

Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting

Friends of the Museum, North Carolina Maritime Museum, Inc.

December 3, 2023

Current board members present: Cindy Cash, Gabriele Ebner, Lee Hinson, John LoPiccolo, Bruce Prager, Reuben Saunders, Bob Terwilliger, Dianne Tetreault.

Past Friends Board Presidents present: Dave DuBuisson, Richard Olsen, Elwyn Wood

Friends Staff present: Brent Creelman, David Daly, Kim Urbanczyk

Museum Staff present: Christine Brin, Cyndi Brown, Michelle Crepeau, Courtney Felton, Shannon McCotter, Mike Peters, Tim White, Ben Wunderly, Nicholas Zahradka

Forty-four Friends members were represented, and a quorum was achieved.

Friends President Bruce Prager called the meeting to order at 2:03pm by welcoming those in attendance to the Annual Membership Meeting of *The Friends of the Museum* and recognized the Friends Board Members present, Museum staff, Friends staff and past Friends presidents in attendance. He thanked the Museum staff for their collaboration and cooperation, and noted the Friends could not do without that, stating the staff supports the Friends just as much as we support them. Prager also mentioned the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Outgoing Board Member Recognition

Prager thanked outgoing Board Members Cash, Harker and Harvey, whose terms expire in 2023. B. Prager stated Cash will continue to chair the Museum Store Committee in 2024 and presented her with a recognition award.

Minutes

Minutes of the 2022 Friends Annual Membership Meeting were approved.

Highlights in 2023

B. Prager presented a 'Year In Review' video produced by David Daly, detailing the Friends' events, accomplishments, fundraisers and other supported events and projects of 2023.

Membership & Corporate Partnership Program

Daly detailed the 2023 membership numbers and membership statistics. Total membership is 1,086 with a retention rate of 60%. New members in 2023 were 211 which helped compensate for a downturn in renewals. Online membership registrations were 35%. Five Lifetime members were added for a total of 169. Business Memberships remain strong at 59 with 11 added in 2023. A new "Admiral" membership will be added in 2024 at a level of \$1,000.00. If the Admiral member maintains that level for 3 years they automatically become a Life Member. Community Clubs are: Beaufort Oars – 72, Traditional Small Craft Association – 30, Carolina Model Makers – 17, Beaufort Women's Sailing Club (dormant) – 2, Sliding Seat Rowing Club (dormant) – 0. Email communications in 2023 resulted in over 131,000 emails sent. The Corporate Partnership program remains somewhat strong with 55% renewal. One new Corporate Partner was added and 2 current Partners doubled their contributions for a total revenue of \$21,500.00. Under consideration is a possible merger of the Business Membership and Corporate Partnership programs. The Friends social media presence continued to gain popularity and increase followers/likes and Port Of Call Museum Store's (POC) social media accounts are increasing, as well, due in part to highlighted events and postings.

Financial Report

Ebner discussed the fiduciary responsibilities of the Friends and its Board of Directors. She detailed that revenue was led with the Port Of Call Museum Store sales, Program income, donations, Membership dues and fundraising activities, representing 84% of total revenue. Museum support is the largest expense category at 73% and the Store's cost of goods sold at 16%. She discussed present and potential future office expenses, and noted the Friends had no major project expenses for 2023. Another \$20,000.00 was added to the Future Exhibits Fund and \$50,000.00 was transferred to the Reserve Fund (deposited into a CD). She asked if anyone would like to be on the Finance Committee to contact her or Creelman.

Museum Director's Report

Peters, on behalf of Director, thanked the members for their support. He described the mission of the Museum; noted the Museum is accredited, which is important because it shows quality assurance, self-regulation through conservation of

