

TERM OF COMMISSION: November Session of the November Adjourned Term

PLACE OF MEETING: Boone County Government Center Commission Chambers

PRESENT WERE: Presiding Commissioner Don Stamper  
District II Commissioner Linda Vogt  
Deputy County Clerk Michelle Malaby  
Auditor and Budget Officer June Pitchford

The budget hearing was called to order at 1:22 p.m. Commissioner Stamper offered apologies for his late arrival. He thought the meeting did not start until 1:30 p.m.

**SUBJECT: Boone County Historical Society**

Boone County Historical Society President Frank Graham requested each boardmember introduce themselves. Those present were: Al Viola, Columbia; Jimmy Hourigan, Rocheport; Jim Givens, Second Vice-President and Chairman of the Finance Committee, Columbia; Jane Flink, First Vice-President, Hartsburg; Lee Tudor, Historical Society Gift Shop, Hallsville, Rocky Fork Township; Miriam McCaleb, Chairman of Historic Sites Committee, Columbia Township; Historical Society Museum Curator Mark Hudson; Bob Bedsworth, Secretary and Personnel Chairman, Hallsville, Rocky Fork Township; Harold "Bo" Edwards, President Emeritus, Columbia; Bill Hooper, Treasurer, Centralia; Helen Wulff, Membership Chairman and Historian, Columbia; Helen Judah, Docens Chairman, Member at Large, Columbia; Jennie Wren, Director, Ashland, Cedar Township; Jacquie Forrest, Centralia; Susan Forrest, Sturgeon, Bourbon Township; Bill Crawford, President Emeritus; Don Sanders, Immediate Past President, Rocheport; and Alex Gates, Chair of the Endowment Trust Committee.

Ms. Pitchford stated the county provided \$12,500 in 1996. The 1997 request was \$24,500. She included \$12,500 in the proposed budget. Ms. Pitchford stated she proposes the 1996 level of funding for this and all outside entities. Increases were treated as supplemental requests. The Boone County Historical Society provided useful information regarding their expenditure of prior funds and their intentions concerning 1997 funding.

Curator Mark Hudson commended the commission for incorporating consideration of the county's heritage into the long range plan for Boone County. The Historical Society is pleased to play an important part in achieving those objectives. Mr. Hudson reviewed events and exhibitions held at the museum, gallery, and Maplewood Home during the past year. Over 20,000 people visited the museum complex during 1995, including 1,000 school children. Mr. Hudson stated one of the most important services they provide to the people of Boone County is preservation. The society's motto is, "preserving the past for the future."

In response to a question from Commissioner Stamper, Mr. Hudson replied he has been with the Historical Society Museum for almost three years.

Ms. Judah stated as Docens Chairman, she recruits, trains and schedules volunteers. Ninety five people served as docents this year. There are many volunteers in addition to the docents who, for example, serve in the genealogy library or work to preserve the photographs. Volunteer hours are estimated at 5,271.

Ms. Wulff stated there are 442 individual members, 51 corporate members and 40 members in the physician's society.

In response to a question from the commission, Ms. Wulff replied membership costs are \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a family, \$30 for a sponsor, \$50 for supporting members and \$100 or more for patrons. Corporate membership dues are dictated by the number of people employed by the corporation. The cost for corporations employing up to 99 people is \$100. The cost of membership in the physician's society is \$100.

Mr. Givens, Finance Committee Chair, stated they did not ask for a funding increase last year. They asked for and received an increase in funding from the City of Columbia last year and this year. The budget for each of the last three years has been about \$100,000. This period coincides

with the operation of the Montminy Gallery. Prior to that time the budget was about \$20,000 per year. Almost half of the budget is for salary and benefits for three full time employees. Mr. Givens stated he was a member of the Historical Society for a year and a half prior to the arrival of Mr. Hudson. He does not believe the exhibits changed during that time. They now change every two months. When you call the facility now a receptionist answers the phone making communication more reliable and professional. Expenses have exceeded income for each of the past three years. The deficit has been funded with reserves. They did not think the City of Columbia or County of Boone would increase their funding if reserves were available. Reserves are exhausted. They have tried to increase income by recruiting new members, having an auction, increasing the suggested donation by visitors, and applying for a federal grant. Their grant application was not approved. They have reduced expenses and deferred maintenance. The endowment trust is planning a fund drive next Spring. It should be three to five years before the endowment trust helps. They are counting on funds requested from the county to balance the budget.

