

Civil War Museum Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 3:00 PM City Hall – Upstairs

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Advisory Board.

Present: John Burgi, Larry Deffenbaugh, Gary Stuart, Councilmember Ron Wells, Chris Johnson, Brian Crigger, and **Melissa Little (Museum Manager and Advisory Board Secretary)**

Absent: Ed Barlow

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chris Johnson made a motion to approve the March 24, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Gary Stuart. **Motion carried unanimously.**

3. Museum Update

Visitor Activity

Melissa reported that visitor numbers for May and June exceeded totals from the previous four years. Increased attendance in May was attributed to visits from Carthage eighth-grade students. June attendance was driven by increased marketing efforts surrounding the Experience History in Carthage Weekend, which included the Battle of Carthage Reenactment, Carthage Stampede Rodeo, and Boots Court kickoff activities.

Melissa also reported executing a marketing campaign through **Byways**, a digital travel magazine, which included a full-page advertisement and a feature video showcasing the museum. The campaign provided additional exposure through Byways' Route 66 travel content and related promotional videos, expanding awareness of the museum beyond the local market.

Museum Operations

The museum continues to operate successfully with two part-time employees and one PRN employee.

Upcoming Needs and Projects

The museum's air conditioning system has struggled to maintain proper temperatures. A professional service provider has been contacted to evaluate the issue. In the interim, circulating fans are being used throughout the facility.

4. Officer Positions

Election of Officers

Larry Deffenbaugh made a motion to appoint Chris Johnson as President. The motion was seconded by Gary Stuart and approved unanimously.

Chris Johnson then made a motion to appoint John Burgi as Vice President. The motion was seconded by Larry Deffenbaugh and approved unanimously.

Melissa Little will continue serving as Secretary.

Board Vacancy

The Board discussed leadership changes following the resignation of President David Armstrong, effective June 23, 2026.

The Advisory Board currently has one vacant seat. Members discussed providing recommendations to the Mayor for consideration during the appointment process.

5. Old Business

The Fire Alarm Control Panel will be replaced using FY27 Capital Outlay funds. The project will be completed by Electronic Contracting Company (ECC).

Mission Statement Review The Board revisited discussion regarding the museum's 1999 mission statement. A committee had previously been formed to review the statement; however, the committee did not meet following the resignation of President David Armstrong.

Board members agreed that the existing mission statement remains appropriate and did not identify an immediate need for revisions. The matter will be revisited at a future meeting.

Second Floor Resource Center

The Board expressed interest in utilizing the upstairs space as a resource center. Members agreed that a plan should be developed to determine improvements necessary to meet building code requirements and ensure public accessibility.

6. New Business

Insurance for Loaned Artifacts

Dr. Larry Deffenbaugh raised concerns regarding the museum's inability to insure artifacts that are on loan.

Educational Programming

Dr. Deffenbaugh also discussed the importance of incorporating an educational component during years when a Battle of Carthage reenactment is not held. Establishing educational programming would strengthen eligibility for grant funding opportunities.

Board members discussed hosting a Civil War educational event at Memorial Hall in May 2027 while school is still in session. Dr. Deffenbaugh noted that Tim Heggemeier of St. Louis would be available to present a program if given sufficient advance notice.

7. Public Comment None

8. Adjournment Chris Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. The motion was seconded by Gary Stuart. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, August 19, 2026 4:30 PM Upstairs Conference Room, City Hall