

## **G.A.R. Memorial Hall Board of Trustees**

### **Meeting Minutes April 11, 2017**

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

Meeting Began at 5:29 p.m.

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

Minutes from March 7, 2017 were not approved pending revision with omitted information. Secretary Rodriguez will add the omission and resubmit a revised March minutes for next G.A.R Meeting.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Chairman Daniel McAuliffe and Tim Boucher met with Deputy City Solicitor Jennifer Beaton of the City Law Department. The meeting was to discuss the creation of a trust. As a result of the meeting, Chairman McAuliffe prepared a letter addressed to Robert Antonelli, the Assistant Commissioner of the Parks, Recreation & Cemetery who is the liaison between the G.A.R. Memorial Board and the City Manager's Office. Chairman McAuliffe read out loud the letter (dated March 22, 2017) to entire Board. The letter will be placed in the files.
  - a. Highlight of the letter is that on November 15, 2016 the Board voted unanimously to place valuable historical items in the possession of the City and in the care of the Board, be placed in a Trust where they will not be sold or leave the possession of the city for all time. Specific items were listed (Three Confederate flags, The Bell of the CSS Albemarle, and bronze plaques located on walls at the G.A.R. Hall at 55 Pearl Street. The letter continued with placing the Trust as an item on the City Council's agenda. Additionally items stored at the Worcester Historical Museum were attached to the letter. The letter closed with the present location of the three Confederate flags and the bell.
2. Treasurer Linda Hixon updated the Board on the books located at the Worcester Auditorium. According to Treasurer Hixon there is no new information and that she will be meeting with Robyn Conroy as this is an ongoing project of the Board.
3. Treasurer Hixon then addressed the finances of the G.A.R Hall Board. She presented a print out "City of Worcester, MA Expenditure Transaction Analysis" dated 2/17/17. If the Board reads the information correctly there is sixty-four thousand five hundred and sixty dollars (\$64,560.00) in the G.A.R. Hall Trust. Tim Boucher will verify the information at the next meeting.
4. Treasurer Hixon is working with Chairman McAuliffe on an official Board manual. As part of the manual Chairman McAuliffe wants to add the existence and location of the items

like the Confederate flags and the Bell. This keeps the Board transparent so that future Boards do not miss that the items existed as well as loan agreements.

5. The G.A.R. Board discussed the articles on the Facebook in regards to Worcester's involvement in the Civil War. So far Trustee Maple has put in an article on the Battle of New Bern which Chairman McAuliffe followed up and added a story on a letter from an Ohio soldier. Secretary Rodriguez mentioned adding the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts drummer boy and General Boomer. Chairman McAuliffe stressed that for the Facebook to work that likes and sharing needs to take place. According to Chairman McAuliffe he has spent money to boost it and that we have as many as 465 likes so far. Trustee Maple said that the Facebook isn't costing us anything so we can keep it going. Eventually more people will come to it and read about the past items. Trustee Baker suggested putting the meeting announcements on the Facebook or at least a link.

#### **New Business:**

1. Chairman McAuliffe discussed with the Board renewing the loans on the flags and the bell for an additional 2 years to November 2019. Chairman McAuliffe said that Solicitor Beaton wants to revise the actual loan agreements. According to Chairman McAuliffe the flags do get rotated every 4 months and that the state of North Carolina regulates their museums. Chairman McAuliffe says that the Board and the museums have had a good partnership since 2011.
  - a. Chairman McAuliffe read an email from Solicitor Beaton in regards to the loan agreement. The email essentially reported that the city manager has agreed to meet sometime after the budget season in late spring or early summer. Part of the email was Chairman McAuliffe informing Solicitor Beaton that a clause may need to be added that the museums may loan them out to another reputable institution provided legal documentation and insurance in place. The meeting will be to review the current loan agreement.
  - b. Trustee Maple asked how much time was left on the agreement. Chairman McAuliffe said that a decision needed to be made by August at the latest.
2. The Board then had a discussion on the displaying of the Confederate flags and Tyron Palace as a possible site. Chairman McAuliffe visited the site and exchanged email with the museum director, Alyson Rhodes-Murphy. According to Chairman McAuliffe Tryon Palace was a secure place but that a school house that is unattended four days a week and mainly has copies of items may not be a viable site to display any flags. Trustee Maple noted that we should not be limiting ourselves to Southern museums. Secretary Rodriguez agreed that there may be other museums besides those in the south that could display the flags. There are museums in the north and New England. Chairman McAuliffe said that he had explored locations for the flags but was unable to find many takers. The bell of the CSS Albemarle is in the best location it can possibly be since the Museum itself focuses on the Albemarle area.

- a. Chairman McAuliffe did address a possibility of moving the flags and or bell back to Worcester if a short display was planned.
  - b. Trustee Maple wanted the Board to think about other than Southern museums as it is possible that the G.A.R. members never intended those flags or the bell to ever return to the South. Treasurer Hixon cleared the discussion to remove Southern museums as the criteria and put it out as 'museums' for consideration.
  - c. Chairman McAuliffe reported that in the past the Board did put the flags on display but did not get much of a turnout. The use of the museum in the south draw more people that want to see them.
  - d. Trustee Maple suggested the G.A.R. Museum in Lynn or in Pennsylvania as options.
  - e. Treasurer Hixon said that the items need to be secure and seen.
  - f. Trustee Maple added and it was agreed by the Board that the museum that has the items need the Board's approval prior to sub loaning to any other site.
  - g. Chairman McAuliffe made a motion "Favor loaning flag or flags to Tryon Palace to display at its's schoolhouse". All unanimously opposed (5-0.)
3. Treasurer Hixon attended a Daughters of American Revolution meeting and was informed that on May 20<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm there will be an organized cleanup of the gravesites in Hope Cemetery to include cleaning up and flagging the G.A.R. Lot. Trustee Maple volunteered to work with Treasurer Hixon and the Daughters of American Revolution.

Being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:09 p.m.

The next meeting will be June 13, 2017, to be held at the National Guard Armory on Skyline Drive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reynaldo Rodriguez

Secretary, G.A.R. Board of Trustees