

**Governance Assessment  
Sample Report  
Museum Assessment Program  
American Association of Museums**

**“Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania” Museum**

The purpose of this sample document is to help illustrate a sample report. The contents of this information shall not be substituted for, nor substantially used as the basis for, any document produced by the recipient. This should serve as a model only.

The AAM and its Museum Assessment Program, as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, reflects, reinforces, and disseminates information on standards and best practices in the museum field. AAM has endeavored to make the information as accurate and current as possible. However, inadvertent errors can occur. Therefore, these materials are provided “as is,” without any guarantee or warranty of any kind, expressed or implied.

This sample report from the Museum Assessment Program is based on a real museum. The report is a good example of the challenges typical of many museums participating in the MAP program. All of the names of the staff, board members, museum, town, buildings, as well as the Surveyor, have been changed.

**Why is this a good report?**

This report focuses on a relatively new organization (only 10 years old) that is having mixed success with its current board, such as having quorum issues, as well as concerns with the economic recession. Recommendations are well woven into the overall report and then pointed out at the end. This report makes clear recommendations and then additional ideas on how they may be achieved.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania participated in the American Association of Museum's Museum Assessment Program for a Governance Museum Assessment (GMAP) by completing an intensive self-study, providing extensive documentation of policies and procedures, and hosting a peer reviewer for three days. The purpose of the process is to improve the governance of the organization and to help it meet its mission. The mission of the Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania is to foster knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the decorative arts, and to celebrate the architecture and heritage of the Zink-Cohen House.

The site visit occurred September 15-16, 2009. Prior to the visit, the reviewer conducted telephone interviews with the director, the president of the board, and chairs of the collections, exhibitions, finance, and GMAP committees. During the visit, the reviewer met with those individuals (except the president and chairs of collections and GMAP, each of whom were unavailable) plus several other members of the board and staff, and a representative of the owner of the organization's historic property (Dackman County); an itinerary is attached in Appendix A. After the site visit, the reviewer spoke by phone with one other board member, Jane Rabbit, whose schedule had not permitted a meeting during the site visit.

The museum intends to use the results of this GMAP process in conjunction with a 2008 Institutional MAP to inform its strategic planning as the museum moves into its second decade.

Subsequent to the museum's completion of its self-study in January, it lost two of its eight employees as a result of illness and other professional opportunities for those staff. Given the recessionary economic situation of the nation during this time, the positions were not filled. Staff duties were reassessed and reassigned and efforts to recruit volunteers were increased. Just prior to the staff losses, the organization more than doubled its public hours, and this has affected the remaining staff's ability to juggle their regular duties while occasionally assisting with gallery monitor/guide responsibilities when volunteer monitors/guides are not available.

## 2. BRIEF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

The Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania (OWMP) occupies three handsome buildings on Main Street in lovely downtown Cardin, PA. The Zink-Cohen House, a two-story brick structure built in 1835, is the centerpiece of the property. Its ground floor houses staff offices and restrooms. The *piano nobile* has a gracious center hall and two Federal-style period rooms from the Zink era of habitation and two furnished in the Eastlake style of the Cohen era (one of the latter functions as a museum shop). The top floor serves as galleries for temporary exhibitions of decorative arts. The small two-story brick Kassof House (1804) and a spacious two-story brick Cohen Annex (1912) complement the main house. The Kassof House provides a small meeting space and compact overnight accommodations for VIPs. The Art Annex functions as studios for arts education. Its concrete-floored space on the main level opens directly through three pivoting garage doors onto a large brick patio where outdoor events occur.

The Zink-Cohen house was restored from dereliction a decade ago through the partnership of family heirs, Dackman County, the State of Pennsylvania, and community donors. The Ilene R. Cohen Trust donated the property to the County. The State funded the majority of the restoration. The Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania formed at that time to “foster knowledge, enjoyment, and appreciation of the decorative arts, and to celebrate the architecture and heritage of the Zink-Cohen House.”

OWMP meets its mission primarily through tours of the historic structure and its temporary exhibitions of decorative arts plus an energetic arts education program that engages children and adults in classes and activities. Annual attendance in recent years has averaged about 11,000. Art classes account for a sizeable percentage of total attendance.

