

University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc. (UFHSA)
A direct support organization to UF as provided, Chapter 267.1736 Laws of Florida

UFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
November 5, 2021
Time Convened: 10:02 a.m.
Time Adjourned: 1:51 p.m.
Governor's House, 48 King Street, St. Augustine, FL

Board Members Present via in-person and virtual meeting:

Kathy Deagan, Charles Ellis, Michael Francis, John Fraser, Buff Gordan, Roy Hunt, Allen Lastinger, Bill Robinson, Herschel Shepard, Don Slesnick, Doug Wiles, Tom Willis

Board Members Absent:

Rick Gonzales

Staff /Others Present: Ed Poppell, Linda Dixon, Karen Thomas, Matt Hodge, Billy Triay, Cindy Stalvey, Richard Goldman, Rachel Mandell, and Cleary Larkin

Welcome

Chair Lastinger welcomed everyone in attendance and called the UFHSA meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

The Board considered the following Action Item:

Action Items:

Approval of Agenda and Minutes May 7, 2021

Motion to approve the minutes from the May 7, 2021 meeting was made by Board Member John Fraser and was seconded by Board Member Kathy Deagan. The board approved the minutes unanimously.

Financial Reports

Budget Review for 1st Qtr. FY2021-22 and EOY FY2020-21

Linda Dixon discussed the budget review for 1st Qtr. FY2021-22 and end of year FY2020-21. As previously indicated, UFHSA funds are allocated through three sources of money; there are two from state funds and a DSO account that is funded through revenue from rentals and special events. The state funds are allocated to UFHSA by the University and are for operation and maintenance of the properties. The state funds were previously reduced by 2% and that reduction is permanent. Expenditures are on target with the budget. June end of fiscal year ended surprisingly well in the DSO fund in terms of revenue despite COVID - the overall picture exceeded expectations. First quarter of the current fiscal year remains on target and we are hopeful that rental and special event income will pick back up as people are doing more of those

types of things now. Budget amendments for the Vickers exhibit and History Festival were presented and voted on during those later agenda items. Those amendments are expected to incur expenses of \$213,800 from DSO cash reserves.

Colonial Quarter Financials and Update

Cindy Stavely gave an update on the Colonial Quarter. She began her report by congratulating Dr. Francis on his recent distinguished honor. She indicated that they continue to recover with total income up over last year but are still down on school tours. She believes things post-pandemic are trending in a positive direction. Food and beverage has taken most of the hit during the pandemic, and they are working on ways to mitigate that. They have placed great emphasis on retaining employees, including creating a vaccine bonus initiative that rewarded employees with cash bonuses upon showing their completed vaccine status.

Annual Audit FY2020-21

James Moore performed the annual audit of financial statements for fiscal year 2020-21. All in all, there were no comments and a good report. Ed Poppell stated that DSO is about \$450,000 richer than what the financial statement reflects and there is approximately \$2M dollars in cash holding that represents a full year of operating funds in reserve for the DSO. The UF Foundation has funds of the DSO invested, the Board would like to know if they can use the interest from those funds. According to Ed, the University rules state that those funds are investment only for the university, and not to be used for operating or special projects. The board approved the Annual Audit by acclamation.

Education, Interpretation, Historic Preservation, and Facilities Committee - Roy Hunt

Interactive Map Review

Roy Hunt, Chair of the EIHPF Committee reminded the board that they have funded for the past two years development of oral histories. Roy reports that this funding was well spent. Dean Judy Russell of the University Libraries was granted permission to use the British library Puentes map. She has been a remarkable and persistent advocate and the Board greatly appreciates her efforts.

The committee has put in work to develop an interactive map that overlays the Puente map with the current location of buildings in historic St. Augustine. There could be some connection with the oral histories that are currently located on the UFHSA website. The goal of this map is to present historic St. Augustine in a way that represents various properties and provides various details about them for tourists and community members alike. This interactive map depicts what historic St. Augustine looked like back then with remarkable accuracy.

Board members discussed ways to better utilize this as a tool for tourists to see historic St. Augustine in a thoughtful manner. The map is designed to include directions to properties and historical information for UFHSA-owned properties. Board members mentioned that perhaps the map could include a layer that includes all historic properties, not just the UFHSA-owned ones. This would create a flexible and adaptable system, where UFHSA properties could be a layer

that is toggled on and off. The Board suggested that the “About Map” feature be made more prominent so users could learn about the map. They also suggested the title be UF Historic St. Augustine, not Historical St. Augustine, and that the St. Augustine Historic Society properties be added. This electronic map will work on any device, phone, tablet, or computer. It is web-based, not an app. Board members discussed the possibility of connecting oral histories and parish records with this project to create a full interactive experience such like a self-guided tour for visitors. The map could show roughly where locations were, who lived there, and biographical information on property owners, etc.

