: 1) the Oakes Street bridge issues, 2) Signage for the fort and SAMFA, 3) neighboring properties appearance issues, 4) the Cultural District overall.

**9. Staff Reports** - Bob reported that he promoted Brenda Lee Brown from part-time tour guide to full-time Visitor & Volunteer Services Coordinator. The city will post the part-time tour guide position next week or the week after and we expect many applicants.

**10. Briefing on City Capital Improvement Program and Fort Projects** – Bob stressed that the Capital Improvement Program is a plan mandated by city ordinance. It is not a funding plan. With the recent winter storms, there are numerous street and pipe issues, which will need to be addressed. Our needs are interior repairs to Officers' Quarters 2, 6, and 8; Barracks reconstruction; the Visitor Center and street drainage. Because other more pressing issues have arisen for the city, we do not anticipate receiving money for our projects. Next year, our plate is full with reconstruction of the barracks and repairs to exteriors. We will be okay with what we have as money goes to streets and pipe infrastructure projects. The Capital Improvement Program is online and citizens may vote on favorite projects as guidance to the city council, however, there are currently pressing issues due to the winter 2020-2021 storms.

**11. Discussion on Fort Exhibits and Interpretive Study** – The Standard-Times article, which is included in the board's packet, is a "Reader's Digest" version of the study. Bob sent the complete Interpretive Planning Perspective by email. One of the more important things to implement from the study is to replace displayed original artifacts with replicas so that the originals are preserved.

**12. Building Maintenance and Repairs Updates** – Work is ongoing on Officers' Quarters 4. Next up is the hospital, which needs some TLC after pipes burst in the winter storm. The fort wants to thank the San Angelo ISD maintenance workers who responded very quickly when they discovered the leaks at about 5:00 p.m. Fort staff responded shortly thereafter and leaks stopped by about 7:00 p.m. Some displays sustained damage, but the quick response averted a worse disaster. The work is coming along fine, but not as quickly as we would like.

**13. Fort Concho Foundation Report** - No report. The foundation's next meeting is in April.

**14. Future Agenda Items** – None.

**15. Announcements** – April will be a busy month with the Speaker Series on Wednesdays, the Regional Cavalry Competition the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> and the Frontier Day event the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Roger congratulated Sherley Spears on her Chamber of Commerce award. Sherley then thanked Bob for the article in her start-up newspaper, The West Texas Tribune.

Sherley Spears moved to adjourn. Don Barnhart, seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Roger adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joyce K. Lowe

Board Secretary