

LOUISIANA NAVAL WAR MEMORIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Commission Meeting

October 19, 2017

4:00 p.m.

Members present:

- Richard Brandt
- Robert Hawthorne
- Joe Jenkins
- Kyle Kennedy
- Henson Moore
- Robert Schilling
- Leonard Sedlin
- Karen St. Cyr
- Michael Vicari
- John Wells
- Roderick Wells

Members absent:

- Lane Drake
- Franklin Foil
- Bobbie Pugh
- Homer Rodgers
- Hans Sternberg
- C.J. Krueger

Others present:

- David Beard
- Tim NesSmith
- Andrew Daire
- Brad Bongiovanni
- Pearce Cinman

Call to order: At 4:10 o'clock p.m. the meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Henson Moore, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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. *On a motion and duly seconded, the minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously with one typographical correction pointed out by Commissioner Sedlin.*

Financials. The Chairman called attention to the reports for June, July, and August previously sent to the Commission members and included in the packets for each Commissioner. He noted that year to date we have a \$105,000 positive cash flow and sufficient cash on hand for our present needs. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Building maintenance. The Chairman asked for a report on maintenance of the ship and the building. Tim NesSmith reported that asbestos and mold studies showed no dangerous condition, but a few isolated places need attention. He described certain HVAC equipment which has received or will need attention. A general discussion followed during which the Chairman explained that for the first time ever, the State Division of Administration acknowledged responsibility for the building by including requested major repairs in HB2, the capital outlay bill. Unfortunately, the Legislature did not fund our projects. The understanding with the Division of Administration is that the State will pay for major repairs, such as the roof and HVAC, with the Commission being responsible for routine maintenance. The State's "emergency fund" for State-owned facilities is also a possible and perhaps more likely funding source.

Education and Veterans Support mission statements. The Chairman explained that at the last Commission meeting the "Strategic Plan Recommendations" presented by Strategic Planning Committee was considered and the Preservation Section was adopted but deferred approval of the Education and Veterans Advocacy mission elements. The Strategic Planning Committee has met and clarified the Education mission statement and has rewritten the Veterans Advocacy mission statement, now retitled "Veterans Support." Included in each packet for today's meeting are the suggested changes marked "10/11/17" in the bottom margin. These changes address concerns expressed at the last meeting as well as by Commissioners Moore and J. Wells directly to the drafting committee. Considerable discussion followed including explanations by Commissioner Sedlin and by Pearce Cinman. Commissioners J. Wells, R. Wells, St. Cyr, and Moore suggested possible projects. *Commissioner Sedlin moved that the revised language be adopted by the Commission and made a part of the "Strategic Plan Recommendations." The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jenkins. The motion was adopted unanimously.* Commissioner Sedlin commented that as a result of this action the entire Strategic Planning Recommendations report dated October 2017 is approved. The Chairman agreed. The Commission also authorized Commissioner J. Wells to contact the Nineteenth Judicial District Court to discuss possibilities for a "veterans' court" in East Baton Rouge Parish, similar to such courts in other parishes. The Chairman explained that all of the sections of the "Strategic Plan Recommendations" have now been adopted. The next step is to present copies to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and to ask them to follow

through with their previous offer to help us develop plans to implement the recommendations in the report.

Announcements. The Executive Director called attention to two upcoming events:

- Vietnam graffiti exhibit – The exhibit is being installed in the Theatre room on the first floor. The opening reception is schedule for next Thursday from 5 to 7 p.m. Each Commissioner should have received a postcard invitation and should plan to attend if possible. Other important dignitaries have been invited such as the Mayor-President.
- Veterans Day – Plans are underway but we need a \$500 sponsor. Again, he urged all Commissioners to attend.

Chairman's report.

- The Chairman called attention to three new things which have happened this year and complimented the staff on their initiative in conceiving and making them happen:
 - World War I exhibit – This is an impressive exhibit and is unlike anything else in Baton Rouge;
 - El Galeon Andalucia exhibit – The staff learned of this opportunity and made it happen in a very short time-frame;
 - Viet Nam Graffiti exhibit – This is a different kind of exhibit and should bring variety to what we offer the public.
- The Chairman thanked Tim NesSmith for having McKinney Towing recognized at their annual luncheon by the Louisiana Museum Association as the Support Organization of the Year. McKinney's help in bringing the USS Kidd to Baton Rouge was vital – without their help, it probably would not have happened. Their in-kind contributions over the years whenever needed have been invaluable.
- The Chairman observed that he is not happy with our efforts to obtain sponsors. Commissioner J. Wells requested a list of our present sponsors. We need to continue to work on sponsorships.
- On the annual fund, he expects each Commissioner to make a contribution at whatever level they think appropriate.

Executive Director's report. The Executive Director pointed out that each Commissioner should have received a copy of his printed report. In addition, he made the following comments:

- The seats in the theatre room have been removed and disposed of. The floor has been polished and the walls and ceiling painted. The Viet Nam Graffiti exhibit is being installed. After that exhibit is gone, the room should be refitted for more general use, including for events, receptions and meetings. Some of this work can be done in-house, but much of it will involve outside vendors.
- In response to a question about charging extra to use the space or for exhibits in the space, he stated that at this time we are not in a position to “upcharge” for exhibits – hopefully in the future we will be able to do so, but for now the goal is to make our space more useful to the public and increase public awareness. We hope to be able to “rent” the space to other organizations at some time in the future.
- The Fourth of July is a loser for us. We cannot continue to bear the cost of half of the fireworks. We need to look at other alternatives. At this point Commissioner Jenkins said that we should find a way to continue because of the favorable publicity. Several Commissioners offered suggestions for sponsors. After further discussion, the Chairman reviewed the history of our paying for half of the fireworks and charged the Executive Director with making a recommendation at our December meeting.
- The Spirit of '45 has not been profitable for the past two years, particularly considering the staff time it requires. He recommends that we explore alternatives.
- He also called to the attention of the Commissioners the downward trend of attendance at “historic ship” museums. We will all have to be more innovative in the future.

Old business. The Chairman told the Commission that the trial for our Civil Service litigation is set for next week. It is solely a legal question and he will be the only witness.

New business.

- The next Commission meeting is **Thursday, December 21, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.** at the Museum. LET THE CHAIRMAN KNOW WHETHER OR NOT YOU WILL ATTEND.
- Each Committee Chairman will be expected to give a report at that meeting. The nominating committee will present a slate of officers for the

coming year. The budget for next year will be presented for adoption as well as an update on the status of the Civil Service litigation.

- The **Executive Committee** is scheduled to meet **November 30 at 4 p.m. at the Museum.**
- Commissioner Kennedy announced that he has finished the ship model of the USS Louisiana which he has been working on for 30 years. He explained that the ship was scraped in 1923 but that the smaller deck guns were previously removed. He passed around scale models of two of the cannon and explained that six of the larger guns were made. He has located 2 of guns on Bora-Bora and proposes to explore bringing one of them to Baton Rouge. After discussion *Commissioner J. Wells moved that Commissioner Kennedy be authorized to explore the feasibility of bringing one of the guns to Baton Rouge. Commissioner Brandt seconded the motion and it was unanimously adopted.*

Public comments. The Chairman asked if there were any comments from the public. There were none.

Adjournment: The Chairman asked if anyone had further business for the Commission. He received no response so he adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Robert A. Hawthorne, Jr., Secretary