Mr. Graham stated they hope achieve financial independence so they do not have to request funding from the county.

Mr. Gates stated the Endowment Trust is an appendage of the Boone County Historical Society board. They are a separate entity, but are somewhat dependent on the board. Their goal is to get to the point where they can invest funds in the endowment trust for use in maintaining the building and providing curator services. They hope to generate \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year.

Mr. Sanders stated one point that should be made in regard to finances is that the facility, valued at approximately \$1.25 million, is paid for. The budget is used only for operations. Corporate and physician memberships are increasing. Corporate memberships for the largest entities cost up to \$500 per year. Several businesses fall into that category. There are close to 50 business memberships. There is wide community support for this operation. He would like to reinforce that the county's own long range plan identifies the importance of preserving heritage. Preserving local heritage is an appropriate area for financial support by a local government.

Mr. Viola stated there are signs along state highways identifying the Historical Society Museum as a visitor's center. They provide a lot of information, such as directions, to people visiting the area. This is particularly true in the Summer.

Ms. Flink stated she comes to the Historical Society with a slightly different perspective. She was the Director of the Winston Churchill Memorial and Library at Westminster College. The library had the advantage of being able to, upon occasion, rely on funding from Westminster College. The Boone County Historical Society Museum has been funded entirely with private funds. She likes the concept of a partnership of government and private citizens or private industry. When people join to create something which has the value this institution has, it is a valid request to ask for assistance in enhancing it. There are not county institutions of this quality everywhere.

Mr. Crawford stated this community is extremely mobile. People who come here generally have no understanding of Boone County's heritage. This is one group which benefits from the museum.

Ms. Wulff commented after being a County Commissioner, the next step is President of the Historical Society.

In response to a question from Commissioner Vogt as to whether their request is a one time or ongoing request, Mr. Givens replied they definitely need the funding for 1997. They will keep trying to raise funding in other ways, but if they are unsuccessful they will probably renew their funding request.

In response to a question from Ms. Pitchford as to what is their perspective on the partnership between the Society and local governments, Mr. Graham replied the City of Columbia contributes to their operation. They see the entities as complimenting one another. Together they can do so much more. Mr. Hudson shared some of the activities which benefit local governments.

Mr. Crawford stated when they were in the building stage, they met with museum consultants who indicated a historical society without physical property does not require much of a budget. However, a museum requires funding which membership fees alone cannot support. The

consultants emphasized the importance of cooperative agreements with counties and cities. If this organization had been afraid of all the problems which they have encountered, they would never have turned over the first spade of dirt. There is a legitimate need for the service they provide.

Commissioner Vogt asked are other cities in Boone County acting as partners?

Mr. Bedsworth replied he is a member of the Hallsville Historical Society. Mr. Hooper is a member of the Centralia Historical Society. Mr. Hourigan is a member of the Rocheport Historical Society. They all struggle. They all have financial problems. The attitude among the societies is what can they do to help? Assistance is not financial, but takes the form of curator support and advice.

Ms. McCaleb stated their first historic site was the Centralia battlefield. A.B. Chance cast the historical markers, provided logos and funding for brochures. The schools held contests. The entire community was involved. The second historic site at Ashland, was the Forest Hill Plantation. Members of the Bass family from California, Texas, Mississippi, Maryland, and Washington were involved. The historic site this year was the Columbia Cemetery. School students studied the cemetery all semester. Forty children with their parents were stationed at different graves on May 27, 1996 to provide information. Someone provided funding for the brochure for that site.

Commissioner Vogt stated this is the first budget hearing. They do not know what is to come. If this were a one time request it might be easier to find the money. They have to look at ongoing requests differently. The museum is storing county records for the convenience of the public. The Long Range Plan Steering Committee used the meeting room frequently. She is proud of the facility. She will remember these things when considering their request.

Commissioner Stamper stated it is not hard to recognize an organization with the level of support this one has. He is astonished by the outstanding leadership of the board. Growth of the organization is phenomenal. The commission cannot say that it will provide the requested funding today. What the Historical Society does is important. He is concerned about where the commission draws the line in the future sustenance of the organization. The county is not in the position to provide long term funding for a large portion of a budget.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Attest:

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Wendy S. Noren  
Clerk of the County Commission

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Don Stamper  
Presiding Commissioner

ABSENT  
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Karen M. Miller  
District I Commissioner

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Linda Vogt  
District II Commissioner

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June Pitchford  
Auditor and Budget Officer