

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Brown Fisher Association, Inc. Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Brown-Fisher Association (BFA) held a meeting on Saturday, February 9, 2019 at the home of board member Sarah Brown who prepared a scrumptious brunch for all.

**Call to order:** President Stephen Brown called the meeting to order shortly after 10:00 a.m. following a scrumptious brunch provided by the extended Brown family.

**Attending:** Deane Brown, Larry Brown, Sarah Brown, Stephen Brown, Hunter Fisher, Rod Kesler, Norman Ribelin, Linda Shelton, Keith Wolf and Brenda Zimmerman, our newest board member. **Absent:** Ken Clifton, Candace Elliott Brown, Cathy Kirchin, Carolyn Miller, Betty Dan Nicholas, Sandra Phillips, Linda Shelton, Debbie Taylor, Paul Walker and ex officio member Aaron Kepley.

**Minutes:** Secretary Paul Walker was unable to attend but had emailed minutes from the previous meeting to the Board in advance. Larry Brown made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as sent. Motion was seconded by Norman Ribelin and passed unanimously.

**Financial Report:** Treasurer Larry Brown distributed the financial report as of January 31, 2019. Balances were as follows: Checking account - \$1,345.88, Money Market account - \$83,126.08, both at First National Bank, making a total of cash on hand of \$84,741.96. Fund balances were as follows: General - \$6,826.86 (used to fund general expenses); Lifetime Memberships - \$57,745.45 (used for special projects such as the Visitor's Center); Memorials - \$1,995.66 (used to fund general expenses); Cemetery - \$1,512.64 (used to maintain, e.g. repair/replace tombstones, in the cemetery at the Michael Brown House; Reunion Trust - \$10,000.00 (used to fund reunion expenses); Publications - \$8,965.60 (used to publish Brown or Fisher family books); Michael Brown House improvement - (\$2,574.25) (use is self-explanatory). He stated that this fund is in the negative because of the donation to Rowan Museum towards removal of the caretaker's house. Larry reported that the Board voted to move the bank accounts to F&M several years ago but that move hasn't occurred. The thinking is that when and if we approach F&M for donations the fact that our accounts are there will be helpful. The bank will be a prime target for donations to the new Visitor's Center given that it was formed in Granite Quarry and is owned by the Fisher family. Norman Ribelin made a motion, which was seconded by Stephen Brown, that we move both bank accounts to F&M and further that the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Coordinator be authorized signers on the accounts. Discussion occurred regarding whether there was a local credit union that might be paying more than the present 2.3% but no one thought so. Larry suggested that one thing we could consider in the future is investing \$40,000 or so in short term CDs which may pay higher interest. President Brown called the question and the motion passed unanimously. **ACTION ITEM – Larry to obtain required documents and bring to next meeting to obtain signatures, if allowed by the bank.**

**Editor's Report:** Editor Cathy Kirchin was too ill to attend but Larry reported that he spoke with her and she has enough information for a 4 page edition. She Doug turned the meeting over to Cathy who indicated that her health was good enough to allow her to complete the edition and get it to Diversified Graphics soon. Doug Robinson asked the group if we had ever considered selling ads for the newsletter as a means of offsetting production costs. Discussion occurred that we could offer space in return for sponsorships, but we could not limit the audience if we began selling advertisements which might create an awkward situation.

**Coordinator's Report:** Coordinator Doug Robinson reported that no new memberships were received this quarter. (Larry indicated that he had one Annual membership that he hadn't yet forwarded to Doug.) A discussion ensued regarding eliminating the ability of a "family" to join as one membership and whether we might be losing income by allowing this. From the Treasurer's perspective, Larry said he thought that continuing to allow families to join was acceptable but perhaps we might want to increase fees on all memberships. Norman Ribelin made a motion, seconded by Sarah Brown, that the treasurer is to report back at the next meeting with suggested increases in membership fees. Discussion occurred as to whether we should have a special life membership for newborns but decided to highlight gift lifetime membership to them instead. President Brown called the question and motion pass unanimously. **ACTION ITEM – Larry to report**

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**back with recommended increases.** Lastly, it was noted that the organization needs more membership and involvement from the Fisher clan and Hunter Fisher was tasked with this project.

**Webmaster's Report:** Kat Clifton was not in attendance, but Doug reported on several enhancements she had made to our site. Memberships may now be purchased or renewed through the website and an electronic confirmation is sent to the new/renewed member (a sample was passed around) via e-mail and the BFA coordinator is notified. Handled through PayPal, there is a per transaction fee of \$.30 each + 2.2% of membership amount. This feature has also been used to accept donations and memorials online, again with email confirmation going back to donor and notification sent to BFA coordinator. The next feature to be added is the ability to electronically sell items, such as pen & ink drawings, Christmas ornaments, etc. now that our site has been moved off Weebly, allowing our web address to be simply [www.brownfisher.org](http://www.brownfisher.org). Doug also noted that we will soon have used up all the start-up funds Stephen donated. Although Stephen plans to make another donation to further subsidize the website, we should create a line item in our budget, to be offset by Stephen's donation, so that we will be able to plan budgets accordingly in the future. She has added the print dates to the Brown and Fisher books that are available online. Those are:

