

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING
BUDGET HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008, 11:15 A.M.

VOLUME II OF III

PRESENTATION ON
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

BEFORE:

HONORABLE DWIGHT EVANS, CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE MARIO J. CIVERA, JR., CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE STEPHEN E. BARRAR
HONORABLE H. SCOTT CONKLIN
HONORABLE CRAIG A. DALLY
HONORABLE BRIAN ELLIS
HONORABLE DAN B. FRANKEL
HONORABLE JOHN T. GALLOWAY
HONORABLE WILLIAM F. KELLER
HONORABLE THADDEUS KIRKLAND
HONORABLE TIM MAHONEY
HONORABLE KATHY M. MANDERINO
HONORABLE MICHAEL P. MCGEEHAN
HONORABLE FRED MCILHATTAN
HONORABLE RON MILLER
HONORABLE JOHN MYERS
HONORABLE CHERELLE PARKER
HONORABLE JOSEPH A. PETRARCA
HONORABLE DAVE REED
HONORABLE DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY

1 BEFORE (cont.'d):
2 HONORABLE DANTE SANTONI, JR.
3 HONORABLE MARIO M. SCAVELLO
4 HONORABLE JOSHUA D. SHAPIRO
5 HONORABLE JOHN SIPTROTH
6 HONORABLE MATTHEW SMITH
7 HONORABLE GREGORY S. VITALI
8 HONORABLE DON WALKO
9 HONORABLE JAKE WHEATLEY, JR.

10 ALSO PRESENT:
11 MIRIAM FOX
12 EDWARD NOLAN

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DEBRA B. MILLER
REPORTER

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I N D E X
TESTIFIERS

NAMES	PAGE
BARBARA FRANCO	4
JEAN CUTLER	17

1 CHAIRMAN EVANS: I would like to reconvene
2 the House Appropriations Committee meeting.

3 We now have the Historical and Museum
4 Commission before us. So as you know, we usually go
5 right into questions.

6 MS. FRANCO: Exactly.

7 CHAIRMAN EVANS: So what I would like to do,
8 Representative Jake Wheatley, go ahead.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: Start off?

10 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Yes, I'll let you start off
11 since you seem like you know a little bit about
12 history.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: Actually, no; I'm
14 going to be very parochial in my conversation.

15 And, one, I want to welcome you here and
16 thank you for coming, and I'm sure that you are very
17 much aware of the August Wilson Cultural Center that
18 has been developed and is growing in Pittsburgh, and
19 I understand that part of the line item that maybe
20 that museum could apply for support is being cut a
21 little bit this year.

22 But can you talk to me about, one, how many
23 museums you are supporting through that line item;
24 and two, how a museum like the August Wilson Cultural
25 Center could access more support from you all?

1 MS. FRANCO: The museum assistance grants
2 have a number of different categories. There are
3 project grants, but the largest segment of that money
4 goes toward general operating support.

5 And over the past 5 years, the number of
6 museums applying for that funding has increased from
7 about 80 to over 100. So it is almost a 10-percent
8 increase in the number of museums.

9 So there is clearly a growth in the number
10 of museums. We have had flat to diminishing funding
11 in that category. Clearly, there is great need, and
12 even the amount in the budget this year and last year
13 isn't enough to meet those needs.

14 So the funding, the proposals that people
15 send in we are only able to fund at a percentage, so
16 that we can spread that around to as many different
17 museums as possible.

18 But clearly, there is plenty of need for
19 operating support and support for our museums.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: Now, in making
21 decisions around the support for various museums and
22 how much you will support through that line item, is
23 there some type of criteria, a competitive basis,
24 that you determine internally how museums will gain
25 support?

1 MS. FRANCO: Yes. We have done panels in
2 the past. What we are now looking at is coming up
3 with a new set of standards, so that if a museum
4 meets those standards, the money will be distributed.

5 So ongoing support really is--- We want to,
6 obviously, reward good work, but it is very hard to
7 make that as too competitive, because all of the
8 museums are really doing good work.

