

LOUISIANA NAVAL WAR MEMORIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Commission Meeting

December 15, 2016

4:00 p.m.

Members present:

- Richard Brandt
- Robert Hawthorne
- Joe Jenkins
- Kyle Kennedy
- C.J. Krueger
- Henson Moore
- Homer Rodgers, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs
- Leonard Sedlin
- Hans Sternberg
- John Wells
- Roderick Wells
- Michael Vicari

Members absent:

- Franklin Foil
- Bobbie Pugh
- Karen St. Cyr

Others present:

- David Beard
- Tim NesSmith
- Jerry Pugh
- Pearce Cinman
- Brad Bongiovanni
- Mitch Verma
- Frank Simoneaux
- Sylvester Mason
- Hank Doughty
- Andrew Daire

Call to order: At 4:09 o'clock p.m. the meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Henson Moore, who asked Commissioner Jenkins to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. He announced that a quorum was present.

New Commissioners. He then introduced our four new commissioners: C. J. Krueger, Roderick Wells, John Wells, and Michael Vicari and asked each to say a few words about themselves which they did. They were then given a round of applause by the other commissioners.

Agenda: The Chairman asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. He then stated that he would take a few items out of order in order to accommodate our guests.

Minutes. The Chairman asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the last meeting. On a motion made by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Brandt, the minutes of the last meeting was approved unanimously.

Strategic Planning Committee report. The Chairman recognized Commissioner Sedlin who gave a brief overview and asked Pearce Cinman to give an update on the work of his sub-committee. He stated that a number of experts were volunteering their time to evaluate the building but two have not completed their work because of the August flooding. Fortunately, he estimates that the evaluation process is only about a month behind, so he should have something for the next Commission meeting. He then introduced Mitch Verma who passed out an updated proposal to address IT needs. After a number of questions and considerable discussion, he promised to prioritize the proposal with three approximately equal stages.

Civil Service lawsuit.

- The Chairman explained that the estimate of \$3,500 for legal costs which was the basis for the Commission's previous allocation of \$5,000 has proved to be inadequate. He has discussed the matter with Mr. Frank Simoneaux, the attorney representing the Commission in the matter, who has agreed to continue the litigation based on a total cost to the Commission of \$8,500 as a flat fee/cost. Therefore, the Chairman recommends that the Commission increase the prior allocation to \$8,500.
- He then recognized Mr. Simoneaux to answer any questions. Mr. Simoneaux explained the circumstances necessitating the increase and

answered questions concerning the status of the lawsuit. He also pointed out that the fee arrangement is far below what his normal fee would be and that he is motivated in part because he is a Navy veteran and a long-standing member of the Naval Reserve. After further discussion, Commissioner Sedlin moved that the previous allocation be increased to \$8,500. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion which was unanimously adopted by voice vote.

Financial and budget report.

- The Chairman called attention to the financial reports in each Commissioner's packet and commented on several items. He pointed out that revenues are below budget but so are expenses and he projects that we will end the year with a surplus which is remarkable since we were closed for 33 days because of the street closure necessitated by the flood in addition to paying for replacement of an air conditioning unit (unbudgeted) out of budgeted funds. However, we do owe \$10,000 on the line of credit and plan to pay it off if funds are available.
- He then explained the proposed budget for 2017 in the packet which has been approved by the Executive Committee. He pointed out that although the proposed budget seems modest in comparison to this year's budget, it is fairly aggressive when compared with actual figures for this year. Several commissioners commented on various items in the budget and expressed optimism for the coming year. The Executive Director pointed out that there are two new items in the budget which were not in this year's budget but which will not be done unless additional funds are raised:
 - WWI exhibit which is a two year exhibit and will cost approximately \$10,000;
 - Viet Nam traveling exhibit which would start in the Fall and cost \$5,000.
- David Beard also pointed out that some IT upgrades in the Verma proposal, including interfacing with the gift shop and web page improvements, are in the proposed budget.
- Chairman Moore also explained that the project list in the packet was composed by him with the understanding that the staff will add to and prioritize it before the next meeting. He also mentioned that he and David have talked to the chairman of the foundation about raising money to fund the theatre project to convert it into a multi-purpose room with improved

audio-visual equipment. This is a \$20,000 project (approximately). He has also talked with LPB about doing an introductory video as well as a more elaborate educational video with an approximate cost of \$40,000.

However, none of these projects will be done unless donors are found to fund them either through the foundation or by the Commission directly.

Nominating Committee report. Commissioner Jenkins, as past chairman and chairman of the nominating committee explained that there are five elected officers including the at large member of the Executive Committee. Officers may not serve more than 2 consecutive 1 year terms. The Executive Committee recommends that the current officers be nominated and reelected. However, Commissioner St. Cyr has already served two consecutive terms as Treasurer so someone else will need to fill that position so he asked for volunteers. Commissioner Vicari volunteered to do so. Therefore, Commissioner Jenkins nominated the following to serve as officers for 2017:

Chairman – Henson Moore

Vice Chairman – Hans Sternberg

Secretary – Bob Hawthorne

Treasurer – Michael Vicari

Executive Committee At Large – Kyle Kennedy

Commissioner Brandt seconded the nominations and after discussion those nominated were unanimously elected.

Veterans Advisory Committee. The Chairman proposed that we establish an advisory group made up of representatives of all of the veterans groups who are interested to support and advise us. Commissioner Krueger volunteered to help get restaurants to donate food for meetings. Commissioner Rodgers explained that he had experience shepherding such groups when he worked in Arizona. Commissioners Brandt, Vicari, J. Wells, Krueger and Jenkins agreed to help. With that show of support, the Chairman stated that he would move forward to form such a group.

Executive Director's report. David Beard explained that he is just getting settled into the job and the city but is excited about the future. He pointed to his written report in the packet which also includes an addendum by Tim covering the time period before David arrived. He is pleased with the staff and the news exposure so far. The events have been good. Marketing and development need a lot of

attention. He is pleased to see that new Commissioner Krueger is interested in that area and has experience which will be helpful.

Next meeting. The Chairman pointed out that the dates for the Commission meetings next year are in the packet. They are:

- March 09
- June 08
- October 12
- December 14

If anyone has a problem with any of those dates, please let him know as soon as possible. The meetings will be at 4 p.m. at the Museum unless otherwise specified.

Announcements.

- The Chairman announced that he had submitted a grant proposed to Entergy to donate the gas each month for the “eternal flame.” However, in response they sent a check for \$2,000 for which we are grateful.
- David Beard and Bob Hawthorne will work with Carolyn Castile, the chairman of the foundation, to have a revised CEA for our next meeting.
- The By-Laws also need to be updated.

Public Comments. The Chairman asked if there were any comments from the public.

- Sylvester Mason expressed appreciation for all of the prayers in recent months.
- Commissioner Pugh is have surgery in the morning and needs to be in our prayers.
- Tim NesSmith pointed out that our staff and volunteers have been recognized by NHSA for the last three years. We should be proud.

Adjournment: The Chairman asked if anyone had further business for the Commission. He received no response so he adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Robert A. Hawthorne, Jr., Secretary