artifacts and accountability; and said 2023 was a very busy year. He stated there will likely be \$50,000.00 in donations in 2023, crediting the Museum volunteers who made an effort to steer visitors to the donation box. There were 130,993 visitors from January 1 – December 1, surpassing 2022, from all 50 states, 2 US territories, 20 foreign countries and 6 continents, and shared comments from a few of those visitors. Four highly qualified staff members were hired, all hitting the ground running, and have made a huge impact. The new van (from Annual Appeal 2021) was finally delivered and a new, much-needed truck was added to the Museum fleet, as was a new aluminum trailer. Peters also offered other items of note: the staff has travelled more in 2023 than in the past 4 years combined; the arsenic laced birds are gone; the in-house Lab has processed over 2000 pieces; 2 up and coming museum professionals were given internship experience; the Library furniture was replaced; headway is being made on upgrading the computer and sound system in the auditorium; an 1880 George Washington shad boat was acquired (placed on the Friends-purchased trailer), there are only 5 remaining in existence; 2 cannons were installed in the Museum; the Education Department put on 150 programs, field trips and tours, with over 28,000 outreaches; a Goose-Beaked Whale skeleton, completed by Natural Science Curator Keith Rittmaster, was put on display at Duke Marine Lab; social media presence continues to grow; Cyndi Brown secured a \$20,000.00 grant from the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority. With Ken Howard's retirement, many changes are in store for 2024. The HVAC will be replaced at some point. Christine Brin will start a new program called Kids Cove, and the Museum will participate in the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2025.

NaviLens

Peter Crumley thanked everyone, including volunteers, for their support of the NaviLens program, noting this is the first museum in the country to have the system in place. He also thanked the Friends for matching the Beaufort Lions Club's ongoing funding of the program. Finally, he thanked Christine Brin for all her hard work in making the NaviLens program happen. He challenged everyone to try out the NaviLens app.

Gallants Channel

Bucky Oliver, Maritime Heritage Foundation (MHF) Board Member, said the Maritime Education Center (MEC) has been a long time coming with big changes coming up. He described the MHF's function and detailed the \$15 million which has been raised to fund the MEC project - \$3 million received in 2022, \$10 million from the NC Legislature 2023 Budget, and the remainder through philanthropy. The MHF is using engineering firm Clark Nexsen, who has submitted site plans for the MEC to the Town of Beaufort. Site construction could be bid as early as March 2024, with actual construction being completed in 12-14 months. Clark Nexsen will complete building drawings in January 2024 and could go to bid in 2024. The Ward Hancock building, animal rehab center, Bonehenge parking, and a performance area are included in those plans. Additional parking for possible ticketing options, such as the ferry service, is also included. The MHF has an agreement with the Friends to maintain the site and an additional \$600,000.00 will come from Carteret County. State Construction and the NCDNCR have approved the project. Oliver discussed the layout of the site plan. Reuben Saunders asked what effect the construction would have on future events and programs. Oliver responded the Beaufort Music Festival will go on as planned and no effect on the Junior Sailing Program is expected.

Annual Appeal – New Cannon for the Museum

Creelman stated the 2023 Annual Appeal, titled "Let's Have A Blast", is to purchase an exact 18th century French replica cannon, similar to those found on the Queen Anne's Revenge shipwreck. Watercraft Center staff and volunteers will build the carriage. A deposit has been put down for the cannon. Saunders asked what the fundraising goal for the Annual Appeal is. Creelman responded \$15,000.00 to \$16,000.00.

Nominating Committee

Terwilliger stated one of the most important components of the Friends is to have a Board with people who are active, engaged and passionate for what we do. What we look for are diverse backgrounds with different perspectives and ideas. He personally sat down with each Board candidate and they all are already engaged and share our passion for the Museum. He discussed each 2024 Board nominee – Michael Dykstra, Tom Kies, Liz Kopf, Nancy Tebeau – and believes each are strong candidates. He mentioned Dianne Tetreault, who has an unceasing energy level, is up for a second 3-year term. Terwilliger said, as the incoming Friends President, he is happy to work with this group of candidates and highly recommends their nomination.

Election of 2024 Board

Friends Director of Operations Brent Creelman presented recommendations from the Nominating Committee for the 2024 Friends Board of Directors. No nominations were made from the floor. The nominations included incumbent member Tetreault, and new Board Members Dykstra, Kies, Kopf and Tebeau. Motion to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendations accepted by all. Creelman also acknowledged Lisa Cox with the Maritime Heritage Foundation.

Adjourn; Motion to adjourn passed at 3:21pm.

Minutes recorded and respectfully submitted by David Daly.

Approved by the membership on _____.