September 21, 2023 Louisiana State Exhibit Museum

Governing Board and Friends Meeting Minutes

**LSEM has had over 12,065 visitors since January 1, 2023**

Nell Shehee called the meeting to order. It was determined a quorum (6 members) was present.

Cindy Grogan took the roll call. Present were Paul Strickland, Thomas Carmody, Jeff Girard, Peter Ramsey and Nell Shehee. Proxy to Thomas Carmody from Ann Reid Mills, Catherine Newsome & Rosalind Glover Bryant, Proxy to Nita Cole from Chris Brown, Proxy to Peter Ramsey from Nancy Walker. Friend’s Board members attending were Ted Roberts, Dennis Beckman, Dr. Cole Evensky, Kay Camp and Valerie Hoogland. Guest attending was Chris Chandler.

Nell asked if there were any changes or corrections to the April Meeting Minutes. There were none. Paul made a motion to accept minutes as written; Peter Ramsey seconded the motion. Motion carries and the Gov. Board Meeting Minutes of April 20, 2023 were approved.

 Standing Committee Reports -

A.  Executive Committee report: Nell Shehee stated the Executive Committee had not met - no report.

B.   Accession and Deaccession Committee report: Richard LeBlanc was absent - no report.

C.   Strategic Planning Committee report: Jeff Girard stated that they have not met but they will have a meeting Sept. 26, 2023 at 12 noon.

D. Building and Grounds Committee report: Peter Ramsey reported that they had not met but the grounds were looking good. Valerie stated that the grounds weren’t being watered enough, the sprinkler needs to run for 45 minutes instead of 15.

E.   Education & Exhibits Committee -Rosalind was absent but Thomas will include this in his report.

F. Nominating Committee - Nell stated that a nominating committee will need to be formed to nominate new members. Nell and Thomas explained that the Governing Board members' terms served with the Secretary of States’ term (4 years). The nominees are sent to the SOS for him/her to appoint any new member. The Senate then confirms the new members’ appointment.

If any Governing Board member would like to serve another term, please inform Thomas or Nell.

**SOS Museum System Director’s Report:**

**Past Events**

* Sunday, April 23, 2023 Red River Crossroads had their annual meeting here. (Private event).
* Thursday, May 4, 2023 from 4:30 - 7:00 pm the ***Andres Sanchez-Flores: Gems of an Artistic Genius*** Exhibit had its opening reception. It was very well attended with
* Saturday, May 20, 2023 Ayers Business College had a graduation. (Private event).
* Friday, May 26, 2023 the Shreveport Police Academy had their Cadet Graduation in the auditorium. (Private event).
* Thursday, June 7, 2023 5 - 7 pm was the Project Talent opening reception. This is the student artworks and is usually one of the most well attended exhibits.
* Tuesday, July 11, 2023 4:30 - 7 pm was Two Generations of Art, the Richard and James Cawthon exhibit opening.
* Sunday, August 6, 2023 was the double exhibit opening of The Shreveport Art Club Juried Show and Louisiana Mud Mavens Ceramic Art exhibit opening.
* Thursday, September 7, 2023 4:30 - 7 pm “A Collection of Creations” by Stephen Porter exhibit opening reception was held with 110 guests attending.
* Saturday, September 16, 2023 10 am - 2 pm was the 8th Annual Archaeology Day with over 500+ attending.
* Tuesday, September 19, 2023 5-7 pm Documentary Kick Off Reception (Private Event)

**Upcoming Events**

* Sunday, October 8, 2023 ICAA Louisiana 9 am -12 noon (Private event).
* Saturday, October 14, 2023 10 am - 2 pm OUTREACH @ Pioneer Heritage Center.
* Friday, October 27, 2023 9 am - 12 noon Police Academy Graduation
* Saturday, October 28, 2023 12 noon - 4:00 pm State Fair
* Saturday, November 4, 2023 12 noon - 4:00 pm State Fair
* Sunday, November 12, 2023 NTA Tour 9:30 am to 11:30 am (Private Event)
* Sunday, November 19, 2023 2-4 pm Louisiana Society of Animal Artists Exhibit Opening.
* Friday, December 1, 2023 is the 34th Greening of the Museum.

The museum has hosted 15 weekend or evening events since January with 6 more scheduled.

Our museum staff counts on the Friends' of LSEM financial support and volunteers to make these events a success. It was great to see Ted Roberts, Kay Camp, Dennis Beckman, and former board members Harriet Daggett, Keith Norwood and Betty Black at the Steve Porter opening reception.

**Building Repairs Paid by the State:**

1. There are four missing lanterns at the front gate columns along Greenwood Road. Four new lanterns have been replicated but new electrical service must be installed. The contractors are working on it currently.
2. All the glass lighting covers that are on the breezeway (inside & outside) have been replaced with period correct “rain glass.”
3. The state provided funding to replace the 8 speakers in the rotunda with 16 inset speakers so as not to detract from the architecture. The 6 speakers will be placed in the auditorium to compliment the two already there.

