

The Falmouth Historical Society

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Zoom Meeting—June 6, 2023

The meeting came to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were board members Betsy Whitcomb, Carol Kauffman, David Farnham, Ron Scorsone, Sally Farneth, and Sue Farnham.

President's Remarks

David observed that our busy season is off to a good start.

Secretary's Report

Minutes. The May minutes were approved online.

Membership. Our active membership is 103.

Treasurer's Report

Finances. Excluding \$7,500 reserved for the scholarship, the Society has a balance of \$3,595 in its operating accounts and \$23,002 invested with Maine Community Foundation. Our projected income for the remaining weeks of our fiscal year is \$350, projected expenses are \$305, and accounts/tax payable is \$190. This leaves an estimated end-of-year balance of \$3,450. Our actual expenses are \$357 over budget due to inflation. Our unrestricted net current assets (excluding long-term assets) have declined by \$518 this fiscal year.

Last month's report presented a gloomy picture with one of our financial metrics (unrestricted net current assets) having slid well into the red. Our financial picture was expected to improve this month and it did.

The state migrated to a new online portal for submitting our sales taxes (for things we sell). The new portal also included our new sales tax exemption certificate (for things we buy, not including merchandise or material intended for sale). There are new rules for exempt purchases: when not using a Society check or credit card, a purchase order is required. A purchase order can be created and emailed to you in a few minutes.

Upcoming work for the treasurer includes the fiscal year 2024 budget at the July board meeting, and the tax year 2022 filing to the IRS after our fiscal year 2023 books are closed at the end of June. Due to last year's revaluation, we are switching from Form 990EZ to the full 990. This will require creating a new spreadsheet to assemble the data for the filing.

Committee Reports

Programs. Our Society has been busy.

There was the Civil War book talk co-sponsored with Falmouth Memorial Library. It was well-attended—about thirty people. David said a few words at the beginning and some people had questions after the talk.

We carried our banner in the Falmouth Memorial Day Parade (behind the Town Council and before the ambulance). We need to arrange for a vehicle—perhaps an old-timey car—to carry some of our older members in future parades; that requires making arrangements well in advance.

Rich presented the Marion Perkins Memorial Scholarship for 2023 to Francesca Pound at the Falmouth High School awards ceremony. Francesca will attend the University of Massachusetts this fall where she plans to major in business. She exemplifies the hard work, leadership, and kindness for which Marion Perkins was so highly regarded.

The scholarships are presented in ascending order of significance; the Perkins Scholarship was the next to last (and was followed by recognition of admission to a military academy). This year's award is \$5,000 split into two installments: \$2,500 now, and the other half next June.

The school trip by Falmouth Elementary second graders went very well. There were seven classes with about 133 students accompanied by seven teachers and at least seven other adults. There were four groups (three of two classes and one with the remaining class) spread across two days. We had four stations with a docent at each:

- Betsy Whitcomb in the Barn
- Diane Moore under tent
- Polly Burke in Museum office
- Sally Farneth in Museum research area

It took a lot of coordination and preparation to make the visits flow so smoothly. Breaking the groups into four sections helped. It was agreed that more time (about ten minutes) is needed for each station next year. It would be helpful if the students wore name tags. We also should have “postcards” to hand to the students as they depart.

Our next public event is our table outside the polls on Election Day. While turnout is expected to be light, elections are still our best opportunity to connect with our community.

There were questions about self-guided tours of Falmouth. We need to make some minor changes. David proposed an addition: highlighting the five villages of Falmouth. This was done in the Tercentennial displays. Interest in the villages is reflected in questions we receive from the community. He suggested that as the tour passes through each village, the guide could spotlight the buildings providing the social and business pillars of a small New England village (school, church, post office, general store, community hall, rail stations, etc.). Most of the buildings are still present, even if not used for the original purpose. Carol added that we could take this a step further by including more stories about the people of Falmouth.