1. *Brown – A History of the Michael Brown Family of Rowan County, NC by the Reverend Richard L. Brown, Second Edition 1973. Introduction by Roscoe Brown Fisher.*
2. *Brown – Michael Brown of the Old Stone House, His Influence and Descendants, Second Edition 1975, Edited by Roscoe Brown Fisher.*
3. *Brown – The Ancestors and Descendants of Abraham and Jacob (Braun) Brown, 1703-1983. Compiled and edited by John Burgess Fisher, Dorothy Brown Koeller, and Margaret Brown Anderson.*
4. *Fisher – The Jacob Fisher Family, Volume I, 1727-1958. Compiled by James L. Fisher, Arthur W. Fisher, and Hilbert A. Fisher. Second Edition 1980.*
5. *Fisher – The Jacob Fisher Family, Volume II, 1959-1979. Compiled by John Burgess Fisher and Roscoe Brown Fisher. First Edition 1979.*

**Historian's Report** – Historian Betty Dan Spencer was not in attendance and did not submit a report.

### Old Business:

1. **Annual Audit** - Larry Brown spoke to the question raised in the previous meeting regarding the by-law requiring an annual audit of BFA's finances. He stated that the Board had addressed this years ago and, as a cost-saving measure, agreed to have board members review the Treasurer's supporting documents rather than pay for an audit by a third party. **ACTION ITEM - Doug Robinson agreed to ensure that the Treasurer's financial report conforms to the monthly bank statements prior to the annual meeting.** This will be documented by his signature and date on preceding bank statements. The Board will assign this task to another board member should Doug be absent or otherwise unable.
2. **Correcting date on Michael Brown tombstone** – Larry reported he had spoken with Aaron who indicated that he is researching the issue but believes the date on the tombstone is somewhere around 10 or so years later than Michael's actual date of birth. Aaron thinks it may be the date of another Michael Brown. He plans to discuss his theory further with Betty Dan Spencer before proceeding.
3. **Fisher Publication Fund** – After discussion, the Board agreed to rename the Fisher Publication to simply the Publication Fund. **ACTION ITEM - Larry agreed to make changes in financials.**
4. **Fisher Books** – Larry noted that we have a good supply of Fisher books still to sell. The books sell for \$40 for set of two volumes. We sold 3 sets in December 2018 and 8-10 more sets remain. **ACTION ITEM – Limit online access to books to encourage selling printed versions?**
5. **Brown Books** – The original Brown books are now collector's items. Brenda Zimmerman noted that she saw that someone in Clemmons is selling the second book on eBay for \$175. People have published separate copies of these books now that our copyrights have expired (copyrights exist 90 years).
6. **Long Range Plan Update:** Larry reported that Aaron had been in contact with Tommy Long House Moving regarding moving the caretaker's house and was told that it was once again too wet to attempt

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to move the caretaker's house. Aaron conveyed that the Museum was no longer concerned about the mess that would be created and that it wanted the house moved pronto. The same company is to also move the McCombs Cabin logs to the site and Aaron conveyed that Keith McCombs, representing the McCombs family, wanted it moved immediately. Larry encouraged Aaron to stay on the movers until this is completed. Norman reported that the logging company will begin removing trees next week. After that is completed, BFA will need to pay to have the area leveled so that a foundation can be laid so that the slave quarters can be built out of the McCombs Cabin logs. In total, the Museum owns 22 acres on the site. Further analysis revealed that a parking lot can be included behind the new Visitor's Center, accessible from an access road to be cut behind the existing mobile home park. A question was raised as to whether we will encounter any issues with the Land Trust who owns conservation easements on the property. Larry reported that the Land Trust recently merged with a similar organization to create Three Rivers Land Trust. Aaron has presented the master plan to them and believes he has convinced them that the woods are not virgin forest and has their buy in with our proposed changes. Norman reported that only part of the property lies within town limits of Granite Quarry and we need to ask that the rest be added. As for the building itself, the intent remains to provide space for bathrooms, office/gift shop, BFA archives, storage, space for income producing events, such as weddings, etc. and a warming kitchen (perhaps a catering kitchen dependent upon money raised). Larry reported that they're considering enlarging the building in order to hold more people, which would allow the archives space to expand as well. He stated that the Museum's goal is to have a preliminary plan ready so that a capital campaign can be in place before Spring Frolic. Funding for the building committed to date is the Lagg's \$240,000.00, \$25,000.00 from the Lib Taylor estate, perhaps \$25,000.00 from BFA for naming rights to the archives. The building itself could be built for that but the furnishings and other accoutrements further add to the costs. One concern is that a recent ground-penetrating radar study found evidence of dirt disturbance in the proposed locations of both the new building and the reconstructed slave quarters. Both areas were most likely used for planting crops, which would explain the dirt disturbance. Both will need to be excavated in order to get a better understanding.

7. **Board Position Description** document - Doug asked if there were any corrections or additions to the document and none were noted. **ACTION ITEM - He will finalize the document and distribute it at the next meeting.**
8. **Original of Michael Brown's Will** – Betty Dan Spencer had asked for its location at the last meeting and no one could answer the question. Larry reported that he had no knowledge of its location either. Doug asked if it might be in a safe deposit box and Larry responded that our box had been closed years ago. He stated that those items were given to Rowan Museum for safekeeping. **ACTION ITEM – Larry to inspect Juanita's materials to locate will.**

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### New Business:

1. **Museum Storage** – Larry reported that they need shelving at the museum's storage location. Doug asked if they'd reached out to Food Lion about excess shelving and offered to make that connection.  
**ACTION ITEM – Doug to contact Food Lion regarding shelving.**
2. **Rowan Museum Patron's Party** – Larry reported that Aaron has changed the name of the event so that it is not confused with parties for other events.
3. **Rowan Museum's Spring Frolic** – Scheduled for April 6, 2019.

**Next Meeting:** Saturday, May 11, 2019 at St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Salisbury.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 12:44pm.

Respectfully, submitted

Doug Robinson – Interim Secretary