



## FOR THE RECORD

**Oklahoma Historical Society  
Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting  
*Wednesday, January 28, 2015***

### **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society was called to order by President Bill Corbett at 1.30 p.m., January 28, 2015, in the Dr LeRoy H. Fischer Boardroom, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

### **Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag**

### **Roll Call**

Members present: Jack Baker, Mickey Clagg, Bill Corbett, Betty Crow, Frederick Drummond, Cheryl Evans, Deena Fisher, Billie Fogarty, Karen Keith, Leonard Logan, Guy Logsdon, Patricia Loughlin, Sherry Muchmore, Shirley Nero, William Settle, Donna Sharpe, Kenneth Sivard, Lewis Stiles, Charles Tate, Barbara Thompson, and James Waldo.

Emeritus members present: Thalia Eddleman and Dan Lawrence.

Members excused. Sherry Beasley, Martha Lippert, John Mabrey, and Sandra Olson.

### **Presentation of Service Pin**

Dr Blackburn presented Laura Martin, deputy director of the Research Division, a twenty-five-year service pin.

### **Echoes of History**

Dr Blackburn departed from the normal echoes format of reading from past historical society board minutes. Instead he gave a historical overview of the finances of the agency Dr Blackburn emphasized the public/private nature of the OHS business model, stating that Title 53 is a contract between the public and private sides of the historical so-

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ciety In 1989, when Dr Blackburn became deputy director and began working closely with the budget, each museum and site had its own banking and checking account. There was no oversight or control. To rectify the situation, a ledger book was used for accounting purposes for the whole agency Dr Blackburn showed the board members one of the original ledgers that still are housed in the Finance Department. Dr Blackburn concluded by stating how advanced the OHS financial tracking system is today and how far the agency has come in terms of transparency, control, and management.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Jack Baker moved to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2014, Quarterly Board Meeting. Seconded by Cheryl Evans, the motion carried.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Deena Fisher reported that the OHS has \$1,941,759.19 in cash at the State Treasurer's Office. The OHS has \$200,556.94 invested in the Salomon Smith Barney account. This was originally a \$150,000 investment. The OHS has \$157,695.17 invested in Federated with an original investment of \$150,000. However, there are monthly drawdowns of \$750 per month from that account. The OHS has \$2,347,988.00 invested at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation Endowment Fund. The total cash and invested funds of the OHS amount to \$4,647,999.30.

### **Presentation of David Pendleton Oakerhater's Diaries**

Charles Tate and Bill Welge introduced family members of David Pendleton Oakerhater who made the generous donation of Oakerhater's diaries to the OHS. Mr Welge stated that he believes this donation to be one of the most important recent additions to the OHS archives collection.

### **Executive Director's Report**

**Review of budget projections and expenditures.** Dr Blackburn reviewed the FY 15 actual expenditures to date with the board. He stated that this is not an accounting sheet but a management overview of what OHS staff project will be spent. Every month those funds are tracked, and OHS staff administrators report to the board if adjustments are needed.

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**Consideration of a response to legislative questions about budget cuts or other changes in funding.** Dr Blackburn told the board members that he will be attending a legislative budget hearing the following day. Typically, agency representatives get twenty minutes for their respective hearings. It is important to be consistent in how the OHS deals with a budget crisis. There may be a revenue shortfall this year. There is also a possibility of a 4 percent budget cut for the next fiscal year. Dr Blackburn stated that when looking at places to cut funds, the OHS must balance short-term and long-term goals, geographical reach, services, and political support. The OHS state appropriation is \$2.5 million less than in 2007. The reality is that the OHS has utilized the sales tax revenue to make up \$1.2 million of that \$2.5 million cut. While OHS-generated revenue continues to increase each year, it is not enough to make up the gap of more than \$1 million. Since 2008 only one budget cut has affected the Museums and Sites Division. Each museum and site now raises 17 percent of its operating budget. Every other budget cut in the past few years has been made at the History Center. Dr Blackburn recommended to the board that cuts made for next year should focus on the Museums and Sites Division. The maintenance budget for that division needs to be left intact, but alternative saving options such as affiliate status, reduced hours of operation, and transfer of ownership all will need to be considered as possible saving opportunities. The last resort in the face of a significant budget cut would be to close facilities. The proposed format to prioritize where to make cuts will be made by looking at the priority ranking list, geography, savings, and the ability for the site to generate revenue.

Lewis Stiles moved to approve a position that in the event of a budget cut, those cuts primarily be made to the Museums and Sites Division. Seconded by Guy Logsdon, the motion carried.

**Review of communication plan to promote the Grants-in-Aid Program and the OKPOP** Dr Blackburn stated that in July the board voted to approve the Grants-in-Aid Program and the OKPOP as the two top legislative requests for 2015. Dr Blackburn reviewed the language that was filed by Senator Ron Justice for the Grants-in-Aid Program—now titled Senate Bill 297. The bill is not attempting to seek funding this year; it only is seeking authorization for the program. Kathy Dickson and her staff in the Museums and Sites Division have completed a survey of possible eligible organizations throughout the state. The number is more than five hundred and is in both list format and has been placed on a geographic map. The hope is for this program to help rural organizations.

