

Minutes

Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, Quarterly Meeting
Cain's Ballroom, 423 North Main Street, Tulsa, OK 74103
Wednesday, October 23, 2019, 12:30 p.m.

1. Call to order – President Jack Baker

The regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society was called to order by President Jack Baker at 12:35 p.m. on Wednesday, October 23, 2019, at Cain's Ballroom, 423 North Main Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll call – Bob Blackburn

Board members present: Jack Baker, Teresa Black Bradway, John Cary, Cheryl Evans, Deena Fisher, Billie Fogarty, Karen Keith, Dan Lawrence, Neal Leader, Leonard Logan, Patricia Loughlin, Terry Mabrey, Dallas Mayer, Jonita Mullins, William Settle, Donna Sharpe, Kenny Sivard, Charles Tate, Barbara Thompson, and Jim Waldo

Board members excused: Harold Aldridge, Sherry Beasley, Frederick Drummond, Duke Ligon, and Shirley Nero

Emeritus members present: Thalia Eddleman and Bill Corbett

4. Presentation of service pins – Bob Blackburn

Dr. Bob Blackburn presented Kathy Dickson with her 40-year service pin and Terry Howard with his 30-year service pin.

5. Echoes of History – Bob Blackburn

Dr. Blackburn read from the minutes of the January 27, 2016, OHS board meeting that summarized conversations with legislators about the OHS and Will Rogers Memorial Museums being ready to take the next step in pursuing a partnership. At that meeting, the OHS Board of Directors moved to approve moving forward with the Will Rogers Memorial Museums (WRMM) becoming a division of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Dr. Blackburn emphasized that this was a partnership, not a takeover. Both the OHS and WRMM staff and commissioners needed to feel confidence in the collaboration before moving forward. Dr. Blackburn noted that later in the meeting, a new concept for the WRMM would be presented that would continue to strengthen this successful partnership.

6. Approval of minutes

a. Quarterly Board Minutes, July 24, 2019

Neal Leader moved to approve the minutes from the July 24, 2019, Quarterly Board Meeting. Seconded by Jim Waldo, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Treasurer's report

In the absence of Shirley Nero, Terry Howard provided the Treasurer's report to the board. Mr. Howard reported that the OHS has \$2,361,494.39 in cash at the State Treasurer's Office. The OHS has \$200,640.71 invested in a Salomon Smith Barney account. This was originally a \$150,000 investment. The OHS has \$138,952.70 invested at Federated with an original investment of \$150,000. The OHS has \$2,421,196 invested in the Oklahoma City Community Foundation Endowment Fund. The total cash and invested funds of the OHS amount to \$5,122,283.80.

8. Executive Director's report

a. Review of budget projections and expenditures from the first quarter (July 1 to September 30)

Terry Howard reviewed the projections and expenditures for the first quarter, noting the overhead column is low because there is a one-time bill for insurance that will be paid later in the year.

b. Report on upcoming legislative session

Dr. Blackburn had a few points to touch on about the upcoming legislative session. He first discussed the OHS's thirty-year plan to reduce its reliance on the legislature for funding. At one point in time, the OHS depended on the legislature for 98 percent of funding, whereas currently the legislature provides the OHS with 70 percent of its total funding. Dr. Blackburn noted that it is vital to keep legislative support in all geographic areas of the state. It is important to remember that much of Oklahoma's history occurred in rural areas and that the OHS must maintain strong relations with rural legislators and their constituents. Dr. Blackburn used the new Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Program as an example of how to keep those relationships with the rural community strong.

Next, Dr. Blackburn discussed possible changes to the OHS's statutory authority. In 1985 the legislature passed a bill stating the OHS could not take title to any locally owned historic or recreational site that would require state funding without approval by both the Oklahoma Senate and House of Representatives. There has been talk of changing the statute, but statutory authority and limitations remain intact.

Dr. Blackburn addressed the next point by noting that, over the course of the last fifteen years, other state agencies have begun to charge fees for services to fellow state agencies. The largest of these fees comes in the form of information technology services from Oklahoma Management and Enterprise Services (OMES). Currently the OHS pays a total of \$451,000 to OMES. The most expensive portion is related to server storage fees. The OHS is one of the largest consumers of server storage, primarily due to the mass digitization efforts led by our Research Division. The OHS would like to propose that, due to the digital revolution, digitization should be considered part of the core mission of the OHS and therefore associated costs should be included in our base appropriation.

