

**Culture & Heritage Commission
Board of Commissioners Meeting
February 24, 2026
Museum of York County
6:00pm**

Person Presiding: Katie Rutland

Members Present: Katie Rutland, Dorothy Johnson, Maria Duncan, Jeff Lyon, Margaret Parson-Willins, Annie Laurie Wheat, and Jimmy Fitzpatrick

Members Absent:

Ex-Officio Members Present: George Sheppard and Ed Stewart

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Staff Present: Richard Campbell, Dabney Scholler, Jillian Bingham, Joe Mester, Sara Johnson, and Michelle Totherow

Others:

Call to Order

- Katie Rutland called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
- Katie Rutland presented the minutes from the November 25, 2025 commission meeting and asked for changes or corrections.
 - No corrections to be made.
 - Annie Laurie Wheat made a motion to accept the minutes as written.
 - Margaret Parson-Willins seconded the motion.
 - A vote was taken and the motion passed to accept the minutes as written.
- Katie Rutland welcomed new commissioners:
 - Maria Duncan, District 3
 - Jimmy Fitzpatrick, District 7
 - Ed Stewart, Ex-Officio

Calendar Review

- Upcoming Calendar Items
 - June- reviewing Institutional Plan to end of the fiscal year.

Reports and Presentations

- CHM Preservation Presentation
 - *Presented by Joe Mester and Sara Johnson*

- Historic Brattonsville Assistant Site Director, Joe Mester and Preservation/Restoration Specialist, Sara Johnson presented a PowerPoint, giving the Commission a glimpse of what the CHM Preservation Department does within the institution. They described key elements within the scope of historic preservation:
 - Documentation
 - The importance of documentation to learn as much as possible about the historic structures, by taking measurements and photographs, as well as, creating treatment drawings for condition assessment.
 - *Photo: The McGill Barn*
 - Conservation Lab
 - Outfitted with a florescent microscope, material analysis, mostly paint, can be analyzed for details that show age and historic information.
 - *Photos: Paint from the Colonel Bratton House, magnified x200 and the Homestead.*
 - In-House Preservation Work:
 - While many of the projects are large and require contractors and engineers, we try to do as many small, hand-on projects in-house as possible. Many of these projects give quality control, such as using historically accurate nails, that a contractor or engineer may not have an eye for.
 - *Photos: Brick Slave House, lime washing and carpentry. Outbuilding, original to Historic Brattonsville, the purpose or age is a mystery but an understanding has been established by documentation and conservation.*
 - The Blacksmithing Forge was reconstructed, as it was on the verge of collapsing, to what it may have historically looked like.
 - *Photo: The Blacksmithing Forge and the materials used to construct, all created on-site through the work of staff and volunteers.*
 - Preservation Project Management
 - Forest Hall
 - For this project, preservation engineers were contracted to assist in the repair of extensive structural issues.
 - *Photos: Forest Hall under construction and the repaired and repainted Forest Hall.*
 - McCelvey Center
 - In 2021, preservation engineers were contracted to repair the McCelvey Center, as the roof was on the verge of collapse, due to stressed trusses. This project is nearing completion and the finishing touches are being applied, so that we can reopen it.
 - Richard Campbell stated that this project came in under budget on something that has a lot of moving parts, Preservation has done a fantastic job on it.
 - *Photos: McCelvey Center auditorium, one with scaffolding and one without.*
 - Architectural Fragment Collection

- Original pieces that need to be replaced are kept in a catalog to preserve, while reproductions are used for the repair.
 - *Photos: Hardware- Spindle- original and reproduction and original nail, corner post from the Homestead House.*
- Highlights From Recent Projects
 - Homestead House Roof
 - The roof of the Homestead House was recently restored from a wooden, shingled roof to a metal roof, as seen in the 1900 photo. We have historic documentation of the purchase by Harriet Bratton.
 - *Photos: 1900 photo of the Homestead and current photo of Homestead.*
 - Brattonsville Female Seminary- Plaster Conservation
 - Since 2024, Preservation has been working to restore the Female Seminary to its 1840s form. This project has become the most labor intensive, as staff, interns, and volunteers spent five months hand-scraping this structure. Most of the plaster was able to be preserved and a protected coating was added.
 - Also, Preservation is trying to preserve the log walls so visitors can see the historic structure and maintain the integrity of the building.
 - *Photos: Plaster preservation by scraping the skim coat and gluing the plaster back on the walls of the Brattonsville Female Seminary at the Colonel Bratton House. The log walls of the Colonel Bratton House.*
- George Sheppard asked if we could make the historic nails on-site
 - Joe Mester said that we don't make the nails that we use for Preservation because of sheer volume. Our interpreters make nails at the blacksmithing forge but there is a finesse to it. We order more modern-cut nails because of material; it also helps with dating and documentation.

