

G.A.R. Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

Meeting March 8, 2016

Minutes

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

Meeting Began at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Daniel McAuliffe, Michael Baker, George Maple, Linda Hixon and Timothy Boucher

Minutes of the December 8, 2015 meeting were approved.

The Board extended a welcome to new member George Maple, who had been a member of the Board approximately 5-6 years ago.

Board member Michael Baker made a report on his visit to Worcester Memorial Auditorium on January 29, 2015.

- Trustee Baker noted this trip was an initial run-through of about an hour with Trustee Hixon and a couple of student volunteers
- They found that there was important primary source, hand-written documents stored in the building, including GAR records that appear to be in fairly good condition with little water damage and no mold
- The other books stored there are considered secondary sources and would be of less importance; because these are published materials publically distributed, most are or would be available through online sites or interlibrary loan
- Trustee Baker also noted that he has had requests through Facebook by members of the public looking for ancestors who may have been members of the GAR
- He noted the priority must be getting the primary sources safely stored; he thought the board might want to negotiate with Worcester Historical Museum for them to store the documents through a loan
- Secondary sources are a lower priority; most are badly damaged by water although there doesn't appear to be mold on these books

Trustee George Maple asked if the documents could be copied or digitized. Trustee Baker noted that this could be done but would take time

- The primary sources need storage, preservation, and cataloging
- The secondary sources would need much more work to be preserved and may be beyond repair
- Chairman Daniel McAuliffe asked how long it would take for scanning and cataloging; Trustee Baker noted that time frame would be hard to determine but would take a considerable amount of time
- The primary sources would need archival storage; Trustee Baker would like them to be housed elsewhere
- Chairman McAuliffe asked if the board could still retain control of the documents

- Trustee Baker said they could be put on loan with WHM; he thought this would be a benefit to the board as it would make this records accessible to historians

Trustee Hixon gave a report of the Civil War Biography Project at Worcester State University to write the biographies of the 398 soldiers listed on the Civil War Soldiers' Monument. She noted that she has about 15 undergrads and volunteers from Worcester State involved in the project.

- She told the board that WSU's Printing and Publishing department has offered to print the books for the re-dedication ceremony gratis as long as the WSU logo is on the front cover
- The book will be about 60 pages with a full-color front and back cover with black and white images inside
- WSU has also offered to print posters for the event and the book; Trustee Hixon noted that the idea of basing the posters on Civil War recruiting posters housed at the American Antiquarian Society is being considered
- Chairman McAuliffe asked if descendants of the soldiers have been found. Trustee Hixon told him that 2 people from the Massachusetts Brigade meeting of February were descendants; one has been in contact but will not be able to attend the re-dedication; the other has not been in contact yet and she is trying to reach him
- She also told the board that some of the students are finding interesting stories in their research. Chairman McAuliffe suggested getting some of these stories on the Facebook page; he suggested using that internet source as a way to find living relatives; Trustee Maple suggested using Channel 3 and said as a member of the Sons of Union Veterans he could spread the word
- Trustee Baker said the city is planning a media campaign for the re-dedication ceremony
- Chairman McAuliffe suggested contacting newspapers and magazines prior to the next city meeting; he suggested articles on the stories of some of the soldiers
- Trustee Hixon asked if photographs of the Monument are in GAR or city hands and how she would get a copy; Chairman McAuliffe said there are images on Facebook and on Wikipedia
- Tim Boucher found a vintage booklet printed by the city entitled *Artworks in our Parks* with several images in it; Trustee Hixon will use some of these images for the WSU publication

Trustee Baker gave an account of his meetings with the City of Worcester on the re-dedication ceremony of July 15; he said the meeting "fleshed-out" the program for the day, although the planning was preliminary

- The parade would start at Mechanics Hall
- The GAR board would have a place of honor in the parade
- Chairman McAuliffe would speak at the ceremony
- The city is planning a major media campaign called Four for Freedom
- The city is trying to work out the actual unveiling of the Monument, which Tim Boucher pointed out could be a problem as the monument is very tall and an unveiling might need to involve a crane
- Re-enactors may be able to fire muskets at the event, but cannon firing may be dangerous
- The next meeting with the city is set for April 7

- Trustee Baker will try to find a bugler for the event, and is in contact with a brass band that can do Civil War songs
- Chairman McAuliffe suggested he could contact Junior ROTC groups; Trustee Baker said he would ask the city first
- Invocation is planned by Father Reilly
- There are no plans for someone to read the names of the soldiers

Tiim Boucher updated the Board on the conservation of the Monument.

- He said the conservator had made a mold of the missing statue
- The conservator took a sample of the granite and ordered a replacement for the missing granite block
- Tim Boucher noted a lot more work can be done as the weather improves, and that the conservator seems to understand the deadline and the importance of meeting that deadline

Tim Boucher gave a report of the GAR funding.

- He showed the board a spreadsheet of the monetary transfers and the remaining balance. Trustee Maple questioned how the money was spent legally; Chairman McAuliffe answered that he had been to all the meetings with the lawyers and it was all done legally and above board
- Chairman McAuliffe noted that the flags and the bell which are owned by the Board are currently housed where they can be seen and appreciated; that these artifacts are important and must be taken care of

The next meeting of the GAR Board is planned for Tuesday, April 12 at 6:30 p.m.