**LOUISIANA NAVAL WAR MEMORIAL COMMISSION**

Minutes of Commission Meeting

March 17, 2016

5:30 p.m.

Members present:

* Richard Brandt
* Franklin Foil
* Robert Hawthorne
* Joe Jenkins
* Kyle Kennedy
* Henson Moore
* Bobbie Pugh
* Leonard Sedlin
* Karen St. Cyr
* Hans Sternberg
* Homer Rodgers, Under Secretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs

Members absent:

* Rudolph Bourg
* Shawn M. Cronan
* Denis Ricou

Others present:

* Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser
* Alex Juan, Executive Director
* Tim NesSmith, Ship Superintendent and Educational Director
* Jerry Pugh
* Craig Juan
* Larry Muenzler
* Pearce Cinman
* Ken Dixon
* Bennie Buras
* Charles H Doughty II
* Sylvester Mason
* Tommy Straight
* Fritz Embaugh
* Frank P. Simoneaux
* Benjamin Fernandez
* Matthew Joseph Cassiglia

Call to order: At 5:30 o’clock p.m. the meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Henson Moore, who asked Homer Rodgers to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. He announced that a quorum was present.

Agenda: The Chairman asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none.

Minutes. The Chairman asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. There were none so they were approved by consent.

Lt. Governor: The Chairman introduced the Lieutenant Governor, Billy Nungesser, who had just completed a tour of the ship and the museum. He complimented the Commission on the outstanding condition of the ship and museum. He pledged to help with private fundraising efforts and offered any assistance his office might be able to provide.

Chairman’s remarks: The Chairman briefly departed from the agenda to express his sincere thanks and gratitude to Past Chairman Joe Jenkins for his leadership these past years which presented unprecedented challenges and difficulties. This was followed by a rousing round of applause by all present.

Performance Review of Executive Director: The Chairman announced that the Executive Committee conducted a performance evaluation with the Executive Director and approved a raise for her. He asked if any of the Commissioners had questions or desired further explanation. None responded.

Strategic planning: Commissioner Sedlin briefly reviewed the work of the strategic planning committee to date. He referred to a seven page handout and called to the attention of the Commission a new mission statement highlighting education, veterans advocacy, and preservation. He then discussed the proposed new name recommended by the committee and moved that the Commission adopt as a new business name for the ship and museum “USS Kidd Louisiana Veterans Museum.” Commissioner Brandt seconded the motion which after further discussion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Goals for 2016: The Chairman then read off five goals he has for the Commission this year and invited comments or further suggestions by Commissioners or members of the public. The goals are:

1. Determine and implement the optimal organizational structure;
2. Explore the most economical insurance structure available;
3. Clear up the confusion about ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the ship and the building;
4. Determine whether or not we are or should be subject to the State civil service regime;
5. Start an annual fund campaign with at least one major fundraising event.

Commissioner Sternberg asked our total attendance last year. When told that it was approximately 86,000, he suggested that we set a goal to triple it.

The Chairman then explained that he and the Executive Director had agreed on seven goals for the Executive Director which the Executive Committee approved. They are:

1. Create three new exhibits never before done at the museum to further the museum’s mission and to bring value to the community.
2. Expand outreach of the overnight camping program to generate new interest and increase attendance of this program by 10%.
3. Plan and execute two new events that will generate interest in upcoming historical events.
4. Initiate a tracking system to document the results of direct mail, e-mail, personal solicitation, and special events in order to assess their effectiveness.
5. Maintain overall visitor attendance at the 2015 numbers of 86,293.
6. Obtain $15,000 sponsorships to help fund Free First Sunday, KIDD Keynotes and patriotic events throughout the year.
7. End the year 2016 in the black financially or profitably.

The Chairman then asked the Commissioners to help obtain sponsors for the free Sundays. Commissioner Pugh endorsed the idea of starting with fundraising and getting more help. Commissioner Sedlin asked for fundraising ideas. The Chairman responded that they should include grants, donations, sponsorships, annual fund contributions and events and that all of us would need to be involved.

