



Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees

Thursday, March 24, 2022 | 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Welcome** – Senator Hackworth called the meeting to order due to the delayed arrival of Delegate Morefield.
2. **Roll Call** – Kim Davis
Attending: Delegate Will Morefield, Senator Travis Hackworth, Senator Todd E. Pillion (V), Dean Chiapetto, Bryan Horn, Adam Hutchison, David Matlock, Rita McClenny, Duane Miller, Amanda Pillion, Ellen Reynolds, Kathy Shearer (V), and Julie Walters Steele.

Absent: Delegate Sam Rasoul, William J. Smith, Kevin Byrd, Dylan Locke

V = Virtual
3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Senator Hackworth.
A motion was made by Rita McClenny to approve the agenda. Second by Ellen Reynolds. Vote. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of Minutes from December 2021** – Delegate Hackworth. Motion to approve the minutes from the December 2021 meeting by Duane Miller. Second by Ellen Reynolds. Vote. Motion carried.
1. **Welcome to new DHCD Leadership** – Senator Hackworth introduced DHCD Director Bryan Horn. Bryan relayed his appreciation for the welcome and reflected on the privilege to serve in the role and how proud he was to return to the Southwest Virginia area. He considers the area home and SW Virginia is near and dear to him. Brian looks forward to listening first and then being loud. The work is so very important. He wants to meet the people and see the region.
5. **Executive Director Report** – Kim Davis
 - Staffing updates – Announced the recent hires and promotions that include Tina Murray hired as Deputy Director of Operations (DHCD position); Becky Littleton, Director of Finance & Administration; Idalina Walker promoted to Director of Outreach & Partnership.
 - 2021 Annual Report – Printed copies are available for you to take with you today
 - Partner Meetings
 - Spent a week in Richmond visiting with several partners, participating in a variety of events, and attending meetings with key DHCD staff
 - Lead a team through Wise County (Big Stone Gap & Pound) visiting sites to review opportunities for building projects in that region.



- Tri City Airport meetings – Kim has been participating in meetings where there is discussion on regional travel and desire to develop a marketing and growth plan that includes the entire Upper ETN and SWVA region. Kim believes there is an opportunity to have input on the specific needs of the SWVA region. She will be calling a meeting of key SWVA partners to discuss a SWVA focus that can be shared with the airport planning team.
 - Partnership Program Update
 - Working through the process of requesting community financial participation. Letters have been mailed to towns and counties, with focused requests going to be presented in Norton, Floyd, and Galax. Last year this effort produced \$40,000 in revenue and looking for that again this year. However, the goal is for revenue growth from this program in years to come.
 - Cultural Center Program
 - Fundraising events being planned to include a *Love SWVA Concert Series* of 3-4 outdoor concerts held on the grounds over the summer, a Halloween Ball, and building on the prior year's Christmas in SWVA events. Will be soliciting sponsorships for the events, so the ticket sales and other items sold will produce revenue for the Center.
 - Rental Promotion – Creating a marketing brochure that will be mailed to regional businesses encouraging the community rental of the building and meeting space for their events.
 - Marketing budget is not meeting the needs of the organization and will be working to expand that budget. Have applied for two grants to support marketing:
 - VA Tourism Grant \$20,000
 - TRRC Grant \$140,000 marketing ask to update video and photography assets.
 - Power16 Grants – We celebrate Haysi Riverwalk has gone to bid. Two other projects will go to bid soon.
 - Very early discussions with Blue Ridge PBS – Their desire is to launch a Digital Affiliate Station and would like the Station to be in the Center. They are working on financing opportunities, which will need to be worked out first. Kim will keep the board up to date as discussions continue.
 - Southern Living – Congratulations on Abingdon being named by Southern Living as a top 15 Mountain Town in the Southeast.
6. **Financials** – Kim Davis and Becky Littleton
- Becky reviewed the financials as were distributed in advance of the meeting
7. **New Business**
- N/A



8. Deputy Director of Operations Update – Tina Murray

- Christmas season events were received well by the community and had excellent participation
- Enjoyed lighting up the building during the Christmas season
- Developing rental policies; several events already on the calendar for 2022
- Technical upgrades
 - Panic buttons have been installed on both levels of the building
 - Migrating the 2008 server, that had lost Microsoft support, into a new server
 - Three new staff laptops have been purchased. Additionally, received a grant through State Farm to replace five other staff computers.
 - Phone system upgrade is complete and will create a \$600 per month savings
 - Lighting upgrades internal and external have been completed
 - Roof – Spring meetings are scheduled with engineers to determine the necessary repairs needed to fix the leaks in the galleries
 - Interstate sign has been repaired and updated