Board Chair Lastinger suggested that all ideas be forwarded to Linda Dixon to collect and the Education Committee will evaluate, prioritize, and identify what might be most appropriate to pursue and present back to the Board at a later meeting.

Reappointment of Directors and Committee Assignments

Board Chair Lastinger asked Ed Poppell to present on the various committee and board member reappointment.

Ed presented to the committee that Doug Wiles is up for board member reappointment. Chair Lastinger asked for a motion to approve the reappointment of Doug Wiles to the UFHSA Board. Don Slesnick moved, the motion was seconded by Charles Ellis, and the board approved unanimously.

The committees were presented to the Board as follows:

Education/Interpretation/Historic Preservation/Facilities:

- Roy Hunt-Chair
- Buff Gordon
- Kathy Deagan
- Herschel Shepard
- Michael Francis

Finance/Audit/Governance:

- Bill Robinson-Chair
- Charles Ellis
- Ed Poppell-Treasurer

Development:

- Don Slesnick-Chair
- Allen Lastinger
- Doug Wiles
- Joe Joyner
- John Fraser
- Tom Willis

- Rick Gonzalez

Vickers Art Collection/Budget/First Colony

Ed Poppell provided an update to the Board on the progress of the Vickers Art Collection. The Harn Museum of Art made the Board aware of several requirements needed to house the collection in St. Augustine. Ed reports that the space requirement is restrictive, there must be an emergency generator on site, that the humidity factors must be within a set limit, and there must be insurance and security guard to ensure the safety of the collection.

Due to the COVID related supply chain issues, and even with months of lead time, the generator is the item that is causing delay. They believe that the location will be ready to receive in March April timeframe. The construction costs to prepare the space including the generator is estimated at approximately \$275,000. The project is under way and Ed hopes that by May 2022, the exhibit can be open for viewing and the Board can potentially host an opening celebration gala.

Ed reports to the board that it will likely cost approximately \$78,000-\$80,000 per year for a security guard and other associate costs to keep the Vickers collection in St. Augustine. He reports that they will likely continue working with the Harn to bring different exhibits to St. Augustine and are considering changing the Vickers content on a 6-month to 1 year basis to keep content fresh.

Ed reports that there is an amendment before the Board for approval that represents a new allocation line in the budget of \$278,800 to cover the cost of a generator and work to prepare for the Vickers exhibit. Chair Lastinger asked for a motion to approve this budget amendment, Don Slesnick so moved, Roy Hunt seconded the motion, and the board approved unanimously.

History Festival Budget

Ed Poppell presented to the board regarding the latest planning details for a proposed history festival. Ed detailed that this report was prepared with engaged stakeholders who might help identify what an event might look like next year. The current proposal is for this to be an annual event in May – that timing represented good weather and seems to fill gaps in the calendar related to St. Augustine events. Ed proposed an event titled “Olde City History Festival” with St. Augustine underline. He noted that most in the group preferred The Oldest City, however that St. Augustine is not technically the oldest city. The Board preferred the alternative title “*The Oldest City History Festival*” with a branding message that “*history lives here*”. Ed proposed that the theme for first event would be around preservation, which is the Florida Trust theme for this year and May is preservation month.

The board members discussed many ideas related to the event, festival, and thematic choices including the length of the event such as a weekend, one week, or one month. The consensus of the Board that the first year would need to start smaller with the idea to grow in future years. Board members supported the idea of connecting with local food vendors and placed emphasis on creating a family friendly, fun event, rather than placing emphasis only on history.

There are many concerns that the Board felt need to be addressed including the amount of work it would take to put on an event of this scale as well as what the budget impacts might be. If the event is targeted for a May 2022 start, there needs to be significant work effort beginning now. The board talked about the need for a staff person dedicated to this event coordination and planning.

Ed stated that there is a budget amendment before the Board that includes a \$75,000 budget to fund. The Board mentioned that if they approved the budget amendment, the funds do not have to be spent. Chair Lastinger asked for a motion to approve the budget amendment to include \$75,000 to fund a history festival. Roy Hunt moved, Doug Wiles seconded the motion, and the board passed it unanimously.

The Board agreed that the next step is for Chair Lastinger and Ed Poppell to explore possibility of identifying a person to lead the effort with the idea that it is an annual event that takes year-round planning. They will come back to the Board at a future meeting with recommendations for moving forward.

Development Discussion with Matt Hodge and Jessica Long

Don Slesnick introduced Matt Hodge and welcomed Jessica Long who is the new development officer for the Whitney Laboratory. Jessica is a UF alum and local resident in St. Augustine and is excited to work with UFHSA on development. She is currently the development officer for UF Whitney Labs in Marineland, and she will be adding UFHSA to her responsibilities. She indicated that she will work with Board to discover their goals, outline a plan and identify future opportunities. The Board appreciates Jessica's forethought and believes her to be an incredible asset to the team and officially welcomed her to UFHSA.