In 2009, OWMP more than doubled its open hours, now serving the public Tuesday through Sunday from 10AM through 4PM. The museum is open to the public for free, but most classes require fees. The organization has programs that provide scholarships for many students, especially gifted, needy, and special students. OWMP recently suspended popular special event rentals inside the Zink-Cohen house due to valid concerns for collections.

The permanent collection is very small—a mere 80 items of high style Federal furniture from Philadelphia similar to that the Zink family owned plus selected Eastlake furnishings appropriate to the Cohen era. The temporary exhibitions are well researched and well designed, primarily the product of a long-time volunteer curator with good connections to public and private collections of decorative arts.

The property is owned by Dackman County, which takes its landlord and stewardship role seriously. The county recently re-committed a portion of its hotel/motel bed tax to OWMP; approximately 40% of the nearly \$500,000 annual budget comes through that levy. The Dackman Foundation (which administers several donor-advised funds), area businesses, memberships, and earned income fill out the organization’s coffers. A board-designated fund of about \$750,000 generates income that has been reinvested towards the goal of amassing a million dollar fund that is treated as an endowment but is not formally restricted as such.

OWMP is a community success story that stands ready to open a new chapter of its life with the celebration of its tenth anniversary in 2010.

### 3. VISION AND LEADERSHIP

OWMP's mission statement is clear and concise. It is easily found in printed materials: "The mission of the Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania is to foster knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the decorative arts, and to celebrate the architecture and heritage of the Zink-Cohen House."

There is a consensus opinion that the mission is met through three complementary program areas: 1) guided tours of the period rooms on the mansion's main floor; 2) temporary exhibitions of decorative arts in the galleries on the upper floor; and 3) arts education activities and classes in the "Art Annex." Individual board members vary in the importance they attach to those various program areas, but they agree that a mix of art and history, of active and passive learning, provides a balanced diet to nurture the community.

The Institutional MAP in 2008 questioned whether this three-part program to meet the mission might be too broad for the small organization to fulfill; however, the three complementary program areas (historic house, decorative arts, and arts education) bring a wide variety of staff and supporters to the organization. Moreover, the breadth brings some balance to the bottom lines (budget, attendance, etc.). A robust year in one category may compensate for a lean year in another area. The consensus of staff and board consulted on this issue were comfortable with the tripartite approach to meeting the mission. Although there are other historic houses in the community, none focus on the decorative arts. There is a children's museum and a glass museum but no art museum in the community, so the services OWMP provides are not duplicated by other non-profits. Moreover, the integration of historic house, decorative arts focus, and arts education make the organization distinctive locally, regionally, and perhaps nationally.

During its first decade, OWMP has successfully engaged three CEOs, hiring the current director in 2005. The organization enjoyed the boom years of the national economy at the turn of the century and it is coping successfully with the current economic bust. OWMP, governed largely by local business and community people, seems to be weathering the financial storm of the Great Recession as well as the Cardin, Dackman County, north-east Pennsylvania community it serves. In particular, by increasing volunteer recruitment to staff the expanded public hours, the organization is taking a responsible action to increase access to its collections and programs, but OWMP must monitor the staffing situation carefully to ensure that collections and traveling exhibitions are not put at risk. Moreover, OWMP should ensure that staff members are utilized to their highest and best potential; their time spent monitoring galleries when volunteers are not present may detract from the time or concentration needed for their other duties.

One of the keys to the organization's success to date is its hands-on board. One board member serves as volunteer curator of exhibitions. The board treasurer reconciles the books each month. The board secretary actually takes the minutes and distributes them. Other board members serve as volunteer monitors/guides. The organization could not function at its current level of operation without substantial funding increases were it not for the board shouldering some of the staff work. This is a commendable situation. It seems to be working. Still, one of the risks with such an arrangement is that board members may not realize when they are wearing their board "hat" and when they are wearing their "staff" hat. Currently, those wearing both hats seem aware of, and up to, the challenge. As the organization grows into the next decade, it would be wise to be aware of the potential for problems with this arrangement that commonly beset museums in this stage of development.