The sales pitch for OKPOP has been simplified this year. Thanks to the George Kaiser Family Foundation and its generous support, the OKPOP can go forward into this legislative session with the phrase that no new state appropriated money is needed for the OKPOP. The OHS will have bond payments for the History Center retired by September 2018 that will allow the money currently in the OHS base appropriation to go toward the payment of the OKPOP bond issue. The only new money needed would be bridge funding until August 2018. The OHS has firm pledges from Tulsa that will cover the bridge funding for the OKPOP. Further, the OKPOP will ask for no new appropriated funds due to a business plan that will cover all operating costs.

Following Dr. Blackburn's report, Jeff Moore, OKPOP project manager, announced several upcoming projects. A vinyl record of previously unreleased, aluminum-based acetate masters of Bob Wills's music will be released by the OKPOP. The recordings were digitized through a grant from the Grammy Foundation and then were digitally enhanced and restored by artist Steve Ripley. There will be a limited release of the vinyl record and the songs also will be available for purchase on compact disc and digital format. Mr. Moore also told the board about an upcoming temporary exhibit on Patti Page to be featured at the Pioneer Woman Museum, the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, the Route 66 Museum, and the Claremore Historical Society.

**Report on staff review of the OHS Strategic Plan.** Tim Zwink gave an overview of the review completed by division heads on the major elements of the Strategic Plan to date. As a result of that review, staff consensus was that the major current elements of the OHS Strategic Plan still fit the needs of the agency and that no changes need to be made. During that meeting the group also discussed OHS information technology needs and issues, entrepreneurial opportunities, and the proposed Grants-in-Aid Program. The next step in the planning process will be to update the Strategic Plan for the 2016 fiscal year. The tentative schedule is to update the divisional objectives and action plans by February and to send the draft out to the board by March. The document will then be ready for board consideration at the April meeting.

**Consideration of the Priority Ranking of OHS Museums and Historic Sites.** Dr. Blackburn explained that each year members of the Museums and Sites Division get together and formulate a priority ranking list of the OHS museums and sites. This is the OHS's best effort at an evaluation. Each year, due to factors such as programming, repairs (or lack thereof), and revenue, museums and sites move up or down on the list. For example, the Museum of the Western Prairie

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increased its ranking this year because it renovated its exhibits with funds raised through local support. However, the Frank Phillips Home dropped because its physical condition is getting worse. The boiler is failing and there are structural problems. Additionally, there have not been any updates to the interpretive exhibits in fifteen years. This year the priority ranking list is particularly important because of the possibility of budget cuts. Dr Blackburn stated that the priority ranking will not be the sole factor in deciding on cuts for museums and sites, but it is an important tool in that process.

Jim Waldo moved to approve the priority ranking and the continued use of the ranking system as a means of assessing OHS museums and sites. Seconded by Karen Keith, the motion carried.

**Report on Civil War Sesquicentennial Projects.** Kathy Dickson, director of the Museums and Sites Division, spoke about the Civil War Sesquicentennial projects. Ms. Dickson stated that the OHS has been active in the celebrations with a 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary reenactment of the Battle of Honey Springs, lots of merchandise that has been available for purchase, and visitor center construction projects for both Honey Springs and Fort Towson.

### Committee Reports

**Research Committee.** *Demonstration of improved online access to OHS photo and newspaper collections.* Bille Fogarty stated that online access to OHS archives on the Gateway to Oklahoma History has reached nearly one million items. The online program is free and searchable. While the program began as a means of searching and viewing historic newspapers, the OHS has expanded the site to include other media such as photographs. There have been 337,979 images scanned from the OPUBCO Collection, and of those, 235,328 have been placed on the Gateway

*Consideration of new strategy to preserve and digitize film and tape collection.* No action was taken.

**Oklahoma Museum of History** *Report on efforts to improve quality and enhance revenue through the museum store, events, and café.* Barbara Thompson asked Dan Provo, director of the History Center, to give a presentation on the generated revenue of the store, events, and café. Approximately \$655,169 is brought in each year through admission, events, and the museum store.

**Annual Meeting.** *Plans for the Annual Meeting and Conference.* Mr Tate reminded board members that the OHS Annual Conference will be held in Sulphur at the Artesian Hotel. The Chickasaw Nation

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has been extremely generous and welcoming and will be helping to fund parts of the conference.

### **Executive Session to Evaluate Executive Director**

Leonard Logan moved to go into Executive Session under 25 O.S. 2001 § 307(B)(1) to discuss the Evaluation Committee's Evaluation Summary of the Performance of the Executive Director. Seconded by Jim Waldo, the motion passed. Thereafter, the Executive Session took place. Lewis Stiles moved to adjourn the Executive Session and return to open session. Seconded by Guy Logsdon, the motion carried.

The meeting resumed in open session.

Bob Blackburn, executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, unanimously was found to have carried out duties in a superior manner.

Karen Keith moved to accept the Performance Evaluation of the Executive Director as presented by the Evaluation Committee. Second by Guy Logsdon, the motion carried.

### **New Business**

No new business was discussed.

### **Adjournment**

President Bill Corbett adjourned the Quarterly Board Meeting at 4:15 p.m.

BOB L. BLACKBURN, Executive Director

WILLIAM CORBETT, President