Dr. Blackburn reminded the board that last year the OHS received \$600,000 in one-time funding for maintenance and repairs to the Oklahoma History Center. He would like to try to keep that funding in our base appropriation and earmark those funds for an ongoing repair and maintenance budget for the History Center and OKPOP. Lastly, Dr. Blackburn wants to begin a conversation with legislators about seeking \$1 million in funding for a new concept at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum that would include a building expansion, a new business plan, and a new approach to keeping Oklahoma's favorite son in popular memory.

c. Update on Oklahoma Route 66 Centennial Commission

Dr. Blackburn stated that the commission has not yet had a meeting and is still awaiting a few more appointments from Governor Kevin Stitt. He noted that on December 3, 2019, there will be a stakeholders' summit led by Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell in which community leaders on Route 66 will provide input on what they would like to see happen for the centennial.

d. Update on Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission

Dr. Blackburn spoke about working closely with Senator Kevin Matthews on this project. Larry O'Dell provided an update on fundraising and efforts for Greenwood Rising, a website for African American History Resources including the *Oklahoma Eagle* newspaper. Mr. O'Dell also noted that the Black Heritage Committee will be meeting in November to discuss African American cultural tourism.

e. Summary of projects underway and planned at OHS Museums and Historic Sites

Kathy Dickson presented information regarding select museums and historic sites that are currently undergoing construction and renovations. She also discussed future projects.

Highlights of the presentation included a new interactive film that is in production and will be shown in the Visitor's Center at Honey Springs Battlefield; structural and earthquake repairs on multiple buildings at Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum; and Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center reopening after the flooding on the site in June 2019. Dr. Blackburn added to Ms. Dickson's presentation by noting the importance of maintaining a repair and construction funding balance with the Museums and Sites Division, OKPOP, the Oklahoma History Center, and the Will Rogers Memorial Museums. He reiterated how important it is to keep the repair and maintenance budgets safeguarded and, if possible, expanded.

9. Consideration of a concept and business plan to expand the Will Rogers Memorial Museum

Tad Jones reported the three main goals for the Will Rogers Memorial Museum as it relates to the new concept and business plan. These goals are to improve collections storage and protection, to become a community engagement epicenter, and to share and explore Will Rogers's story and legacy. The future vision for the museum is to transform it into the Will Rogers Experience, retelling the story of Will Rogers with new technology. A few of the improvements would be an event space, more office space, larger exhibit and vault space, and a new entryway to make the entrance easier for visitors to locate. Dr. Blackburn noted that this would be a reallocation of resources, both in terms of staff time and funds, and he wanted to make sure that the board is comfortable with this direction.

Neal Leader moved to approve moving in this direction contingent on raising the funds. Seconded by Dan Lawrence, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Consideration of a schedule for the selection of a new executive director

The proposed schedule for filling the position of executive director of the OHS had been recommended at the September 18, 2019, executive committee meeting and is as follows:

January 22, 2020: President Baker appoints Search Committee

April 22, 2020: Search Committee submits job description to OHS Board for consideration

June 1, 2020: Job description is released nationwide

July 22, 2020: Search Committee submits to the OHS Board a review of applicants and the OHS Board approves a short list of those to be interviewed by the Search Committee.

October 28, 2020: OHS Board interviews finalists, selects top choice, and authorizes OHS President to offer the job

January 4, 2021: New OHS Executive Director reports for duty

January 15, 2021: Bob Blackburn formally retires

Kenny Sivard moved to approve the schedule for selecting a new executive director as presented. Seconded by Karen Keith, the motion carried unanimously.

11. Review and possible consideration of amendments to the following

a. Historic Context Review Report

Dr. Blackburn reviewed the current Historic Context Review Report with the board. He noted that this document is one of the single most important planning tools for the OHS. While Dr. Blackburn did not have any changes to recommend to the board, he encouraged the board to continually review the report and address any revisions that might need to be made. No board action was taken.

b. Organizational Charts

Dr. Blackburn presented the most current organizational charts for the agency to the board. No board action was taken.

12. Consideration of OHS Board members to serve on the Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Selection Committee

President Baker appointed Jim Waldo, Charles Tate, Cheryl Evans, Dan Lawrence, Neal Leader, Bill Settle, and Terry Mabrey to serve on the on the Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Selection Committee.

Leonard Logan moved to confirm the appointments made by President Baker. Seconded by Donna Sharpe, the motion carried unanimously.

13. New business

There was no new business to report.

14. Announcements

Dr. Blackburn thanked Jeff Moore and the staff of OKPOP, Nabholz, 6PR, Cain's Ballroom, and Karen Keith for their contributions to the groundbreaking of OKPOP, which had been held earlier that morning across the street.

15. Adjournment

Cheryl Evans moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Barbara Thompson, the motion carried unanimously. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by President Baker at 2:34 p.m.