The current strategic plan, which was targeted for 2006 through 2008, is essentially complete. OWMP made a conscious decision to do the GMAP as a step towards a new strategic plan that they expect to make over the coming winter/spring. That timing is fortuitous considering the organization's tenth anniversary in 2010.

As the organization enters strategic planning, it would be wise to consider spreading the planning process over several days, or even several weeks, to ensure that the staff and the entire board plus other community stake-holders are able to participate. It appears that many members of the board travel rather extensively, so a planning process that occurs on multiple days spread over multiple weeks might make sense. My hunch is that any day-long or overnight planning retreat would be missed by several people. If the planning sessions happen over several days, each board member should be able to participate in at least some of the process.

As OWMP moves into its second decade, the organization should focus on recruitment, orientation, and retention of board members, and succession of officers.

Recently the board has been challenged to have a quorum at meetings. This could be a momentary problem, especially in light of the momentous challenges of the recessionary economy in recent months; however, it could also signal a larger problem. One self-study participant expressed concerns suggesting that too much of the full board's power had been delegated to or subsumed by the executive committee, leaving other board members with "rubber stamp" responsibilities. Indeed, the executive committee does appear to have business under control; meetings are efficiently run and productive—which could lead some to feel that meeting outcomes are pre-ordained, or that discussion or dissention is avoided. The board would be wise to assess this concern and take appropriate action if needed. The forthcoming strategic planning process should provide opportunities for this.

The planning process should also offer a forum for discussion of related issues of board member recruitment, orientation, and retention, plus the succession of officers. At present there is no formal nominating committee, and orientation consists of a single session of an hour or so in advance of a new member's first meeting. The current board members queried about these two issues seemed satisfied with the status quo, but several acknowledged there may be merit in formalizing the nominating committee. (Recommendations for that follow in the next section of this report.) There was less concern about expanding board orientation efforts. Many of the current board are experienced with non-profit boards and all seem very busy with rich and active lives. Nevertheless, something more than staff introductions and behind-the-scenes tours may be needed to sketch the scope and breadth of the organization and to clarify expectations of board members. (Again, specific recommendations follow in the report section on Structure and Function.)

Retention of board members and succession of officers also deserve consideration. Neither issue seems problematic at this time, but the recent difficulty in making a quorum for monthly meetings could be a harbinger of things to come, and the upcoming vacancy in the presidency may be harder than normal to fill because the vice president has already indicated her inability to move up due to work commitments (i.e., frequent travel). This is a very competent "get it done" board, so it will surely rise to the occasion. Some recommendations for the board to consider regarding restructuring officer positions, terms of office, and expectations of board members follow in the report section on Structure and Function.

Another indicator of the importance of addressing board member recruitment, orientation, performance, and evaluation became apparent during the site visit. A 10-minute exercise coordinated by the peer reviewer during the board meeting revealed that the board rated itself rather lowly in terms of its effectiveness at recruitment, orientation, and performance assessment. The reviewer asked each of the 13 board members present to rank the board's performance from 1 to 10 (10 being outstanding) on each of the "Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards" as determined by BoardSource. While the scores on questions about mission and purpose, selecting and supporting the CEO, providing and managing resources, maintaining accountability and ethical integrity averaged from 7.2 to 9.0, the board rated itself 6.5 on how it recruits and orients new board members and assesses board performance. (The questions and average scores for each follow in Appendix B.) The average score of the other nine questions was 7.9.

At a minimum, this suggests that the board should address this issue. The low score may be a function of the question having three components. Board members may have scored the whole board low because they felt that recruitment OR orientation OR assessment needed work. On the other hand, they may have felt the board needed to improve on all three and thus assigned lower scores. This written exercise was conducted quickly, there was little discussion of the questions before or after members scored the board's efforts, and the results were not reported to the board until now. Board discussion may indicate testing errors, and it will surely suggest solutions to the low scores. Recommendations for improving the board's performance in this category follow in the section on Structure and Function.

The Ten Basic Responsibilities test and results could be a useful topic for board discussion regarding self-assessment — an activity all good boards practice regularly. Such discussion might be a fruitful first step in the strategic planning process set to commence in early 2010.