Carol is coordinating with Falmouth Community Programs to schedule bus tours for mid-October. The plan is to do the tour of the western side in fall, and the eastern side in spring.

A town event similar to “Falmouth Old Home Days” is being planned for August 26th. We will ask to have a table at this event.

There was a brief discussion about the Cumberland Fair in September. It is a heavy lift for us and fewer than 10% of the people passing our table are from Falmouth. The board agreed it is worth the effort. Having the Cumberland and Falmouth Historical Societies in the Exhibition Hall elevates the visibility of town historical societies in the broader community. We welcome anyone who wants to spend a few hours with us at the FHS table.

Falmouth High School has requested assistance with development of a new course for this fall: “If This Land Could Talk.” It will be an interdisciplinary class exploring how residents sustained themselves using the natural resources in the area over the centuries. The students will conduct research and create podcasts

telling the stories. We are familiar with resources the students can use to build their narratives. We will meet with the teachers at the Museum on June 20th.

Museum Operation & Exhibits. May 20th was spring cleaning day at the Museum and Barn. Items stowed for winter were unpacked. Lumber and other items were removed from the front of the Barn. Some rearranging in the Museum was done to make room for the school groups. Thanks to all who helped get everything ready for reopening.

The Museum and Barn opened on June 3rd to take advantage of the Lions Club Sale just down Woods Road. The weather was miserable. We had no visitors.

On our first Tuesday of the season with regular public hours, we had six visitors, all of whom came with questions and spent more than an hour at the Museum. We also had a telephone call seeking help planning a “genealogical tourism” visit later this month. This was another case of a family descended from early English settlers of Colonial Falmouth. We pointed them to the Stroudwater neighborhood of Portland.

Collections. Ron has become more adept at using Photoshop and Lightroom to improve photographs of artifacts. He is also coming across artifacts that predate the ledgers.

A small box of children’s clothing donated to the Lions Club made its way to us. After some research, we discovered that the clothing was donated by a woman now living in Cumberland. The items have no direct connection to Falmouth but include period items relevant to our educational program.

Local History. We responded to five queries during the past month. We are still working on a backlog of five more queries.

For Memorial Day, we published a retrospective article on the website telling the story of Joseph Hodsdon of Falmouth who served with the 17th Maine during the Civil War and was killed in action at Gettysburg.

Debi Curry of the Maine Old Cemeteries Association and Gray Historical Society will be collaborating with Betsy and Sally on a project to build an authoritative list of graveyards in Falmouth. Our files list 49 (and we know of at least one missing), MOCA lists 32, the Town of Falmouth lists 24, and Find-a-Grave lists 23. The goal is to build a comprehensive list including graveyards appearing in older records

that were relocated. Debi, Betsy and Sally had their first meeting at the Museum today.

Communications. It is time to begin assembling the summer newsletter.

- Identify a full-page local history item to feature.
- Point to the retrospective item on our website.
- Highlight acquisition of the Marge Merrill Devine Collection.
- Summarize recent and upcoming activities.

On the website, the color scheme was changed so that hyperlinks (text—when clicked on—takes you to another web page or site) are now blue instead of orange, thus improving legibility.

Merchandise. The second run of sixteen pairs of the new cookbooks is pending (and needs to be done before Election Day).

Museum Buildings & Grounds. The board expressed its appreciation to Ron, Rich, Sue, and John Henson for their hard work. The basement is dry. The utilities are working. The grounds look good. John removed twenty knotweed plants that had been growing by the barn.

Technology. Nothing significant to report.

Development. We received Ron Perkins' donation for 2023. It included a \$2,500 grant for the Marion Perkins Memorial Scholarship which is now fully funded for academic year 2024. It also included a general donation of \$500 for our fiscal year 2024 general fund, plus \$500 for 2023 that he intended to contribute last year. We deeply appreciate the support from the Perkins family.

New Business

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Farnham, Secretary