[Note: A full copy of the CHM Preservation Presentation is attached to these minutes as Addendum A]

- Director's Report
 - *Presented by Richard Campbell*
 - Visitation
 - CHM site-wide visitation for the month of January, totaled four thousand, one hundred and sixty-two. Year-to-date visitation totaled thirty-seven thousand, three hundred and thirty-three.
 - School Groups
 - For the month of January, school group visitation totaled four hundred and sixty-nine and year-to-date visitation totaled four thousand, three hundred and eighty-eight.
 - Membership

Four attendees participated in the first session, with walk-up options available for future sessions.

- Gnome Day
 - Main Street Children’s Museum will be hosting Gnome Day on February 28th from 10am to 4pm. This special event celebrates Vernon Grant and his love for gnomes. Various themed activities including dancing and singing like Glen the Frog to building a snowman inspired by gnomes.
- CHM Project Updates
 - Commission Audit Summary: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025
 - Richard Campbell summarized the audit from Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and highlighted the following points.
 - Strong Financial Position
 - Sound Financial Management
 - Surplus and Fund Balance Growth
 - Operational Stability
 - Government-Wide- Financial Statements
 - Audit Results
 - Independent Auditor’s Report on Financial Statements
 - Internal Controls and Compliance (GAGAS – Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards Report)
 - Richard Campbell concluded that the Commission is financially healthy and well managed.
 - A copy of the full audit was distributed to the Commission to review.
 - Annual Operating Budgets
 - Phase two of the budgeting process has been completed, with all departmental budgets entered into CSI by February 20th. Senior managers met with Richard Campbell individually to review their operational budgets, as well as any additional large project proposals. The remaining budget information is scheduled to be entered by February 27th.
 - The plan is to have a Finance Committee Meeting next month and then present the Budget Summary to the Commission afterwards.
 - Kids in Parks
 - Museum of York County has been awarded a partnership, Kids in Parks, which provides opportunities for families to engage with the outdoors through interactive trail experiences. This partnership includes one Track Trail and two Track Trail Minis, both grant-funded. It also will allow MYCO to expand outdoor learning opportunities and encourage exploration of local parks and natural spaces.
 - Changes at the Main Street Children’s Museum
 - Beginning May 1st, the Main Street Children’s Museum will be open on Sundays from 1pm to 5pm, to align public hours with MYCO and Historic Brattonsville. In addition, birthday party rentals will no longer be offered after April 30th, allowing the museum to resume normal operations and public programming following that date.