The board may also want to assess its composition to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the community it serves in terms of gender, age, and race, while simultaneously fielding the range of professional experience (administration, finance, fund-raising, business, legal, marketing, planning, public relations) and organizational experience (business, government, non-profit) needed to govern a complex non-profit organization. During the site visit, there was discussion of OWMP's professed regional service region and acknowledgement that virtually all board members live in Cardin. The board might fruitfully discuss just what constitutes "regional" and how it might secure representation on the board or other advice regarding governance. Early in its life, OWMP apparently had a regional advisory group of museum and decorative arts professionals scattered around Pennsylvania. Starting something similar —or something with an even broader geographical coverage— might help the organization grow into its second decade. Such a group that meets infrequently, or that meets by conference call, might broaden OWMP's horizons and enable it to impact a larger community.

In terms of vision and leadership, OWMP is fortunate. It has a healthy board with a diverse range of experienced and enthusiastic supporters. As the organization enters its second decade, it has much to celebrate and much to look forward to.

#### 4. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

As OWMP undertakes strategic planning for its second decade, it should start with a reassessment of the organization's mission — not necessarily to change it, but to confirm that it is still relevant, still at the core of the organization's being, still driving decisions about collections and programs, and still providing the ultimate measure of organizational success.

In conjunction with strategic planning, the organization should address several structural or functional matters that deserve attention. There seem to be a few areas where actual practice has deviated slightly from approved practice, and there are some areas where revisions to current policies and procedures may facilitate improved organizational performance.

During the site visit, there was discussion of a Past President office, but in fact none exists according to the Code of Regulations of OWMP. Section 1.01 C. does provide that “a Director who is required to leave the Board because of the two consecutive term limitation and who has just completed a term as President may upon vote of a majority of the Directors then serving, continue to serve as a Director for one more year.” The effect may be the same as a formal Past President office to which a president is automatically elected upon completion of their term as president, but a new Past President office could confer status and power upon that person to tie up loose ends after their busy year(s) as president. The board should consider establishing this new officer position.

In fact, the only limit on the number of terms an individual can spend in office appears to be the two consecutive 3-year term limit of all board members except the Treasurer and Exhibitions Chair who “shall not be subject to term limits.” If it becomes difficult to find officer candidates, the board may want to consider exempting all officers from term limits while they are in office — as is done in many non-profit boards. But, if that change is made, there should be a limit on the number of terms an officer can serve in one or all officer positions. The board could also consider a new Second Vice President position to clarify succession planning — assuming an individual would progress from second to first vice president to president.

The board definitely should formalize a nominating committee, and that committee could be chaired by the second vice president for a year or two, permitting him or her to ensure recruitment of the individuals needed to implement special initiatives under their subsequent presidency.

The new nominating committee should address not only recruitment, but orientation and assessment. The strategic planning process could clarify the nominating process or delegate that to the new nominating committee. Either way, the organization deserves a succinct, written policy and procedures for identifying and approaching candidates, itemizing expectations and commitments, and assessing individual board member performance. At present, a well-crafted Code of Ethics is discussed with candidates, and OWMP membership is required, but the organization may want to review other expectations.

The board approved a “Board of Director's Policy Statement” dated 3 March 2006 that clarifies expectations that board members be members of OWMP, provide financial support, support staff, respect confidentiality, represent OWMP positively, serve on at least one committee, attend regular meetings, and contribute time, energy, expertise, and enthusiasm to ensure the continuing success of OWMP. That statement should be reassessed, revised if appropriate, and then integrated into recruitment materials used by the nominating committee if such is not

currently the case. The board could turn the Statement into a contract of sorts and ask candidates to sign in acceptance of these terms prior to formal nomination to the board. This would ensure that new board members commit to meet the expectations of board members.

During the site visit, one savvy board member ranked the OWMP board as the second most prestigious in the community, behind only the hospital board. If that high standing of the board is common knowledge, expectations for service should be correspondingly high.

If OWMP board membership is highly valued by the community, and if problems with meeting attendance continue to threaten the achievement of a quorum and the ability to conduct business, then OWMP might consider incorporating another structural change to its Code of Regulations regarding the new nominating policies and procedures. A simple statement, “that more than two or three consecutive unexcused absences from board meetings constitutes the board member’s resignation from the board,” would put the onus on the offending board member rather than forcing the board or its nominating committee to remove the member. The board could determine who excuses absences and for what purposes, and thus could retain some flexibility to ensure that unavoidable absences do not penalize the board member or the board.