Discussion Items:

Presentation by Richard Goldman, President & CEO, St Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau

Richard Goldman, President & CEO, St Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau advised the Board that the county has made adjustments to bed tax allocations. Much of the adjustment removed funding from some areas and put it into a category called beach assets. The marketing budget was increased to 5 cents, it was previously 4 cents, that value is \$3M dollars in budget. These changes represent a very significant politically engaged community-based discussion resulting in a 6% increase in budget which represents a \$300,000 increase. That increase will be invested to promote St. Augustine with the goal to get visitors here. Digital advertisement represents the largest portion of increase – they believe that most of their communications are best received in digital platforms. There is also emphasis placed in air service to make it easier for tourists and visitors to arrive in this area. The final area where they have invested is the printed travel planner. There was a significant spike in requests for the Planner in 2021 and they see that trend continuing.

Tourism Economic Impact Study was last completed in 2017 and there have been significant changes since then. This study has shown that areas closest to St. Augustine are the biggest areas of visitor origin. They plan to continue reinvesting budget to get more tourists to visit the area. To that end, advertising represents the largest budget item, digital media specifically, followed by radio.

Presentation by Cleary Larkin, Acting Director, Historic Preservation Program

Cleary Larkin presented to the Board regarding the UF Historic Preservation Program. She is excited about the program and engaging students in graduate assistantships to learn more about historic preservation through programs in St. Augustine. She reports that thy program is working on two projects this fall, St Augustine beach hotel for St. Johns Tourism Council and a sea level rise report and vulnerability assessment. Future work will be to develop more collaborations at UF within the architecture and urban planning departments and increase use and visibility of the Envision Lab. Cleary closed by extending an invitation to all board members to visit the lab and see a live demonstration.

Construction update

Linda Dixon provided an update on the construction projects. The main project right now is getting the generator here and installed. They are also working on redoing stucco on the Spanish Military Hospital. There is an ongoing focus on maintenance and repair - the upkeep of old wooden buildings near the beach requires a lot of work.

The building personnel are suffering the same staffing challenges as the rest of the community with a very tight hiring pool. We are outsourcing custodial and security service as we always have, but we are now also using the temp agency to staff the front desk. We have adjusted the schedule to open Governor's House to the public Wednesday through Sunday rather than every day. Special events are picking back up and currently we can cover those with staff that are in place now. As the events ramps back up, there may be a need for more staff to cover them.

There are proposed construction plans to convert the coquina warehouse to a student dormitory. This will be a costly project; however, Ed Poppell reports that they have two opportunities to fund this project. Incoming house speaker, Paul Renner indicated that he would like to find a way for this project to happen. The Board expressed interest in trying to obtain state funding through the legislative process with Representative Renner's support. The Board discussed that this would need to go through the University process before proceeding with anything legislatively. Ed noted the short timeframe until the next session of the legislature convenes and reports that he has started the conversation with officials at UF and will need to continue to go through that process to obtain permission. They believe that the budget impact for this project represents approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000.

Chair Lastinger asked for a motion to move forward with drafting a letter on behalf of UFHSA board to UF to ask for support of this project legislatively, Don Slesnick moved, Herschel Shepard seconded, and the board passed the motion unanimously.

Documentary Film Update

Ed Poppell reports to the Board that they have completed all tasks to reformat the documentary film so that it could be reinterpreted in all of the European languages. Additionally, Australia reached out to reformat as there are differences in pronunciations. As of now, the documentary has been released in Europe and shortly will be available in Australia.

Report on the Library

Laura Marion and Casey Wooster report that the Library continues to engage online and in-person with visitors. There are two current projects underway: Resilience Project and Washing Away History virtual event. The event was very well attended with more than 200 virtual attendees, and the program is now available on demand. They will continue to present at conferences virtually and engage with visitors.

Board member Michael Francis reminded the Board of the notion to digitize the Eugene Lyons collection. It is currently on microfilm but is badly deteriorated. Microfilm has a shelf life, and this is a wonderful collection that needs to be preserved. The Board discussed that they do not have the right to publish it but can preserve it for visitors to come in and view on computer. There are political issues that will need to be worked through as the Spanish government owns the rights to the documents. Board members discussed engaging the assistance of Judy Russell, Dean of the UF Libraries. Before the project can move forward there will need to be an examination of costs and a machine to digitize the collection. Potentially this is a graduate student project.

Report from Historical Society

The historical society reports staffing issues and low admissions like others. They are thinking outside the box and providing virtual visits to engage people. They have created a member only section of their website where they house articles and resources to engage members. This has given them the opportunity to engage new visitors who otherwise might not engage with museum.

Next Meeting Date

Chair Lastinger indicated that the next meeting will be in the spring and to be on the lookout for a poll of potential dates.

New Business

There was no new business

Adjourn Board Meeting

There being no further discussion, Chair Lastinger adjourned at the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

Minutes Adopted: May 13, 2022