- Brattonsville Female Seminary Preservation Project
 - Work is scheduled to resume in early March. The next steps include reconstructing a partition wall in the east addition and painting walls, completing touch-ups in other rooms, and installing reproduction door hardware.
- Lowry Family Theatre
 - Structural repairs on the Lowry Family Theatre are complete and on January 20th, a Certificate of Completion was issued by the City of York.
 - In order to re-open the building, numerous projects, ranging from mechanical repairs and upgrades, elevator maintenance, and auditorium upgrades, must be completed. CHM has reviewed the proposal to access the auditorium HVAC system and the fire notification system, which revisions to the proposal are pending. Work is taking place on the elevator and elevator phone line, as well as new carpet, rigging, and curtains in the auditorium. Quotes have been received for the green room and the boiler room doors, and the proposal will go before the City of York Board of Architectural Review on March 2nd.
 - Sara Johnson stated that the elevator is to be inspected on Monday, March 2nd.
- Hightower Hall Veranda Project
 - The structural members of the verandas will be examined for decay following use by the Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies on March 21st for the Landmark Conference.
- York County SC250 Committee
 - On January 22nd, CHM staff met with the York County SC250 Committee at Visit York County headquarters. Discussions with the branding agency for the SC250 took place to plan an upcoming “Carolina Day” celebration. Information from the meeting was shared with HB Site Director Kevin Lynch and Education Program Manager Jayme Benton to evaluate if Brattonsville will be able to participate. Carolina Day, an SC250 initiative, will take place statewide from June 27th to July 5th. The YC250 Committee met on February 19th at the Visit York County meeting space near the airport in Rock Hill.
- National Historic Landmark Status
 - On January 27th, Historian Zach Lemhouse reached out to our regional NHL representative to review the comparative analysis section of the nomination. They are satisfied with the current direction, and Zach is actively working on finalizing this component. On January 30th, he and Director of Historic Properties, Carey Tilley met with the NHL representatives to recommend that the NHL boundary use the National Register boundaries for Forest Hall and Brattonsville, connecting the two via Brattonsville Road. CHM Preservation is assisting Zach with drafting the NHL nomination by preparing Section 6 of the nomination form. Research and writing are ongoing.
- Bratton Paper Digitization
 - York County Attorney, Michael Kendree, reviewed a proposed MOU between CHM and the University of South Carolina and requested

clarification regarding the scope of work, specifically the estimated number of items to be scanned. CHM Historian Zach Lemhouse reached out to the director of the South Caroliniana Library to obtain an estimate of the items in the box. Once this information is received, it will be communicated to Michael so the MOU can be finalized and the project can move forward.

- Volunteer Partnership with York Technical College
 - CHM is currently partnering with York Technical College to provide students with experiential learning by transcribing the Bratton paper collection. The focus is on the first digitized box, which will require three hundred sixty-five pages to be transcribed. Zach Lemhouse will provide the course instructor with a spreadsheet of pages to transcribe and a Word template. Students will be assigned pages, transcribe them, and submit them at the end of the semester. The project begins this summer and promotes hands-on learning, student engagement, and advances transcription for public and research access.
- Cornwallis Historical Marker
 - On February 24th, CHM staff will meet with Mark Kerr and Christia Humburg from the Fort Mill History Museum to discuss the Cornwallis Historical Marker. The project has been on hold since the chair of the YC250 historical marker subcommittee stepped down. Christia Humburg has expressed interest in sharing the cost with CHM. Updates will be provided following this meeting.
 - Ed Stewart added that according to the State and a marker committee that he serves on, it will take two years to produce a marker. From the time the wordage is sent to and approved by the State Archives, the marker can be made in eighteen to twenty four months.
- Making History, Making Change – Smithsonian Grant
 - CHM received a \$3,000 stipend to host a Smithsonian lecture and companion program at this year's Huck's Defeat Event as part of the national 250th anniversary initiative. The program features Smithsonian experts sharing interdisciplinary stories of American history, culture, and change. CHM will promote the lecture locally, develop a companion resource, and benefit from Smithsonian support for travel, per diem, and national promotion. The program connects the community to Smithsonian programming and commemorates the nation's 250th anniversary.

[Note: A full copy of the Director's Report is attached to these minutes as Addendum B]

Committee Reports

- Collections Committee
 - *Presented by Jillian Bingham*
 - Accessions to the Collection
 - N/A Field Collection
 - .001- 2025 "A LEGACY MADE WITH MAGIC" ChristmasVille button

