

**Fort Concho Museum Board Minutes
September 19, 2023**

I. OPEN SESSION

A. Call to Order - In the absence of President Sherley Spears, and after waiting for a quorum, Vice President Don Barnhart called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. at Fort Concho Officers Quarters 8, 215 East Avenue D.

B. Determination of a Quorum - Bob Bluthardt, Site Manager, confirmed that having 9 members in attendance, a quorum was present: Don Barnhart, Dave Schaller, Tommy Earnest, Sarah Clemens, Tracy Simpson, Colleen Haddad, Dr. Jason Pierce, Penny Roberts, and Lisa Marley.

C. Approval of Excused Absences - A motion was made by Dave Schaller to excuse the absences and Penny Roberts seconded the motion which carried by unanimous vote. Absences were Sherley Spears, Kathy Keane, Monty Stanley, LTC John McAllister, Yukio Kuniyuki, and George Balli.

D. Introduction of Guests - Tom Johnston, Tom Green County Historical Society and Cheryl DeCordova of Representative Darby's Office

E. Presentations - None.

F. Public Comment - None.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the August 15, 2023 Minutes - Dr. Jason Pierce moved to approve the minutes of August 15, 2023. Sarah Clemens seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

2. Treasurer's Report - Lisa Marley presented the financials for August 2023. Income for August was down from 2022, but is 9% above the ten-year average. Admissions were down due to month-long heat wave. Christmas income will see a big boost in September. Miscellaneous income represents many caterers paying their 10% fees. Year-to-date income is only \$10K below last year and 7% above the past 10 year average. Heat wave pushed down admissions but gift shop is doing better. More income is expected in September for Christmas and Membership. Higher interest rates are pushing interest income up. Overall

expenses are near 84% of the budget at the 92% mark of the fiscal year. Total income for August was \$1,109,202, while operating expenses were \$1,042,656. This nets a positive fund balance of \$66,546. Budget should finish the fiscal year in the black. Congratulations to all for their work to keep within budget. Fund balance does not disappear but stays in fund balance for emergencies and repairs. Colleen Haddad moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Dave Schaller seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. Site Manager's Report - This report was deferred to later in the meeting due to guests being present for other agenda items.

Following item 15, this item was discussed:

Bob Bluthardt reported on the passing of past board member, Alma Perez, two-time Mayor Dick Funk and area rancher Bud Upton. In addition, the mother-in-law of Juanita Thompson (Administrative Assistant) passed. The Librarian position remains open at this time. Two candidates were offered the position, and both declined the position. Recruitment continues and discussions are underway to consider raising the salary range for the position. There are a number of events scheduled for October and there will be a media blast for advertising them. The relationship with the Art Museum is one of an MOU for a shared collection storage space in the State building. That MOU remains in effect even with the changes in management at the Museum.

III. REGULAR AGENDA: PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMENTS

4. Staff Reports - None.

5. Request to host State Employees Annual Picnic on October 12 and waive all charges - Cheryl DeCordova informed the board that this year will be the 32nd annual picnic for State employees. The picnic previously was held at the State Park, but moved to Fort Concho in 2015. Due to the COVID years, the picnic has not been held. Approximately 900 to 1000 employees usually attend. This is a big event for the employees. Food and gifts are provided. The board concurred that this is a good public service for Fort Concho. Penny Roberts made the motion to approve the request to host the event and waive all charges. Dr. Jason Pierce seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

6. Review of 2023 Polo on the Concho with Courtney Mahaffey and Plans for 2024 Event - Courtney Mahaffey contacted Bob Bluthardt to have this

item deferred to the October meeting. There were issues with the field conditions that concerned the polo participants. As we recall, the Symphony provided about \$5,000 in water for the field preparation, and a similar amount in labor and fertilizer, in order to make the parade grounds polo ready. The Cavalry event occurred a week or two ahead of the polo match. This will also be the case in 2024. There is some concern that we need to find a way that the monies that are provided for the grounds are preserved for the polo event. The obvious solution is that the polo event go before the Cavalry event, but this isn't possible. The polo players are only available after the Cavalry event, and the Cavalry event is attached to Frontier Days, which is tied to the Lions Clubs and that is connected to the state convention. Bob Bluthardt will meet with Courtney Mahaffey to reach an equitable solution for all. Any solution for this will be discussed at the October board meeting. Colleen Haddad inquired if the polo display that Joan Murtz provided could be left up for a longer period of time following the polo event in future years. Perhaps with a future event, the display could be placed at another Fort Concho building that isn't rented the following week, thus allowing increased viewing by the public. The good news is that one half of all Fort Concho facilities are already rented for next fiscal year. So it is not always easy to find a block of buildings needed for an event because there are so many existing bookings.

