

G.A.R. Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes October 11, 2016

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

Meeting Began at 5:31 p.m.

Present: Daniel McAuliffe, Linda Hixon, Reynaldo Rodriguez, Timothy Boucher

Recognized that July 12, 2016 was not an official meeting but a follow up to prepare for the rededication ceremony held on Saturday July 16, 2016 for the Worcester's Soldiers & Sailors Monument.

Old Business:

1. Chairman Daniel McAuliffe asked for feedback from the Board as to the Rededication of the Soldiers & Sailor's Monument that took place on July 16, 2016. The feedback from members was very positive. Although there were 'many moving parts' everything fell into place. The time spent from organizing participants to preparing for the event was apparent as no negatives were relayed.
 - a. Secretary Reynaldo Rodriguez commented on how well the book entitled For the Unity of the Republic: The Men of the Worcester Soldiers' Monument, which was published by Worcester State University and written and organized by Trustee Hixon with help from Trustee Baker was fairly and efficiently distributed. Prior to the event some books were distribute by Chairman McAuliffe to libraries and schools. The day of the event, a green ticket system was used to fairly distribute the books.
 - b. Trustee Linda Hixon mentioned that a descendant of Hiram Chambers (who was one of the 398) heard of the book. "Jane" who lives in Hudson will be receiving a copy.
 - c. Chairman McAuliffe informed the Board that the ceremony was so well received that he has received letters of gratitude. He mentioned that the wreath laying and flowers was very emotional and has seen a video of the ceremony that really documented it well.
2. Chairman McAuliffe reported that among letters received included one from City Manager Ed Augustus thanking the Board for a job well done. A copy of his letter as well as others will be filed for future Board members. Other letters included one from Worcester State University, North High School, Worcester Tech High School, emails from Port'O Plymouth Museum, and an article in Worcester Magazine and Immaculate Conception Parish newsletter. Along with that there are a couple of youtube videos and articles in the Telegram & Gazette newspaper. Secretary Rodriguez will make copies of the letters and article for the GAR Files.
3. Chairman McAuliffe showed the Board a binder that he made containing the letters as well as photos from the event.
4. Trustee Hixon reported on the inventory and future of the GAR Hall books left in storage at the Worcester Memorial Auditorium. According to Trustee Hixon most books are not

primary sources and mostly secondary sources. A list will be sent to Chairman McAullife. Currently the books are stored in 7 boxes and in a metal cabinet. Trustee Hixon reported that Robin Conroy at the Worcester Historical Society which houses other GAR Hall books would have a safe place to store them. Chairman McAullife asked if there were other options for storage. Discussed was the American Antiquarian Society and the Worcester Public Library. The Antiquarian may not be viable because the books are not that old and the Worcester Public Library may not have the space.

New Business:

1. Chairman McAullife informed the Board that he had informally and by chance had an opportunity to run into Mayor Joseph Petty. Chairman McAullife discussed the possibility of the 3 Refurbished Confederate flags as well as the Bell of the CSS Albemarle being protected by a trust. Chairman McAullife wanted to see if the city could help. Eventually Chairman McAullife did get an email from the mayor's office.

The Board then discussed the possibility of the word "Confederate" creating a problem if any money was put towards a trust. Chairman McAullife wanted to find a way to avoid the issue on the flags because of the "Confederate" name. Discussed was the historical nature to the City of Worcester which has as much right to the flags and the bell as the former Confederacy. Since the board spent a lot of time and money (\$37,0000) to repair and display the items it was important to retain possession legally. The intent would be to allow the artifacts to be displayed and as long as they are displayed and not housed, to remain where they will be in the public view. Tim Boucher agreed that the city has no place to actually store the items. The Board discussed that possibly in the future there might be a place to display them but that currently there is not.

Chairman McAullife and Secretary Rodriguez reminded the Board that the bell of the CSS Albemarle had actually been forgotten by the Board. The bell was a prize possession of the GAR. It was placed on loan unofficially and the Board by chance found out about it. Currently the Bell and the flags are out on loan agreements.

PROPOSAL: Chairman McAullife made a proposal to have the 3 Flags and the Bell of the CSS Albemarle placed into a trust or legal agreement. The trust would define ownership of the items and that they must be returned if no on display. Secretary Rodriguez seconded the motion and the Board voted. All 3 members (a quorum) present approved the proposal.

2. Chairman McAullife would like the creation of a GAR Member's Manual. The manual will tell the history of the Board, the Duties/Responsibilities, List of Artifacts under the Board's control to include the Memorial Plaques that remain at the GAR Hall. Trustee Hixon has agreed to take on the task of organizing a member's manual.
3. Chairman McAullife mentioned that a new project could be the refurbishing and rededication of the General Charles Devens Statue (Also known as the Worcester County Civil War Monument) which is located off of Lincoln Square at the old County Court House. Chairman McAullife discovered that the court house was sold and that the new ownership had agreed to refurbish

the monument. The Board needs to know if it can get involved in that project. Being a public entity would assisting not be allowed or would the Board have to form a private group on its own with no ties to the city. Secretary Rodriguez mentioned that there are at least 3 equestrian monuments in the state (General Hooker at the Boston State House, General Draper in Milford) and General Devens. Secretary Rodriguez also mentioned that General Devens is an alum of Harvard University and could be possible to solicit private donations from them. Mr. Boucher was asked if he could have a representative from the City law department attend a future meeting in order to answer our questions. Mr. Boucher said he would invite someone who would answer our questions.

4. Mr. Boucher reported that the punch list for Worcester Soldiers & Sailors Monument has been completed. Mr. Boucher said he will ask the vendor if they could possibly look into pricing the General Devens Statue. That way the Board would have a benchmark for cost.

Being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:05 pm

The next meeting will be November 15, 2016, to be held at the National Guard Armory on Skyline Drive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reynaldo Rodriguez

Secretary, GAR Memorial Hall Board of Trustees