9. Development Update – Ida Walker

- Consultants SE Group made a presentation focusing on their recommendations on the Cumberland Plateau project.
 - Key Opportunities include:
 - Breaks Interstate Park – Upgrades to facilities, large-scale improvements, strengthening the area around it
 - Clinch River – destination development, marketing/promotion, community response
 - Trails – capacity building, promotion, accessibility, new trail development
 - Implementation Guide – Concrete next steps, action oriented, specific tasks for Friends of SWVA
 - Outdoor Community Guide – Best practices for policy, design, actions which include case studies
 - Trail Development Guide – Construction, maintenance, coordinating and organizing, funding
 - Outdoor Business Guide – Focused on entrepreneurial efforts. Starting a business, attracting outdoor businesses.
 - This plan has been released to the steering committee and will be published in May
 - A buy in by localities will be an important piece for success
- Celebration - Haysi Riverwalk is open for bid!
- High Knob Destination is awaiting VDOT final approval. New River Destination Center, Mountain Lake Lodge, will open for bid shortly.
- Planning – The Virginia Creeper Trail master plan is in hand and partners are working on the final document before public release.



- Planning - Mt Rogers master plan -continues to evolve and looking for projects to meet the goals of this master plan.
- Lee/Wise project – Three months into the planning phase with documents expected in June. Once planning documents are complete the project will move to the construction phase.

10. Marketing Update – Kim Davis (in absence of Chad Thompson)

- MAP – Marketing Access Program
 - VA Industrial Advancement Alliance – Video Project, website landing page
 - Blue Ridge Crossroad Small Business Development Center – Working with SBDC and 10 businesses to offer marketing services
 - SWVA Museums Group – Offering digital and social media development
- Partnerships with Barter Theatre & Virginia Highlands Festival – How can we capitalize together
- Goal to update merchandise that highlights the region to be sold in the Center
- Promotions – Rack cards have been designed promoting the Center and are being distributed in VA, NC, TN, WV, KY and at VA welcome centers
- Social statistics – Variety of statistics were reviewed with the highlight of 742,000 views on YouTube

11. Partner Update: Virginia Tourism Corporation, Rita McClenny

- Thank you to Legislators for the ARPA financial resources that were passed during the Special Session and have been distributed. These funds will make a huge difference in the agency’s ability to market the region in new areas east of the Mississippi; ie. Chicago, Charlotte, Columbus, Nashville where funding has not been available to market before.
- Indicators do not see travel plans changing for the standard household.
- 15.9 million travel the Blue Ridge Parkway annually - #1 in the nation – VTC is focused on getting travelers off the Parkway and into our communities

12. Partner Update:

- The Crooked Road, Carrie Beck
 - Artist in Residence applications will open in May
 - Crooked Road/Radio Bristol Farm & Fun Time collaboration for May 11
 - Youth Music Festival will be held May 14 in the Center
 - Will be participating in “Perspectives on Heritage Music in SWVA” educational conference at Ferrum College, June 10-12
 - Co-hosting educators for heritage music SOL training – June 22-24
 - The Crooked Road’s Music & Dance Spectacular will be hosted on July 8 at Moss Arts Center on the campus of Virginia Tech
 - Will be coordinating a songwriting event at MECC prior to the Blue Highway Festival in October
 - Heritage Music Fund – Four applicants have been awarded \$500 direct artist support



- Developing a quarterly magazine which highlights heritage music events in the region
- Looking to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of TCR in 2024 with a variety of events
- New hire currently posted for a Programming & Operations Coordinator
- 'Round the Mountain – Kim, Ellen
 - Spring Jury in April, May announcement of those juried in
 - Deep dive into artisans on their inventory status. Letters mailed to artisans had good response
 - Looking to fill open board positions. Recommendations should be provided to Ellen or Kim
 - Glad to see that artisan inventory moves to the floor within 48 hours
 - Artisan training – Needs for nuts & bolts. Working with several groups to bring business basics training back to the artisan network

13. **Approval of next meeting date** – Delegate Morefield, Chair

- Delegate Morefield made a motion the next Foundation meeting to be held on Thursday, June 9, 2022. Second by Aaron Sizemore. Vote. Motion approved.

14. Delegate Morefield took the opportunity to ask everyone that was in attendance to introduce themselves.

15. **Adjournment** – Delegate Morefield