

G.A.R. Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes June 13, 2017

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

Meeting Began at 5:28 p.m.

Present: Daniel McAuliffe, Michael Baker, George Maple, Reynaldo Rodriguez, Tim Boucher

Minutes from March 7, 2017 with corrections were passed out.

Minutes from the April 11, 2017 meeting was approved.

Old Business:

1. Chairman Daniel McAuliffe gave an update on the loan agreements with the Confederate Flags that the City Law Department was working on. According to Chairman McAuliffe the assignment was given to Attorney Janice Thompson. Chairman McAuliffe emailed for status with no answer, then called and left message with Law Department. After not receiving a response, Chairman McAuliffe wrote a letter to Deputy City Solicitor Jennifer Beaton asking why there has been no word nor contact from Ms. Thompson. Chairman McAuliffe received an email from Ms. Thompson that a draft will be created and ready for review at the Board's June 13 meeting. As of 10 a.m. on June 13, Chairman McAuliffe reports to the Board that there is no draft to his knowledge. Chairman McAuliffe said he will go back to get the draft when ready and for sake of time will send to all members via email to review. According to Chairman McAuliffe the Board most likely will not meet again until the fall and can discuss the draft at that point.
2. Chairman McAuliffe gave an update on the GAR Manual. According to Chairman McAuliffe it is an ongoing project with Treasurer Linda Hixon. Treasurer Hixon informed Chairman McAuliffe that the project with the GAR books in the Auditorium is also an ongoing project with hopeful future storage at the Worcester Historical Museum. Trustee George Maple asked if scanning was part of the project. Trustee Michael Baker confirmed that there will be scanning of the books. There was water damage which has caused mold issues. Fortunately, according to Trustee Baker, many of the damaged books have no value. Trustee Baker was on the review team of the books. According to him, the secondary source books which have less value and are damaged also have other outside sources. According to Trustee Baker the important priority is to the primary sources which are in good shape. Those primary sources include rosters and minutes which were both hand written and transcribed via type writer. Those primary sources represent late 19th century and early 20th century which gives them value. Of note are minutes to organizations like the Womens Auxiliary to the G.A.R.
3. Chairman McAuliffe updated Board on putting the Flags and bell of the CSS Albemarle into a trust. At the November 2016 meeting a letter was created to initiate the process. The letter was addressed to the city manager on the suggestion. Chairman McAuliffe

reminds the Board that it is now June and no updates. Chairman McAuliffe reports that through emails and phone calls to the Park's Department and a letter to the mayor's office had yielded little progress. Chairman McAuliffe asked Tim Boucher if he had any updates. According to Mr. Boucher the agenda item for putting the flags and bell into a trust will be added to the City Council's agenda by the end of June or mid July. Mr. Boucher said he will inform the Board as soon as it is on the agenda. Chairman McAuliffe said that he will attend that meeting and both Trustees Maple and Baker also will be attending.

4. Chairman McAuliffe reported to the Board that the facebook article related to Worcester in the Civil War are not getting much attention. Chairman McAuliffe reported that there doesn't seem to be too many reading them but suggests to continue posting articles.

New Business:

1. Chairman McAuliffe informed the Board that he and Secretary Reynaldo Rodriguez's term of office will expire on November 30, 2017. Chairman McAuliffe and Secretary Rodriguez both confirmed that they will not seek an extension. Both have been members of the Board for 14 years working under three (3) city managers.
2. Trustee Maple suggested that the future openings on the Board be posted on the facebook as there might be interest.
3. Chairman McAuliffe opened a discussion on writing a letter to the City Manager on the topic of combining the G.A.R. Board with the Historical Commission. According to Chairman McAuliffe a lot of what the GAR Board can do, has been done. There are matters that would need to be addressed and transferred to the authority of the Historical Commission if it takes place. They are the loans and agreements with the flags and bell end in 2019 and 2025 respectively. Also the bank account needs to be kept under the same name but authority for control to the Historical Commission if it takes place. At this point the Board mainly in the business of maintenance. The GAR Hall was sold and since then there hasn't been as much of the same responsibilities and the Board got involved in Civil War related projects to be relevant. The projects during Chairman McAuliffe's time include a tour of Worcester civil war sites with South High students who did essays, placing a marker at the civil war training site of Camp Scott, for the 150th anniversary of the civil war repairing 3 Confederate flags and putting them on display along with the Bell of the CSS Albemarle, Civil War Cinemas at the Public Library, other presentations on civil war topics like the Burnside North Carolina Expedition, the CSS Albemarle, Lieutenant William Cushing, and Sultana tragedy, Chairman McAuliffe promoting Worcester and its ownership of the Confederate flags and bell, moving the Massachusetts Regimental Flags to the Massachusetts State House, and most recently assisting in funding for the restoration of the Soldiers & Sailors Monument located on the Worcester Common.

4. A motion was made for Chairman McAuliffe to draft a letter to the city manager with the Board's suggestion of dissolving and/or merging the GAR Board with the Historical Commission. Discussed was that the letter needs to address the GAR Board membership as to how it is affected to be rolled into the Historical Commission as well as the legality of dissolving the GAR Board at all. Also pointed out was that the city manager may take into account that by eliminating a Board and transferring its duties to another Board/Commission might be beneficial on a management level. All 4 (4-0) members present approved unanimously for Chairman McAuliffe to draft a letter.
5. Chairman McAuliffe encouraged the 3 Board members who will still be on the Board beyond November to consider nominations for Chairman and Secretary come the September meeting. If the Board nominates and votes for a new Chairman and Secretary at the September meeting it will allow for the former Chairman and Secretary to help with transition.
6. Trustee Maple handed out copies of a Memorial Day program (for souvenirs) to Chairman McAuliffe, Trustee Baker and one for Treasurer Hixon. The program is conducted annually by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War Willie Grout Camp #25. The camp has taken part in the Memorial Day ceremonies for 123 years, and then does separate ceremonies at the Medal of Honor gravesite of Charles Pinkham and Thomas Plunkett at Hope and at Rural cemetery the gravesite of George H. Ward and John Willie Grout.
7. Chairman McAuliffe reported to the Board that he had a phone interview with a reporter in regards to Flag Day.

Being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:11 p.m.

The next meeting will be September 12, 2017, to be held at the National Guard Armory on Skyline Drive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reynaldo Rodriguez

Secretary, G.A.R. Board of Trustees