

**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library Board of Regents**  
**October 23, 2014, 2:00 pm**  
**Minor Executive Board Room, Jepson Alumni Executive Center**  
**University of Mary Washington**

**Regents Present:** G. William Thomas, Jr., Chairman; Mary R. Corbin, Vice Chairman; Porter Blakemore; Peter Broadbent; Art Buswell; Holly Cuellar; Richard Hurley; Justin Logsdon; James Lucier; Mary Lucier; Charles McDaniel; Patrick McSweeney; Helen Marie Taylor; G. Scott Walker.

**Regents Absent:** Erma Baker; Kerry Johnson; Rita Thompson

**Others Present:** Lynda Allen; Richard Finkelstein; Scott Harris; W. Gregory Burkett; Alexander B. Rawls.

**Welcome and Call to Order** – G. William Thomas, Jr., Chairman –  
Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:10 PM and introduced the newly-appointed member of the Board of Regents, Mr. G. Scott Walker. Mr. Thomas asked Mr. W. Gregory Burkett to deliver the invocation.

**Approval of Minutes, Meeting of April 11, 2014** – Mr. Thomas  
Mr. McSweeney moved to approve the minutes without changes, seconded by Mrs. Lucier. The motion carried unanimously.

**Museum Director's Report Summary** – Scott Harris Director, James Monroe Museum  
Mr. Harris presented his report (attached to these minutes) which included information about public programs, speaking engagements, and financial data.

Mr. Harris noted that the public programs for 2014 have been very well received, including the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Fredericksburg Welsh Festival and History Trivia Nights. The Trivia Nights, held on First Fridays in the summer and early fall, were led by celebrity quizmasters and were well attended, so much so that an extra Trivia Night was added in October.

Many Museum programs focused on collaboration with UMW departments, including the James Farmer Multicultural Center and the Department of Political Science and International Affairs, as well as with other area museums such as the Washington Heritage Museums' Rising Sun Tavern and Hugh Mercer Apothecary. The Museum also participated in some nationally organized events such as the Smithsonian's *Raise It Up!* Flag Day event, during which we were likely the only organization featuring the Star Spangled Banner played on kazoos.

Mr. Harris handed out copies of the most recent *White House History* Journal which features an article written by himself and curator Jarod Kearney, concerning the Monroes' role in furnishing the White House after it was rebuilt.

Promotional efforts undertaken by the Museum included local radio interviews, a new brochure, and other initiatives that have yielded good results. Mr. Harris also discussed his public speaking opportunities such as a talk he gave at Mt. Zion Historic Park in Aldie and the James Monroe Chapter, United States Daughters of 1812, which met at the Museum.

Mr. Harris discussed other successful programs, such as *From Monroe to McAuliffe: The Evolution of the Office of Governor of Virginia*, featuring former governor Gerald Baliles, as well as upcoming programming. A program being planned for the new year focuses on conservation of silver artifacts in the collection. The January reception will feature these newly conserved silver items and refreshments including hot chocolate made using a 19<sup>th</sup>-century recipe. It will also be a launch party for the latest volume of *The Papers of James Monroe*.

Mr. Harris gave an overview of the financial information included in his report, noting increases in admissions and store sales and stating that the outlook overall is positive. There has been growth in membership, including new members and upgrades in the membership categories of existing members. He pointed out that 100% of the Regents are Friends of the Museum. He also explained that an apparent decline in overall revenue was due in part to an extra fundraising push for the *James Monroe: Life and Legacy* symposium that inflated the revenue numbers for FY14. Mr. Harris observed that when compared to two years ago revenue is still on the increase. A question was raised about rentals and Mr. Harris stated that rental income is principally from weddings, though also some rentals for business meetings and UMW alumni reunion parties. The Museum has been reaching out through the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce and Fredericksburg Department of Parks and Recreation to promote use of the rental space.

The Museum's State appropriation budget cut of \$6,000 was discussed. Mr. Harris stated that the Museum will be able to adjust to the cut fairly well this year, in part by reducing currently budgeted guide hours. He noted, however, that next year may be more difficult if additional cuts are imposed. Mr. Harris discussed an admission rate increase of 20%, which would amount to an approximately \$1 increase in admission rates.

Mr. Harris stated that the programming schedule for 2015 will be shared around the first of the year, and that the new schedule will include the continuation of established programs, as well as some new events.

When asked about the one thing he would most like the Museum to have, Mr. Harris cited a venue that can host a program of more than 50 people and a gallery dedicated to regularly-changing exhibits. He noted that this desire would be addressed in more detail later in the meeting.

There was general discussion of conditions at other area museums. Mr. Harris shared that he has just become President of the Fredericksburg Museums Council and that block ticket sales are doing well. Mr. Walker mentioned that the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. will hold an event at the Museum on Sunday, October 26.