- .002- 2025 “20 years” ChristmasVille button
- .003- “Thumbs Up” metal award and sculpture, awarded to CHM in 12/12/2025, designed by Bob Doster
 - Donor Name: ChristmasVille
- TC509
 - Collections
 - .001 - Cedar trunk
 - .002 - Pilot tennis racquet, c. 1925
 - .003 - Cadet tennis racquet, c. 1925
 - .004 - Primitive metal school bell
 - .005 - Glove box, engraved with "To Jessie from SS Class '98"
 - Archives
 - Miniature photo & frame, c. 1910 of Lois Dean McLaughlin (1907-1987)
 - Donor Name: Jessica Ann Parker
- TC510
 - .001 Military coat owned by James J. Hill – missing all military insignia
 - Donor Name: Doris Thomas
- TC511
 - York Rescue Squad Album is a scrapbook filled with news articles, photos, lists of its members, and a few thank you letters dating from 1960 to 1964.
 - Donor Name: Linda Lowman
- TC514
 - Book of Chattel Mortgages, dates include 1954-1955
 - York County Birth Index, A-M, dates include 1915-1942
 - Signed photo of Fred Kirby, c. 1950s
 - Donor Name: Robert D. Alexander III
- TC515
 - .001 – 2025 annual MYCO Vernon Grant Christmas Tree ornament titled “Flowers for Santa”, numbered 250 of 700
 - .002 – 2025 annual MYCO Vernon Grant holiday card titled “A Job Well Done”, numbered 133 of 500
 - Donor Name: MYCO Store
- TC524
 - 4 White Rose Annuals for York High School: 1960, 1962, 1963, 1964
 - Donor Name: Jennifer Harris, Tender Hearts
- Deaccession from the Collection
 - 2003.53
 - This archival collection contains 2 periodicals, 11 family history books, and 23 archival boxes of genealogical research including copies of court records, deed, family research, maps, as well as correspondence and personal research notebooks. Detailed list attached.

- Katie Rutland stated that as the Recommendations for Accession and Deaccession come from the Collections Committee, it does not need a second. Katie Rutland asked for a motion to accept the Accessions to the Collection and the Deaccession from the Collection.
 - Annie Laurie Wheat made a motion to accept the Accessions to the Collection and the Deaccession from the Collection.
 - A vote was taken and the motion passed.
 - Outgoing Loan Form
 - Jillian Bingham presented the proposal of Outgoing Loan Terms Change for Charlotte Museum of History
 - The Charlotte Museum of History has requested to borrow the Tavington Costume from The Patriot (2008.002), for display in their upcoming exhibit American Revolution: The Augmented Experience in “The Carolinas” section. The loan was requested for eighteen months, while CHM’s Collections Management Policy currently limits outgoing loans to one year, with an option for a one-year renewal.
 - Jillian Bingham requested that the Culture and Heritage Commission approve to extend the loan terms for Charlotte Museum of History for a total of eighteen months with no option for renewal.
 - This provides a definitive loan timeline for Charlotte Museum staff while minimizing the amount of paperwork for both Collections’ departments. That said, to ensure CHM’s objects are safe, the loan agreement would require Charlotte Museum staff to conduct an in-depth condition report after 9 months that is sent to CHM with photos and corresponding environmental reports. Should the condition and environment be a cause for concern, CHM would work with Charlotte Museum staff to address the issue(s). If the issues cannot be addressed to CHM satisfaction, and it is determined that the items are at risk, the loan would be terminated early with all objects returned to CHM. These updated terms are highlighted in yellow on the accompanying draft loan agreement.
 - Katie Rutland stated that since this request does come from the Collections Committee, it does not require a second, and called for a motion to make a one-time exception to our loan policy in order to make this accommodation.
 - Dorothy Johnson made a motion to make a one-time exception to our loan policy in order to make this accommodation.
 - A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

[Note: Copy of the above Recommendations for Accession and Deaccession are attached to these minutes as Addendum C and the Outgoing Loan Request Proposal and Outgoing Loan Request Form draft are attached to these minutes as Addendum D]

- Finance Committee
 - *Presented by Margaret Parson-Willins*
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Nothing to report, everything looks good.
 - Richard Campbell explained that the Budget Amendment has not been brought over yet, the Financials do not reflect the changes yet but will when we meet next month.

- Governance Committee
 - *Presented by Annie Laurie Wheat*
 - Annie Laurie Wheat would like to have a Governance Committee meeting in March, we will discuss. Annie Laurie Wheat asked if there would be new members to the Governance Committee, Katie Rutland confirmed that the members will be assigned.

Executive Session

- No need for Executive Session

Old Business

- None

New Business

- None

Commission Member New/Non-agenda Comments

- None

Adjourn

- Katie Rutland entertained a motion to adjourn
 - George Sheppard made a motion to adjourn
 - Jeff Lyon seconded the motion
 - Katie Rutland called for a vote, vote was taken, and the motion passed.
 - Meeting adjourned at 7:47pm

Prepared by: Dabney Scholler

Submitted by: Margaret Parson-Willins, Secretary/Treasurer