7. Review of Ruffini Building assessment and any moving/documentation proposal - James Robinson, the presenter from last month's meeting, measured the building and drew up some plans, but no proposal has been presented. He originally wanted the building to be moved to Old Town, but it's unclear if he's talked with anyone about this. Bob Bluthardt will reach back out to Mr. Robinson.

8. Review of 2024 proposal for a Renaissance Festival on Parade Ground - Response to Bob Bluthardt's email has not been received. Their initial proposal included renting several buildings and use of the entire parade ground. This item will be moved to the October meeting.

9. Report on Site of Concho Mail Station - Tom Ashmore invested in some grounds keeping equipment and solicited some assistance from the homeless people at the site to keep the trails open. Rains have made grass and weeds grow extensively. The Fort Concho Foundation voted for \$1000 in support money to help him. The next logical step is a feasibility study and that is being researched. A grant would need to be written for a study to occur as it could cost between \$15,000 - \$20,000. There might be other local foundations that are willing to

cover it. Tom Ashmore will be the guest speaker at the last Speaker's Series on September 27.

10. Report on Tom Green County Historical Society and its future plans - Tom Johnston informed the board that the Society has had a good relationship with Fort Concho since the 1940s. Meetings were previously held at Fort Concho on a monthly basis, but then during COVID, meetings were suspended. Several members passed away due to COVID and membership/attendance dropped off to 8 people. The society is currently inactive but has maintained its non-profit status for fund raising and scholarship possibilities. Mr. Johnston is involved in stirring interest. Many ideas have been explored such as scholarships from the Society to deserving people in an essay contest, as an example. Mr. Johnston is interested in any new ideas to support the Society being active once again. He thanked the board for their support over the years and just wanted to let the board know the current status.

11. Fort Concho Membership Drive Report - Bob Bluthardt reported that \$43,000 has been received. The goal is \$47,000. There is one \$5,000 donation still outstanding, additionally 55-60 renewal letters and 75 letters to perspective new members were sent out. It is still possible to meet or exceed the goal.

12. Building and Grounds Updates - Crews are working to keep the grounds tidy with all the rain. This is a good problem to have. The facilities are in good shape so far. Efforts are now gearing up for Christmas at Old Fort Concho. An assessment of facilities will be done with a focus on the Christmas event, in addition to regular maintenance.

13. Board Appointments for 2024 - There are three board members who will rotate off the board: Sherley Spears, Dave Schaller and Kathy Keane. Those positions will be open for appointments. There are an additional three board members who are eligible for full additional terms: Colleen Haddad, Sarah Clemens and Lisa Marley. If they are interested in remaining on the board, they must let Bob Bluthardt know and also re-apply on the City website prior to the completion of their current appointment. Discussion for replacements will be placed on the October agenda.

14. Fort Concho Foundation Report - Their next meeting will be in November. The Foundation Board voted to fund a few mini-projects including the exhibit improvements in Barracks 1. The tipi has arrived! Also the new exhibit

barrier interpretive items for all of the buildings was approved by the Foundation Board. Cory will be added to the October agenda with some new items that were received from Dr. Langelier, which included a Quartermaster helmet.

15. Update on Barracks/Mess Halls 3 - 4 Reconstruction - The last report from the architect is that they would be finished at the end of September, however there have been weather delays due to the extreme heat. It may be necessary to block the buildings somehow for the Christmas event. It would be nice to clear a path at least for Barrack 4, where visitors can enter through one door and exit through another door, and there could be some two dimensional exhibits on what the buildings will be upon completion. Staff will check further on whether this is feasible.

16. Future Agenda Items - Don Barnhart informed the board that it was suggested that a committee be formed on the subject of the Fort Concho logo, and this topic would be on the agenda in either October or November, once Sherley Spears returns.

17. Announcements - None.

Adjournment - At 4:40 p.m. Don Barnhart asked to adjourn the meeting. Colleen Haddad made the motion. Dave Schaller seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted for Kathy Keane,

/s/ *Lisa Marley*

Lisa Marley, Treasurer