Mr. Thomas commended Mr. Harris for doing an excellent job and for his leadership, stating that he has made a real difference for the Museum. He presented a check for \$1,000 from

the James Monroe Memorial Foundation for the Museum's 2015 public programs. Mr. Thomas stated that the Foundation wants to be a continuing supporter of the Museum, and he encouraged others to be generous. He thanked Mr. McDaniel for his generous donation of a George Weedon letter and encouraged everyone to see it at the Museum. Mr. Thomas stated that the Foundation supports programs that make Monroe relevant in today's society, praising the event featuring Governor Baliles and the article in *White House History* as actions that help achieve that goal. He suggested that Dr. Dan Preston publish the information from his excellent presentation at the Baliles event in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* or the journal of the Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Society. Mr. Harris said that he would make the suggestion to Dr. Preston.

Mr. Thomas also encouraged the Board of Regents to start thinking about a symposium on the bicentennial of the Era of Good Feelings for 2016. He referenced a conversation he had recently on this topic with William Seale, former White House curator and editor of *White House History*.

Mr. Thomas introduced others present at the meeting: Lynda Allen, James Monroe Museum office manager, and two guests, W. Gregory Burkett and Alexander B. Rawls, both board members of the James Monroe Memorial Foundation. He noted that Mr. Rawls' grandmother, Mrs. Georgina Rawls, was a member of the Board of Regents some 45 years ago. Mrs. Taylor recalled recruiting Mrs. Rawls for the Board. Mr. Harris noted the presence of Dr. Richard Finkelstein, Dean of the UMW College of Arts and Sciences.

Mr. McSweeney moved to approve the Director's Report, seconded by Col. Buswell. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Old Business**

### **Report on Statue Reproduction Project (Monroe Park) – Mr. Harris**

Mr. Harris stated that at the April Board of Regents meeting he was asked to investigate the feasibility of reproducing a statue of James Monroe at Ash Lawn-Highland for placement in Richmond's Monroe Park. The project proposed using art students at UMW, the College of William and Mary, and/or Virginia Commonwealth University for making the replicas, with financial support from a Jessie Ball duPont Fund grant. Mr. Harris reviewed the results of his research that are embodied in a memo to the Board (attached to these minutes).

General discussion followed in which President Hurley was asked about the perspective of the president of the College of William & Mary, Mr. Taylor Reveley. [Ash Lawn-Highland is owned and operated by W&M.] Mr. Hurley said that Mr. Reveley told him that he was not enthusiastic about the idea, mainly due to the currently poor condition of Monroe Park.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Foundation saw the reproduction of the statue as a way to share Monroe's story and that they had hoped to place copies of the statue not only at Monroe Park, but also outside academic buildings named for James Monroe at UMW and W&M, and at the Monroe Birthplace in Westmoreland County.

Mr. Harris indicated that Ash Lawn-Highland executive director Sarah Bon-Harper is willing to cooperate on the project subject to approval by Mr. Reveley, but has misgivings about making multiple copies of the statue. Ms. Bon-Harper told Mr. Harris that conservation of the statue is planned, and that Ash Lawn-Highland is considering reproducing it as a merchandise item.

Research by Mr. Harris also found that undergraduate art students are not capable of making adequate copies, nor are suitable facilities available at UMW, W&M, or VCU, and that the services of a professional sculptor would be required. He also indicated that none of the universities under discussion are supportive of seeking a grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund for this project. As an alternative to a statue, Mr. Harris suggested placing an interpretive marker in Monroe Park which would be more informative and less costly product. Mrs. Taylor mentioned a plaque designed by Miles Duvall that had been intended for Hollywood Cemetery, but that was never used, that might be repurposed for Monroe Park.

Mr. Harris concluded his report on the statue project by noting that the planned renovation of Monroe Park is at a very preliminary stage, and that a large fundraising effort has yet to get underway. He will continue efforts to speak with personnel of the Monroe Park Conservancy, the nonprofit organization that is leasing the park from the City of Richmond. He cautioned that with a small staff and current and future budget cuts, this project could be more than the James Monroe Museum could sustain. Mr. McSweeney agreed with the assessment of the Monroe park renovation effort described by Mr. Harris, and also expressed concern about the burden that the statue project could put on the James Monroe Museum staff.

Mr. Thomas, who first proposed the statue for Monroe Park to the Board, stated that it was apparent that the project was not feasible at present, though could perhaps be accomplished through use of 3-D printing as that technology becomes more sophisticated.

## **New Business**

### **Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman – Mr. Thomas**

Mr. Thomas recognized Mr. Broadbent, who reminded the Board that the Bylaws describe a rotating schedule of Chairman and Vice Chairman between the Foundation and UMW from year to year. In odd-numbered fiscal years a representative from the Foundation is chairman with a vice chairman from UMW. In even-numbered fiscal years the offices are reversed. Because the resumption of Board meetings in 2011 came in mid-cycle, the Board had agreed to an exception that allows the current Chairman and Vice Chairman to hold their offices for two consecutive years, in order put the Board back on a regular rotation.

