

G.A.R. Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

Meeting December 8, 2015

Minutes

National Guard Armory Room D, 50 Skyline Drive, Worcester, Massachusetts

Meeting Began at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Daniel McAuliffe, Michael Baker, Michael Baker, Linda Hixon, Reynaldo Rodriguez and Timothy Boucher Minutes of the September 22, 2015 meeting were not approved and will be amended.

Old Business:

1. At the September meeting the Board discussed using college students from Worcester State University to evaluate the books being stored at the Worcester Auditorium.
 - a. According to Trustee Linda Hixon in order to run a class of students there needs to be 10 enrolled. So far there are five enrolled. The class of students will assist them in gaining experience in public history and archiving. Trustee Hixon mentioned that there are also volunteers who will also be helping. Trustee Hixon and Trustee Baker will be informed soon if the course has been approved. Trustee Hixon added that among the volunteers will be a Public History & Archive Professor.
 - b. Tim Boucher asked that he be informed when access will be needed that can be made via phone or email.
 - c. Chairman Daniel McAuliffe suggested to Trustee Hixon and Trustee Michael Baker that the first visit simply be an evaluation. The trustees will give an update at a future meeting.
2. Chairman McAuliffe asked for an update on the restoration of the Soldiers & Sailors Monument. According to Mr. Boucher the top statue has already been removed. It is now located at 1067 Millbury Street, secured in a covered trailer on city property. Mr. Boucher added that the project completion date was proposed and set for May 15th 2016.
3. Chairman McAuliffe asked for a volunteer to be the Board's Treasurer. The treasurer would keep track of the Board's remaining funds. Chairman McAuliffe nominated Trustee Hixon, Secretary Reynaldo Rodriguez seconded the nomination. With no other nominations, the Board voted unanimously to elect Trustee Hixon as Board Treasurer. Mr. Boucher reminded the Board that funds have already been transferred to pay for the monument restoration project. The amount of which was discussed at the September meeting.
4. Chairman McAuliffe turned over to the Board a signed loan agreement for the three Confederate flags located at the Museum of the Albemarle. The document titled, "Loan Agreement, Extension Number One" extends the loan of the flags for two more years (2017). The signed document was then filed with the G.A.R. Board files located at the Armory.

New Business:

1. Mr. Boucher informed the Board that he will be interviewing a potential Board member. If the Board member is appointed, the Board will be five members.
2. A biography project titled, "Civil War Project" was discussed. The project will include Worcester State University students. The project will consist of research conducted on the 398 soldiers & sailors named on the Soldiers & Sailors Monument. Once completed, the biographies will be published on the Board's Facebook site for all to see. Trustee Hixon asked if there was any conflict of interest in using herself with the college students. The Board agreed that since no money was being exchanged then there was no conflict of interest. Trustee Baker explained that the biography project will be conducted in "blog" format. As part of the biography project Trustee Baker will be teaching how to do archival work. Chairman McAuliffe suggested using the website "civilwardata.com". The site is an excellent starting point to allow for as Trustee Baker said, "datamining." It will give everyone involved in the project an understanding of who they are researching as the basic information will be available on the site. Secretary Rodriguez mentioned that the site is great to find out how they died. Secretary Rodriguez said that he had already found that quite a number of the 398 died at Andersonville.
3. Chairman McAuliffe will be adding Trustee Hixon and Trustee Baker to the Board's Facebook site.
4. The Board then discussed the rededication ceremony. Chairman McAuliffe informed the Board that the South Carolina Sons of Veterans indicated that they would like to send a recognition letter to whomever was responsible in getting the monument restored. Mr. Boucher said he would try to find out but pointed out that the project had been discussed for years as part of the revitalization of the Worcester Common. In fact, the World War II monument which is on the Common is also being restored. Further discussion on the ceremony revealed that the City is already making its plans. Trustee Baker was able to attend a preliminary meeting with stake holders in the ceremony. The ceremony is under the coordination of Che Anderson from the city manager's office. According to Trustee Baker, Mr. Anderson has already agreed to a lot of things. One of the agreed upon pieces to the ceremony is having the parade route begin at the G.A.R. Hall on Pearl Street. Chairman McAuliffe appointed Trustee Baker with the Board's agreement to act as liaison to the ceremony meetings being held by the city. So far it looks most likely that the ceremony will take place in July.
5. Chairman McAuliffe asked that the Board try to find living relatives of the 398. That way they can be recognized. Social media and traditional media like TV or newspapers like the Telegram, Worcester Magazine and even Inner City Times as ways to reach out to many people. Chairman McAuliffe further suggested that some biographies be placed into these media sources a good four or five weeks leading up to the ceremony. Mr. Boucher suggested adding photos with the work being done in the back ground. Pictures of the staging will bring attention to the restoration and thus may bring more people to the ceremony. Mr. Boucher volunteered to reach out to the Worcester Magazine.

6. Trustee Baker said he had brought up the idea of a living history as well as other smaller events to also lead up to the ceremony.
7. After discussion on inviting various groups like civil war reenactments units such as the 15th Massachusetts, a General Ambrose Burnside impersonator, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Firefighters, Masons etc...the High School JROTC programs were also added. A suggestion was made that school children could do essays on the battles and prisoner of war camps or even diseases and other causes for the deaths of the 398. Secretary Rodriguez will reach out to the schools to see if students can be recruited.

Being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:28 pm

The next meeting will be March 8, 2016 and will be held at the National Guard Armory on Skyline Drive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reynaldo Rodriguez

Secretary, GAR Memorial Hall Board of Trustees