**Archives:**  The sinkhole repair is status quo. - Facility Planning has a preliminary estimate of $450,000.00 to replace the original 1937 cast iron drain and sewer pipes. In order to expedite the replacement of the pipes, Facility Planning has elected to use the major repair funds, these designated funds are to address emergency repairs. Final approval will be sought at the October committee meeting.

**Old Business:**  The map conservator, Elise Grenier, was at the museum the week of June 19-23rd to do her conservation/repair work on the map which she completed. The museum was closed the 19th & 20th due to storm damages and power outages, but Elise came in and worked. A big thanks to the Friends of LSEM for their agreement to incur the expense to have this restoration done.

April, 2023Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin announced he is not seeking re-election, citing health issues. This fall, a new Secretary of State will be elected and sworn in January, 2024.

Secretary Ardoin would like to express his sincere thanks to the Black family for their support of LSEM. There have been many memorial donations to the museum in honor of A.C. Black. The donations to LSEM were used to purchase 5 metal picnic table “memorials” that were placed on the grounds under the bald cypress trees along Pershing Drive. The tables are in the shade in the southeast corner of the museum property (Fairgrounds side). These tables will serve students and guests of the museum well into the future.

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) awarded a $10,000 grant for promotion of the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum in Shreveport as a state public attraction. These funds were utilized to encourage museum visits and increase attendance during the summer months of June through August 2023. This is a part of the LouisianaTravel.com “Feed Your Soul” campaign to get visitors and tourists back to Louisiana. The first $2,000 went back to CRT for placement of their logo “Louisiana Feed Your Soul” on the museum website for a year. We purchased 2 billboards on I-20, television spots on KTBS Channel 3, and Best of Times ads. The remaining funds from the grant were used for the 8th Annual Archaeology Day ads. Ian Summers mentioned that the Friends would like to do some additional advertising. The results from the museum survey regarding the summer advertising show an increase of approximately 45% in attendance numbers.

May 1, 2022 to August 1, 2022 - 3,736 visitors

May 1, 2023 to July 31, 2023 - 5,290 visitors

**1,554 more visitors in 2023**

Of the 89 groups/families that answered our survey:

42 said they saw the magazine ad

18 said they saw the billboard ad

29 said they saw the KTBS ad

**New Business:**  The June 3rd storm broke off 4 telephone poles in the back of the museum and has pulled one of the museum gates out of the limestone column. We are looking for someone to do the repair work. Little Joe’s Welding was contacted to give an estimate of the costs to repair the gate but Steve Culbertson was able to fix it (in house).

Nita Cole passed out a 2024 Budget Request to the Friends for next year’s exhibits and educational programs with a 2023 comparison.

**Friends President:** Dr. Cole Evensky introduced himself to the Governing Board members. Dr. Evensky announced that the Friends have met twice this year, however no minutes from the meetings have been provided. He said that VP Ian Summers said they would support $6,000 towards the marketing budget for the museum. He stated the Friends will continue to fund the Archaeology Day, the Greening and National History Day programs, however they do not want to support all the art exhibits. They do not see the value in supporting all the local art exhibits. Although there is an annual request within the museum budget, they would prefer to approve the exhibits budget on a month to month basis. Cole stated that the Friends have very enthusiastic volunteers but the members are frustrated. Specifically, regarding the two proposed permanent exhibits (Southern Maid Donuts and a music & food exhibit) that were not approved by the Secretary of State.

There was some discussion regarding the two proposed permanent exhibits, saying they weren’t aware of the procedure to propose a new exhibit and their time and research was rejected by the SOS legal department. Dr. Evensky received a letter rejecting the proposals at this time. Dr. Evensky was surprised that the rejection letter was sent to him personally and not to the Governing Board. However, neither the Governing Board nor the LRSP Committee had ever received a copy of the proposal.

Nita pointed out that sales commissions sent to the Friends in 2022 was $4,270 while the museums’ requested exhibit expenses budgeted for that year was $2,800. The museum staff is not provided with the actual expenses incurred by the Friends.

Jeff Girard, chairman of the LRSP Committee, reminded Dr. Evensky that the committee had met with Friends members to discuss the proposed exhibits. As chairman, he was waiting for a written proposal to present to the committee in order to provide a recommendation to the Governing Board.

Dr. Evensky referenced the flow chart and segregation of duties provided by the internal auditor, stating the Friends after review, are still unclear of how the process to seek approval works. Dr. Evensky requested that a meeting be held to clarify the proposal process and parameters for approving Friends proposals. Chairman Jeff Girard agreed to schedule a Long Range Strategic Planning Meeting. It is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 12 noon at the museum so the proper process can be discussed.

The date for the upcoming Joint Annual Meeting will be Thursday, December 7, 2023 from 5-7 pm.

Meeting adjourned.