The new nominating committee chair should probably become part of the Executive Committee because of the importance of board member recruitment, orientation, retention, and performance evaluation. The Code of Regulations currently define the Executive Committee as the “President and at least four other Directors.” Currently this committee includes the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The board might also want to add the chairs of some or all of the standing committees (e.g., Exhibitions, Collections, and Development), but that could cause negative consequences. If poor recent board meeting attendance is driven by a sentiment that the executive committee makes most of the decisions, increasing the size of that committee might only add to its power. Alternatively, increasing the executive committee’s size might engage more people in decision making or increase the transparency of the committee’s operations. The decision is up to the board, and undoubtedly there are other alternatives than those mentioned here.

The board may also want to consider a ex-officio, non-voting position on the board for Dackman County since they own the property and its buildings. Alternatively, OWMP might just copy the County secretary/clerk with meeting minutes and perhaps board preparation materials. At a minimum, there should be a standing invitation for a county representative to attend board meetings as a guest; but ex-officio status, or an annual or semi-annual report to or from a county representative would be a good vehicle for maintaining communications between the landlord and its tenant.

## 5. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The board prides itself on its financial accountability and transparency. The treasurer reconciles account balances monthly and issues reports to the whole board following their review at the executive committee meeting one week before the full board meeting. Those reports are detailed and extensive. These reports contribute to the transparency and accountability expected of non-profit organizations today regarding fiscal resources.

The board also values the physical resources of the organization, even though the board does not own the buildings it operates or the land on which those buildings sit. There is a consensus opinion that the architectural structures are as important as the organization's collections and the board has ensured that the landlord, Dackman County, shares their respect for the property and its structures. The two groups have recently come to grips with the county's responsibility to repair the massive stone retaining wall above the sidewalk at the front of the building. Presumably, OWMP will steward that work at the county's expense to ensure that best practices and standards for historic preservation will be employed.

The board understands that the buildings, like the small, 80-item collection of historic furniture, are conceptually comparable to the corpus of an endowment. The "interest" in the historic structures and collections is dependent upon their remaining unviolated, just as a corpus of capital must remain intact to generate income.

As a result of respect for the house and its collections, the board decided recently to suspend indoor special event rentals. This disappointed some in the community, who value the elegant interior as a premier spot for small parties and receptions. OWMP may be able to accommodate some requests for future events by exploring options for tenting the paved courtyard adjacent to the spacious Art Annex (with its restrooms and its three garage doors that pivot open, effectively dissolving that wall). Canvas curtains with vinyl windows might also be retrofitted onto the spacious side porch on the *piano nobile* to create a three-season room for small groups to use for cocktails, dinners, or receptions. The restrooms downstairs and in the Art Annex are not far away, and catering might be staged in the Kassof House, the Art Annex, or the adjacent paved plaza.

Additional alternatives for generating income through use of the property might also be found, but responsible stewardship of the historic site may require more baseline information than is currently available before the site or any structures are altered. Data about the historic use of the small 1804 Kassof House is apparently limited, as is information about other structures that may have once stood on the property — and about one-third of the perhaps half-acre site is not used actively, being covered by large trees and ground cover. Consequently, a historic site study and report would be an appropriate next step to consolidate data about the three principle structures, the retaining wall, sidewalks, plazas, and undeveloped areas. During the site visit, several board members commented about wishing OWMP had more space, better parking, and easier visitor access. It is doubtful that the site's perimeter will be expanded, but it may be possible to make better use of the existing spaces and structures. A historic site study should be a prerequisite to any subsequent development of the site. In fact, such a study could discretely explore whether the perimeter really is fixed or if there might be opportunities to work with neighbors on parking, visitor access, or other organizational needs like space for exhibition preparation and crate storage. A historic site study and report could grow into a master historic site plan that guides stewardship and adaptive reuse through coming decades.