Budget for 2016: The Chairman called attention to the proposed budget, comparative profit and loss statement and balance sheet. He pointed out some of the highlights and changes and stated that Commissioners should expect to receive profit and loss statements monthly. He asked for discussion. Commissioner Pugh asked about the overnight camping program. The Executive Director explained that status of the present program and the need to include more different types of groups. On motion by Commissioner Foil and seconded by Commissioner Jenkins, the budget was unanimously adopted by voice vote.

Commissioner admission privileges: The Chairman explained that there is some confusion whether Commissioners and their guests receive free admission. He recommended that Commissioners always be admitted free but not their guests. After discussion, the Commission agreed to this policy without objection.

Pending legislation: The Chairman explained that the Executive Committee approved legislation to address the quorum problem, the required number of meetings, and removal of commissioners who do not regularly attend meetings and that a bill has been filed. The filing deadline was before the Commission could meet so the bill has been filed. It can be withdrawn if the Commission does not approve. A copy of the proposed legislation was previously distributed to the Commissioners. After further explanation by Commissioner Foil, this action was unanimously approved by voice vote on motion by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Brandt.

Bylaws amendment on quorum: The Chairman explained that this item would be deferred until the next meeting.

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with foundation: Commissioner Hawthorne explained that the proposed document previously distributed to the Commissioners is a basic document designed to be supplemented each year with annual goals and objectives. No further action is necessary at this time.

Civil Service resolution: The Chairman introduced Frank Simoneaux, a lawyer who has researched many of the relevant issues in connection with an unrelated matter. He further explained that Mr. Simoneaux is a former legislator and chairman of the Louisiana Ethics Commission. Mr. Simoneaux summarized for the Commission his understanding of the statutes, constitution, and jurisprudence relative to the status of the Commission under Louisiana law. He recommended that the Commission file a suit for declaratory judgment and submitted a proposed resolution for the Commission to consider. Commissioner Pugh asked what the Executive Director wanted to do. Commissioner St. Cyr stated that she never thought the Commission was under Civil Service. Commissioner Kennedy said he has never known where we stood and would be in favor of a decision. Mr. Simoneaux pointed out that if we were declared not to be a State agency, we would not be subject to civil service regulations, state ethics rules, oversight by the legislative auditor or the inspector general. Commissioner Jenkins asked if we could get insurance. Mr. Simoneaux said we would need to get private insurance if declared a private body. He also pointed out that past actions should be disregarded because you cannot make yourself a State agency. *Chairman Moore stated that before any action is taken, he wanted the Commission to know that Mr. Simoneaux represents former Executive Director Maury Drummond in an ongoing legal matter.* Commissioner St. Cyr moved that the resolution, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, authorizing the Chairman to file a suit for declaratory judgment on behalf of the Commission and to retain legal counsel to handle the legal aspects *for a fee not to exceed $5,000 plus reasonable court and litigation costs*, be adopted. *It was pointed out that* ~~after correcting~~ the name of the Chairman *is incorrectly* stated in resolution *and should be corrected*. Commissioner Brandt seconded the motion. The Chairman asked if there was further discussion. There was none and the resolution was adopted by voice vote with no dissenting votes but with Commissioner Rodgers abstaining.

Executive Director’s report . The Executive Director passed out a written report and made comments including the following:

* The operation is heavily dependent on volunteers and she urged Commissioners to volunteer.
* We have a contract to make the necessary repairs to the air conditioning system for $56,000. These repairs should be done in April and can be paid for without drawing on the letter of credit.
* The carryover amount to ORM is now $376,000.
* We have sponsors for all events through April.
* The budget includes $50,000 which includes $20,000 for the fireworks.
* We will host the Historic Naval Ships Association convention next year which should bring additional prestige to the Kidd.

Commissioner Sedlin congratulated the Executive Director for arranging to host the HNSA convention.

Announcements. The Chairman then asked if there were any announcements. There were none.

Public Comments. The Chairman asked if there were any comments from the public. Matthew Cassiglia applauded the museum for being the attraction it is. His parents visited Baton Rouge mainly to visit the Kidd. Tommy Straight expressed surprise that the Kidd paid for part of the fireworks. The background was explained and he seemed satisfied. He then suggested that the city council person for the area may be willing to help out with his/her discretionary funds.

Adjournment: The Chairman asked if anyone had further business for the Commission. He received no response so he adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

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Robert A. Hawthorne, Jr., Secretary