Mr. Broadbent moved to reelect Mr. Thomas as Chairman and Mrs. Corbin as Vice Chairman, seconded by Dr. Blakemore. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consideration of Donation of James Monroe/Charles Everett Documents by Dr. Graham Everett. – Mr. Harris**

Mr. Harris described the recently received letters: one written by James Monroe and one franked by him, and one written by James Monroe, Jr. They are all related to Dr. Charles Everett, James Monroe's physician. The letters come from Dr. Graham Everett, a direct descendant of Charles Everett, and were previously unknown by the Papers of James Monroe staff. Mr. Harris asked the Board of Regents to recommend approval of the donation by the UMW Board of Visitors.

Mr. McSweeney moved that the donation be approved, seconded by Mrs. Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consideration of Artifact Loan Request from the National First Ladies Library–Mr. Harris**  
Mr. Harris stated that a loan from the Museum's collection has been requested for the "Forgotten First Ladies" exhibit at the National First Ladies Library in Canton, Ohio. James Monroe Museum curator Jarod Kearney recommends loaning a brooch and comb that belonged to Elizabeth Monroe. The loan would be from January through September of 2015.

Mr. Lucier inquired as to whether the National First Ladies Library meets professional museum standards. Mr. Harris replied that the Library is a US Park Service property and that the institution's AAM Standard Facilities Report verifies that it is a suitable borrower.

Mr. Lucier moved to recommend approval of the loan by the UMW Board of Visitors, seconded by Col. Buswell. The motion passed unanimously.

**Update from the Rector,-Mrs. Cuellar**

Mrs. Cuellar gave a brief update on recent meetings she attended at the state capitol, saying that she was proud to be there because everyone spoke so highly of President Hurley and UMW. Mr. Thomas suggested that an update from the Rector be added to future agendas for Board of Regents meetings. There was general agreement to this suggestion.

**Presentation Concerning the James Monroe Museum and Seacobeck Hall – Mr. Harris**

Mr. Harris shared with the Board a PowerPoint presentation he is developing that proposes using part of Seacobeck Hall as a campus facility for the James Monroe Presidential Center. The Center is a concept for merging the Museum and the Papers of James Monroe into a single administrative unit that was previously authorized by the UMW Board of Visitors but not yet implemented. Use of a portion of Seacobeck Hall (as part of the building's future renovation) would provide the Museum with needed space for large programs and changing exhibits; allow the Museum's collection of 10,000+ books to be available to students and scholars; and return the offices of the Papers to the UMW main campus.

There was much discussion following the presentation. President Hurley was asked about funding for the Seacobeck renovation. He stated that the project is "in the queue" of the Commonwealth's six-year capital funding plan for UMW. Preliminary review of the renovation shows that cost is less of an issue than determining potential uses of the space, and there are parking concerns to be addressed. Seacobeck will continue to house a faculty/staff dining room, and space could be allocated for a mid-sized auditorium and art studios. President Hurley has

tasked UMW Provost Dr. Jonathan Levin with formulating a recommendation on future use of Seacobeck Hall.

Mr. Harris stated that acquiring space in Seacobeck Hall would not change the configuration of the Museum at 908 Charles Street, which is a pillar of Fredericksburg's downtown attractions. Use of Seacobeck would expand the resources of the Museum and the Papers through the Presidential Center and offer UMW students greater opportunities for practical experience in museum operations.

Mrs. Taylor shared her enthusiasm for the idea, commending Mr. Harris on the concept and stating that she likes the idea of keeping the Museum as it is, but that this is the perfect solution for increasing awareness of James Monroe's legacy.

There was general discussion regarding how use of Seacobeck Hall could benefit students majoring in history and historic preservation, and specifically students in the interdisciplinary museum studies minor. Students would assist in artifact selection and exhibit fabrication, providing them with practical, real world experience that will be helpful in securing employment after graduation. Mr. Hurley mentioned the idea of a Department of Historic Preservation conservation lab as a potential use for part of the space at Seacobeck. Mr. Harris noted that such a lab was part of the original Presidential Center concept.

A discussion followed concerning what the Board of Regents could do to express their support for the proposal presented by Mr. Harris to the UMW Board of Visitors, and to urge in the strongest possible terms the consideration of this concept as presented. Mr. Harris and President Hurley said that the Board's recommendation should be made to the Provost. Mr. McSweeney moved that the Board of Regents commend the proposal to the Provost with its endorsement, seconded by Mr. Broadbent. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Taylor moved that the minutes reflect the Board's appreciation to the Chairman for his leadership, seconded by Mr. McSweeney. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment-** Mr. Thomas

With no further business to come before the Board of Regents, Mr. Thomas adjourned the meeting at 1:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Col. Arthur Buswell, Secretary

Clerical support by Lynda Allen, Officer Manager, James Monroe Museum