In 2009, OWMP lost two of its eight staff and reduced the hours of its part-time curator of education. One resignation was health-related, the other for a new job, but neither position was filled primarily because funding was so tight. Interviews indicated that some thought the downsizing was, in effect, right-sizing; however, concurrent with shrinking the staff the director indicated they hoped to reduce the treasurer's role in reconciling the books by increasing some staff member's responsibility for that work. These conflicting priorities should be addressed.

OWMP should continue consideration of its ideal staffing situation, especially in light of its recent decision to more than double its open hours from Tuesday-Friday 1-4 to Tuesday-Sunday 1-4. The volunteers OWMP envisioned recruiting to help staff the extra open hours have not fully materialized and this has required the downsized staff to spend more time monitoring the period rooms, exhibition galleries, and museum shop to the detriment of their other duties. The security of the collections should not be compromised, but using the director, curator, marketing or business manager to monitor the galleries may not be efficient either.

Staff member appear to be well qualified and enthusiastic about their work, but they receive no health insurance or retirement benefits. The reviewer has made no comparison with salary and benefit standards for comparable organizations, but in order to promote staff stability the board should consider matching staff contributions to a retirement fund or IRA up to a few thousand dollars. Ideally, staff would be eligible for the match upon employment and would vest instantly, but the board could establish guidelines consistent with OWMP's current status as a leader in the local/regional non-profit community. Staff seem understanding of the organization's financial constraints, but one of the two vacancies created this year was the result of a staff member taking a more rewarding job elsewhere in the community.

## **6. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

The OWMP board manifests a very serious, business-like, get-it-done attitude. Board materials are concise and distributed in a timely fashion. Meetings are efficiently organized and operated. Minutes reflect decisions, not discussion.

The board has a solid institutional ethics policy that addresses conflicts of interest, confidentiality, collections management (including NAGPRA and Nazi-era provenance issues), personnel, board/staff relations, and exhibitions and programming.

The organization's Collections Management Plan could serve as a model for a small art/history museum. Like other written communications of OWMP, it is succinct and rationally organized. It clearly articulates policies on restricted gifts, defines accessions, and discusses acquisition procedures for gifts and purchases (including year-end gifts and auction purchases). Deaccessioning and disposal are also discussed and proceeds from deaccessioning are restricted "to benefit the collection." (This statement might not pass AAM accreditation standards – check AAM's Information Center for information on deaccessioning standards). Incoming and outgoing loans are also covered, as are NAGPRA and Nazi-era provenance issues.

The one-page Financial Policies and Internal Controls document approved by the board 18 October 2007 clearly defines the responsibilities of the treasurer and the staff business manager. This document also establishes procedures regarding check authorizations and personal expense reimbursements.

The operational chart and job descriptions included in the self-study materials are clear and concise.

In short, OWMP excels in terms of public accountability.

## 8. SUMMARY

The Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania participated in the American Association of Museum's Museum Assessment Program for Governance Museum Assessment (GMAP) by completing an intensive self-study, providing extensive documentation of policies and procedures, and hosting a peer reviewer for three days. The purpose of the process is to improve the governance of the organization and to help it meet its mission. The mission of the Ornamental Works Museum of Pennsylvania is to foster knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the decorative arts, and to celebrate the architecture and heritage of the Zink-Cohen House. The museum intends to use the results of this GMAP process in conjunction with a 2008 Institutional MAP to inform its strategic planning as the museum moves into its second decade.

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One of the keys to the organization's success to date is its hands-on board. The organization could not function at its current level of operation without substantial funding increases were it not for the board shouldering some of the staff work. This is a commendable situation that seems to be working. Still, one of the risks with such an arrangement is that board members may not realize when they are wearing their board "hat" and when they are wearing their "staff" hat. Currently, those wearing both hats seem to be up to the challenge.

As the organization begins strategic planning, it would be wise to consider spreading the planning process out to ensure that the staff and board plus other community stakeholders are able to participate. Any day-long or overnight planning retreat might be missed by several people. If the planning sessions happen over several days, each board member should be able to participate in at least some of the process.

In conjunction with strategic planning, the organization should address several structural or functional matters. There seem to be some areas where actual practice has deviated from approved practice, and there are some simple revisions to current policies and procedures that could facilitate improved organizational performance. Specific recommendations are detailed in the report and are summarized in the section on recommendations.

