

The Falmouth Historical Society  
Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Zoom Meeting—June 2, 2020

The meeting came to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Betsy Whitcomb, Ron Scorsone, Sally Farneth, David Farnham, and Sue Farnham.

**Secretary's Report**

Minutes. The minutes for the May meeting were approved online and posted on the Society website.

Membership. Membership increased by one but seven members slid into the “pending renewal” category. The renewal letters are waiting for the newsletter, which is waiting for a decision on reopening, which was reached at this meeting.

**Treasurer's Report**

Finances. The Society has a balance of \$7,226 in its cash accounts and \$13,498 with the Foundation. The \$5,000 withdrawal from the Foundation approved at the May board meeting was deposited; we hope it will last until July 2021.

As of May 30<sup>th</sup>, we are running \$432 over budget for our fiscal year which ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. We hope to finish the year within \$200 of budget.

Administration. Work continues on the handbook for financial and membership administration. Now that our business functions are conducted online, the handbook will consist largely of “screen shots” showing our volunteer administrators how to perform—step by step—the most common tasks.

**Committee Reports**

Programs. Nothing to report this month.

Museum Operation & Exhibits. David, as president of the Society, reviewed the orders and guidance governing public access to the Museum. The state order closing the Museum was lifted June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Museum & Barn are considered “public and community buildings.”

Just because we can reopen doesn't mean we should. The state guidance recommends that we conduct our activities online to the fullest extent possible.

Other historical societies are not in a rush to reopen to the public. Like us, they are doing what is necessary to keep the lights on. While most of their work is being done remotely, volunteers must occasionally visit their buildings to access collections.

Our Museum has now been closed for seven months—first for winter and now for the pandemic. The Museum is shut down but the Society continues to operate online. We respond to requests from the community. We can retrieve material from the collections as needed. Only our exhibits are inaccessible to the public.

There are two obstacles to reopening the Museum:

- Coronavirus puts our volunteers and visitors at risk. Many are in higher risk categories—it's just the nature of town historical societies.
- Compliance with state guidelines is a heavy lift for a small volunteer organization. Our Museum should conform with the guidance for both museums and libraries. The guidelines and supporting material are posted on the [Society website](#).

David proposed moving forward slowly and with caution. The safety of our volunteers and visitors comes first. We will open the Museum to the public only when we are confident it can be done safely. This means waiting until the experts tell us the risk is low, our volunteers and buildings are ready under the new rules, and then we will schedule visits “by appointment” to ensure compliance.

We will begin preparing to reopen the Museum to the public. This includes developing a formal plan, obtaining the necessary supplies, grooming our buildings, and training volunteers.

Reopening will not happen prior to September 2020 and—because we will shut down for winter in November—possibly not until May 2021.

Until then, we will continue doing the work of the Society online. Our collections will be accessible to the community—online if possible. We will explore options for public access to our collections at locations equipped to deal with visitors such

as Falmouth Memorial Library. In exceptional cases, we can bring a visitor into the Museum as we do with people performing maintenance.

David called for a vote on the proposed strategy. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the strategy outlined by the president of the Society. David added that he would like to have a member of the board step forward to lead the planning effort.

#### Collections.

*Catalog.* Ron has been loading donors into PastPerfect along with others involved in managing our collections. He has also begun defining roles and setting security policies.

#### Local History.

Nothing to report this month.

#### Communications.

*Newsletter & Social Media.* Nothing to report this month.

#### Merchandise.

*Cookbook.* The committee met twice in May and is slowly closing in on the list of recipes. We are looking to broaden the appeal with some old and some new. We'll include traditional as well as modern locavore cuisine. We want to highlight ties to Falmouth, Casco Bay, and Maine.

*Falmouth-themed merchandise.* David reviewed the products suggested by BGA. A Falmouth-themed tote bag would be a good place to start. He sent pictures and pricing for different options to the board for consideration. He'd like to have the board decide on a product at the July meeting.

#### Museum Buildings & Grounds.

*Museum Basement.* The new sump pump is chugging along. Ron is seeking advice from experts about replacing the drainpipe with something sturdier.

*Woods.* Ron is following up with the Lions Club on harvesting the downed trees.

*Spring Cleaning.* We'll hold off on spring cleaning until we have a firm date for reopening.

Technology.

Nothing to report this month.

**General Topics**

There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Farnham  
Secretary