

The Falmouth Historical Society

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Zoom Meeting—February 7, 2023

The meeting came to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were, David Farnham, Rich Meserve, Ron Scorsone, Sally Farneth, Sue Farnham, and Wendy Morrissette.

President's Remarks

David was pleased that the annual meeting went smoothly (except for the trouble with after-hours admission to Town Hall).

The annual meeting capped off a busy and productive year for the Society. It is our one opportunity each year to toot our own horn and share our accomplishments with the community. We told the story of a fully functional historical society doing the things our townspeople expect us to do. The other message was that we are limited by available resources—volunteers and financial. We need more to do more.

David thanked everyone for all the good work over the past year that gave us something to present at the annual meeting, along with special thanks to those who took up the microphone or drove the computer for the presentations.

Goals and Objectives

David reminded the Board that this was our first meeting following the annual meeting. As prescribed by Article VIII of our Bylaws, this is the organizational and planning meeting during which goals are presented for approval. We revise our goals on a three-year cycle. This is also on the checklists used by prospective philanthropists.

David then presented the draft goals for 2023-2025. Many are carried from the previous list. Some of the previous goals or objectives were dropped for having been completed, overtaken by events (as in the case of the Maine Bicentennial), or lack of relevance. New and updated goals were drawn from discussions at board meetings. A few goals had been stalled due to dependency upon completion of other goals; those prerequisites have been satisfied and work can now resume on the deferred items.

Wendy suggested that there be a goal for thematic exhibits as this would draw more visitors to the Museum. Ron seconded the idea suggesting that it such an exhibit could easily be adapted as an online virtual exhibit.

David said that thematic exhibits had been a goal since 2017 but there had been no forward movement, so it had been deleted from the draft. Erin provided the impetus, but the effort stalled after she stepped back. He expressed reservations about establishing aspirational goals in the absence of determination and resources to follow through. He later admitted he was wrong and thematic exhibits were restored.

Rich suggested that we hand out postcards to students on class trips to the Museum to share what they learned with their parents. Sally, Rich, and Wendy will follow up on this.

The Board voted unanimously to accept the goals.

Secretary's Report

Minutes. The minutes for the January board and annual meetings were reviewed online.

Membership. Our active membership is 105, the same as last month. There was one death (Howard Reiche), and a duplicate family member was deleted. The losses were offset by gains in active members.

David presented proposed changes to the current membership dues and corporate sponsorship levels. We saw that Cumberland Historical now allows members at the lower tiers to renew for five years with a 20% discount. Cumberland's annual dues are the same as ours. He proposed that we follow suit. The current tiers of corporate sponsors are complicated. He proposed that we go with five simple tiers; sponsors who fund projects or events would receive recognition for those as well.

The new tiers were approved.

Treasurer's Report

We currently file our Maine sales tax annually. Our return for 2022 has been filed and the tax paid.

The Society's bookkeeping has been brought into compliance with accounting standards for nonprofits.

When we switched from QuickBooks for Desktop to the lowest tier of QuickBooks Online in 2016, accounts not supported at that tier were frozen. When we upgraded to QuickBooks Advanced in 2020, the accounts reappeared without any activity in the intervening years. These accounts do not affect our day-to-day bookkeeping, but a general housecleaning of legacy accounts is in order.

Accounting standards and the IRS require that we track expenses by program. Today we do this manually. As we begin holding more events, using QuickBooks' class-tracking feature will do this automatically. These two actions are included in the new goals and objectives.

As we improve our compliance with accounting standards, the treasurer's report has grown longer. Financial oversight is an important role of the Board but reviewing nine pages of detailed financial reports at every meeting has become tedious. Beginning with the meeting, the financial report will be boiled down to a single page summary with the metrics the treasurer believes are important. The nine pages of detailed charts will be appended as supplement.

Finances. Not including \$5,000 for the scholarship, the Society has a balance of \$5,164 in its operating accounts and \$22,099 with Maine Community Foundation. Our operating accounts contain 231 days of cash. Our projected income is \$1,450, projected expenses are \$5,207, and accounts/tax payable is \$586. This leaves an estimated end of year balance of \$820. Our actual expenses are \$68 under budget. Our net current assets (excluding long-term assets) increased by \$1,088.

Committee Reports

Programs. No events or activities are scheduled. As soon as Carol is back on her feet, she will work with Falmouth Community Programs to schedule guided tours. The guides need to be updated to fix some minor errors and reflect feedback from members.

Museum Operation & Exhibits. The Museum and Barn are closed for winter.

Collections. Ron reported that integrating the inventory will be a big job. A review of the photographs turned up some issues PhotoShop won't fix; those items will need to be re-imaged.

Local History. We responded to seven queries during the past month. There were no additions to reference materials on the website.

Communications. January was the first time we used a full range of tools to communicate with the community. David described our messaging as "firing a rolling broadside." This included a postal mailing before the meeting, continuous updates to three website pages before and after the meeting, three email blasts, and two Facebook posts. We reached 89 people via the mailing, 64 via the web, 77 via email, and 307 via Facebook. This involved creating or modifying nine online documents, and creating ten more which were uploaded to the web. This takes volunteer time. With current resources, we can do this about four times per year.

The "broadside" accomplished its goal. We reached the membership and many others in the community. Our messages had style and substance. They conveyed competence and credibility. This is what our members expect.

Merchandise. Suzanne reported that she completed a final review of the "Sweets" volume of the cookbook. As soon as the corrections are made, we'll publish a second batch of 16 pairs.

Mail order has been added to the online bookstore with delivery to Maine and New Hampshire only. Our books and Falmouth-themed merchandise are now available at the Museum (during summer), at the FHS table for public events, at Town Hall (in the new display case), and online through the Website.

Museum Buildings & Grounds. Ron reported that the sump did not overflow during the period of heavy rain. The new sump sensor reported that the pump ran continuously for several days to handle the influx.

He is getting the failed pump ready for shipment back to the vendor for repair or replacement. That will give us a backup or, in extreme cases, a secondary pump. We can also improve performance by installing a larger diameter evacuation hose, but nobody has that size in stock due to supply chain issues.

Ron mentioned that the Boy Scouts can paint the hallways and research room this spring. This wouldn't be as complicated as the office because there are no cabinets. It would be good if they could paint the Museum doors and trim while they are at it.

Technology. Nothing significant to report.

Development. We received another \$1,250 from the Perkins family. This is the final donation for their pledge in 2022. The scholarship for 2023 is fully funded.

There was a short discussion about obtaining a grant for the larger improvements needed.

New Business

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Farnham, Secretary