

The Falmouth Historical Society

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Zoom Meeting—April 4, 2023

The meeting came to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were board members Betsy Whitcomb, David Farnham, Ron Scorsone, Sally Farneth, Sue Farnham. Also present was society member John Horton.

President's Remarks

David observed that our busy season resumes next month. After the surge of activity from last year that extended into February, he was ready for a break.

The Museum should be in good shape for re-opening. He asked the board to think about any work that needs to be done this season as well as anything we need to purchase.

Secretary's Report

Minutes. The March minutes were approved online.

Membership. Our active membership is 103. We added two new members last month. Now that we are sending out quarterly renewal notices, the pool of members pending renewal has shrunk.

Treasurer's Report

Finances. Excluding \$7,500 reserved for the scholarship, the Society has a balance of \$3,834 in its operating accounts and \$22,041 invested with Maine Community Foundation. Our operating accounts contain 262 days of cash. Our projected income is \$1,870, projected expenses are \$3,160, and accounts/tax payable is \$450. This leaves an estimated end of year balance of \$2,094. Our actual expenses are \$272 under budget due to electricity usage. (Ron has the thermostat set just high enough to keep the temperature in the basement above freezing.) Our net current assets (excluding long-term assets) have declined by \$241 this fiscal year.

Work on the fiscal year 23-24 budget will begin next month. Board members were asked to identify any potential new or changed expenses.

Preparation of IRS filing for tax year 22-23 (which ends June 30th) will be more involved. Our modest income allows us to file a “postcard” (Form 990N) return to the IRS—except for the years when income from fundraising and grants pushed us above the threshold for the postcard. Instead, we have been filing a Form 990EZ (four pages plus fifteen pages of supplementary schedules). The so-called “EZ” return reports income over five years so we have continued to prepare and submit the longer form during years in which we could have gotten by with the postcard. This avoids an administrative nightmare in the years when our income exceeds the limit for the postcard. Revaluation pushed our assets above another threshold, so our next submission will be a “full” Form 990 (twelve-page return plus the same fifteen pages of supplementary schedules).

We had streamlined preparation of the EZ return using an Excel spreadsheet. We would transcribe data from QuickBooks into the spreadsheet. Next, we would transcribe data from the spreadsheet into an online tax return. Preparing and filing our return took only a few hours. This year we must create a new spreadsheet incorporating the additional information required by the full return.

Most small historical societies like ours get by with the postcard return. What makes us different is the need for recurring capital improvement programs. Many of our peers are housed in town buildings and are not faced with operating and capital expenses that come with “home ownership.”

If preparation of a full 990 becomes too difficult, we can revert to the postcard 990N, but must take care to keep our gross income from dues, donations, grants, investments, and sales under the maximum allowed (currently \$50,000).

Committee Reports

Programs. Work on the pre-colonial map for Falmouth Schools continues. Planning is underway for the field trip by students from Falmouth Elementary.

Museum Operation & Exhibits. The Museum and Barn will re-open in May.

Collections. Ron reported that we have subscribed to the Adobe Creative Cloud Photography Plan. He is learning how to remove extraneous features from photographs of artifacts.

Habitat for Humanity in Kennebunk received a donated diorama of Colonial Falmouth on the eve of the Revolution. It was created in 1937 by students at

Butler Grammar in Portland. The question is: Which institution is best equipped to “adopt” this large (42x50”) artifact? A long discussion ensued. We would love to have it, but we do not have room in the Museum for display. David will check with Maine Historical, Osher, and Portland Public Library. If they can’t take it, we will place it in storage for now.

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

Two queries required substantial research.

- Information on Uriah Grant, born 1822 at Falmouth, Maine. This was a rare instance in which our “history detectives” struck out. We turned over every stone and found nothing. We shared what we did find—including a copy of a 42-page set of documents from the Museum. Analysis of the Grants of Falmouth suggests Uriah may have descended from Grants who were Scottish prisoners of war transported to Massachusetts Bay Colony in the mid-17th century. The requestor appreciated all our work.
- Information about a cavalry saber donated to Falmouth Memorial Library by the Iverson family. This meant reconstructing the military record for Iver Iverson who served in the army of occupation in Cuba following the Spanish-American War. This comprised the third and final part of a compelling story that includes a Falmouth landmark (the Memorial Library) and a Falmouth family (Iversons). We will probably feature this at next January’s annual meeting.

Communications. Assembly of the spring newsletter is underway. Articles will include:

- Story of the mystery grave in Falmouth Community Park (piggybacking on the Sanford mystery).
- Marion Perkins Memorial Scholarship.
- January’s annual meeting.
- Re-opening of the Museum.

The day after the board meeting, we were contacted by Falmouth Memorial Library and asked if we would co-sponsor a presentation by the author of a book about the Civil War. Once arrangements are confirmed, we’ll include an announcement in the newsletter.

Merchandise. The second run of sixteen pairs of the new cookbooks is pending.

Museum Buildings & Grounds. Ron reported that the failed sump pump was returned to the manufacturer. They have agreed to cover the costs of its replacement and dealing with the flooded basement. Ron also plans to repair the older original pump, if possible.

Internet service at the Museum was out for two weeks at the beginning of March. Spectrum replaced the subscriber equipment and service was restored.

Ron identified a humidifier that should meet our requirements for use in the basement. The cost is \$236. The board agreed that we should proceed.

The driveway is sagging where Public Works ran the new sewer line. There was a brief discussion about how we might obtain millings or reclaim to improve the surface.

Technology. Nothing significant to report.

Development. Drafting of the 2022 annual report continues.

David attended a class on fundraising sponsored by Maine Association for Nonprofits. He later attended another presentation on newsletters by the same speaker. Both were packed with helpful tips for small nonprofits like ours.

New Business

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

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Farnham, Secretary