In short, OWMP is a community success story that stands ready to open a new chapter of its life with the celebration of its tenth anniversary in 2010.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations area discussed more fully in previous sections of the report.

- Address the 6.5 score on the board's self-assessment exercise regarding Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards.
- Create new strategic plan no later than winter or spring 2010 in time to capitalize on OWMP's tenth anniversary. Review AAM's Accreditation Commission's Expectations regarding Institutional Planning – available on AAM's web site.
- Assess volunteer and paid staffing needs currently and in coming years to implement the new strategic plan.
- Do historic site study and report, possibly with schematic master site plan.
- Review and revise bylaws to comply with current practice regarding officer positions and terms of office; add Past President officer position.
- Consider exempting all officers from term limits.
- Create a standing Nominating Committee and assign its chairmanship to an officer such as the vice president or a newly constituted second vice president.
- Consider new Second Vice President officer position.
- Formalize nominating procedures and integrate the written expectations of board members into documents discussed with candidates prior to their nomination — and possibly into a contract of sorts signed by the candidate when they agree to stand for formal nomination or when they accept the nomination.
- Revise Code of Regulations to recognize two or three consecutive unexcused board meeting absences as de facto resignation; also clarify what is excusable when, and whether the chair or some other entity excuses the absence.
- Issue standing invitation to Dackman County to appoint ex-officio, non-voting board member or representative to attend board meetings as guest, or for periodic reports to and/or from the county.
- Examine executive committee membership and consider adding chair of new nominating committee and chairs of other standing committees.
- Consider offering at least minimal retirement benefits such as a few thousand dollars of cash match of staff contributions and/or medical insurance.

## **Appendix A**

### **Governance MAP Site Visit**

Dr. John Smith

September 15-16, 2009

#### **Wednesday, September 15**

9:30am Meeting with the Executive Director; Tour the facility  
11:00am Meeting with the Staff  
  
12:00 noon Lunch with Rachel Kassman, Program Director  
  
1:30pm Meeting with Esther Weiner  
Clerk Manager, Dackman County Commissioners  
  
2:15pm Meeting with Dr. Barry Lever, Operations Director  
  
3:00pm Afternoon Break  
  
3:30pm Meeting with Sue Foard, Vice President  
4:30pm Open time  
6:00pm Dinner with the Staff – Parke home

#### **Thursday, September 16**

9:30am Meeting with Jennifer Vess, Board Member (at Jim's office)  
10:15am Meeting with Simone Ellin, Board Member & volunteer liaison  
11:00am Meeting with Karen Falk  
Executive Director, Dackman County Foundation  
  
12:00 noon Lunch with Deb Weiner, Emeritus Board Member & Erin Titter  
  
1:30pm Meeting with Avi Decter, Secretary  
2:15pm Meeting with Jim Goodman, Immediate Past President  
  
3:00pm Afternoon Break  
  
3:30pm Meeting with Executive Committee  
4:30pm Board Meeting  
6:30pm Dinner with the MAP Committee – Cardin Country Club

#### **Friday, October 23**

9:30am Exit interview with Executive Director

## Appendix B

**Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards as articulated by BoardSource with the average scores of 13 board members who rated the board's performance in these categories on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being outstanding).**

1. Determine the organization's mission and purposes....8
2. Select the chief executive....8.5
3. Support the chief executive and assess his or her performance....8.3
4. Ensure effective organizational planning....7.2
5. Ensure adequate resources....7.5
6. Manage resources effectively....7.8
7. Determine, monitor, strengthen the organization's programs and services....7.5
8. Enhance the organization's public standing....7.4
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability....9
10. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance....6.5

## APPENDIX C

### RESOURCES

In addition to resources available from the websites of AAM, AASLH, and BoardSource, OWMP might consider the following books, all of which are available from the AAM.

John Bryson and Farnum K. Alston Jossey-Bass, *Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan: A Workbook for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (AAM, 2004).

Richard P. Chait, *How to Help Your Board Govern More and Manage Less* (BoardSource, 2003).

Kay Sprinkle Grace, *The Ultimate Board Member's Book: A 1-Hour Guide to Understanding and Fulfilling Your Role and Responsibilities* (Emerson and Grace Publishers, 2003).

Sandra R. Hughes, et al., *The Board Building Cycle: Nine Steps to Finding, Recruiting, and Engaging Nonprofit Board Members* (BoardSource, 2000).

Richard T. Ingram, *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* (BoardSource, 2003).

Helmuth J. Naumer, *Of Mutual Respect and Other Things: Thoughts on Museum Trusteeship* (AAM, 1989).

*National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums* with commentary by Elizabeth E. Merritt (Washington, DC: AAM, 2008).

The last title includes a translation of the standards and practices into common English that is worth summarizing here, but a warning is in order. The translations sounds a little tongue-in-cheek, and only selected portions are translated here.

- Be good—not just legal, but ethical—and show folks how good you are before they ask you to prove it.
- Do good for people and know which people you're serving; and be nice to everyone, especially your neighbors.
- Don't clone your staff or board members; look something like the people you are serving, and your neighbors.
- Let other people help decide which games to play, and what the rules are; share your toys.
- Know where you want to go and why it is important; put it in writing and stick to it.
- When deciding what to do next, get lots of opinions, then put your decisions in writing and do it. If it does not work, don't do it again.
- Make sure everyone is clear about who is doing what
  - The board knows it is governing
  - The director knows s/he is directing (and the board knows it too)
  - The staff knows it is doing everything else
  - And put it in writing
  - Put your money where your mission is, and know if you have enough money this year and next and where you will get it. Don't diddle with the books.

## APPENDIX D

### Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums

#### Public Trust & Accountability

- The museum is a good steward of its resources held in the public trust.
- The museum identifies the communities it serves, and makes appropriate decisions in how it serves them.
- Regardless of its self-identified communities, the museum strives to be a good neighbor in its geographic area.
- The museum strives to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse participation.
- The museum asserts its public service role and places education at the center of that role.
- The museum demonstrates a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources.
- The museum is committed to public accountability and is transparent in its mission and its operations.
- The museum complies with local, state, and federal laws, codes, and regulations applicable to its facilities, operations, and administration.

#### Mission & Planning

- The museum has a clear understanding of its mission and communicates why it exists and who benefits as a result of its efforts.
- All aspects of the museum's operations are integrated and focused on meeting its mission.
- The museum's governing authority and staff think and act strategically to acquire, develop, and allocate resources to advance the mission of the museum.
- The museum engages in ongoing and reflective institutional planning that includes involvement of its audiences and community.
- The museum establishes measures of success and uses them to evaluate and adjust its activities.

#### Leadership & Organizational Structure

- The governance, staff, and volunteer structures and processes effectively advance the museum's mission.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers legally, ethically, and effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- The composition, qualifications, and diversity of the museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers enable it to carry out the museum's mission and goals.
- There is a clear and formal division of responsibilities between the governing authority and any group that supports the museum, whether separately incorporated or operating within the museum or its parent organization.

#### Collections Stewardship

- The museum owns, exhibits, or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- The museum legally, ethically, and effectively manages, documents, cares for, and uses the collections.
- The museum's collections-related research is conducted according to appropriate scholarly standards.
- The museum strategically plans for the use and development of its collections.
- Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring their preservation.

#### Education & Interpretation

- The museum clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy, and messages, and demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.
- The museum understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.
- The museum's interpretive content is based on appropriate research.
- Museums conducting primary research do so according to scholarly standards.
- The museum uses techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences, and resources.
- The museum presents accurate and appropriate content for each of its audiences.
- The museum demonstrates consistent high quality in its interpretive activities.
- The museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.

#### Financial Stability

- The museum legally, ethically, and responsibly acquires, manages, and allocates its financial resources in a way that advances its mission.
- The museum operates in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes its long-term sustainability.

#### Facilities & Risk Management

- The museum allocates its space and uses its facilities to meet the needs of the collections, audience, and staff.
- The museum has appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of people, its collections and/or objects, and the facilities it owns or uses.
- The museum has an effective program for the care and long-term maintenance of its facilities.
- The museum is clean and well-maintained, and provides for the visitors' needs.
- The museum takes appropriate measures to protect itself against potential risk and loss.