9 So then the amount that they receive is
10 based on their annual budget. So it is tiered in
11 terms of the size of the organization, with about the
12 largest right now being only about \$45,000 a year for
13 the larger museums in that category, because there
14 are a lot of museums that have to come out of that.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: Now, none of the
16 nonpreferred museums get support through that line
17 item. This is only for all the other various
18 museums?

19 MS. FRANCO: The others; exactly.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WHEATLEY: Okay. All right.
21 Thank you.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Chairman Mario Civera.

24 CHAIRMAN CIVERA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 I just have a brief question.

1 As we were looking through the budget, we
2 noticed that the maintenance program appropriation,
3 as in the past years, has been one line item. Now
4 they have taken that line item and eliminated that
5 and put it into what they refer to as a general
6 government operations appropriation. Could you
7 comment on that? What kind of an effect is that
8 going to have if we remove one line item and now we
9 incorporated that? Can you give me---

10 MS. FRANCO: We requested that in our budget
11 for this reason: One of our biggest issues, two
12 biggest issues are the cost of personnel and the cost
13 of utilities. And a lot of our maintenance work is
14 done by having enough people to mow the grass, the
15 seasonal workers, the wage workers, and things like
16 that, and also utilities.

17 So one of the things that we were looking at
18 is the ability to put that maintenance money, instead
19 of keeping it separate, putting it into the general
20 operating as a way to more strategically use those
21 resources and be able to really keep track of them,
22 and by putting them together, we think we can do a
23 better job of the maintenance.

24 CHAIRMAN CIVERA: Do you believe you can
25 save money?

1 MS. FRANCO: It is simply a question of the
2 maintenance budget. Some things could be paid out of
3 that, some couldn't, so we were splitting, coding.
4 It was very cumbersome in terms of trying to figure
5 out how much we were actually spending. This way, we
6 will be much better able to track those expenses, and
7 as we need, to be able to support some of the
8 increases in utility costs.

9 CHAIRMAN CIVERA: Okay. I understand.

10 Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative Fred
12 McIlhattan.

13 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Thank you.

14 I noticed two of your line items that were
15 eliminated, the historical education and museum
16 assistance and the regional history centers. Could
17 you talk a little bit about what they do and why you
18 chose them for elimination there? What was going on?

19 MS. FRANCO: Those are usually items that
20 are put into the budget after the Governor's budget,
21 so they tend to be legislative initiatives.

22 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay.

23 MS. FRANCO: And those are not things that
24 we have direct input into, for the most part.

25 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay.

1 Following up on that, I noticed in the
2 nonpreferreds the Carnegie Museum and Science Center,
3 you asked for a huge increase there which wasn't
4 granted at this time. What are they looking for
5 there? What is the reason for that?

6 MS. FRANCO: Each year the nonpreferreds
7 submit to us what they would like. It is not a very
8 complicated request. They simply put in the number
9 that they are looking for, and I don't know that they
10 put any justification.

11 Again, we don't get involved in looking at
12 or assessing those requests. We simply pass them
13 along.

14 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay. That is
15 mainly that you just pass those through then; okay.

16 And one final thing, something that I know
17 you do have a lot of control over, and that's the
18 State Museum in Harrisburg.

19 MS. FRANCO: Yes.

20 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: There has been a
21 lot of work going on there. Where are you in your
22 plans for renovation, and where does the money come
23 from for that? Does that come out of a spatial
24 allocation or does it come out of your budget? How
25 does that work?

1 MS. FRANCO: Repairs to the State Museum
2 would come from the capital budget---

3 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay.

4 MS. FRANCO: ---and there is an
5 appropriation for renovation to the State Museum and
6 money to replace the State Archives building as well.

7 The issue for us has been that the capital
8 budget has been limited for us to health and safety
9 issues, so not very many large projects have gone
10 forward. So it is on hold.

11 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay, but I
12 guess what I'm trying to ask, too, is there a great
13 need for major renovations -- growth, construction?
14 What are your plans? What is your wish list? Your
15 dream, I guess.

16 MS. FRANCO: We do have a master plan. The
17 major issues for the State Museum are really
18 upgrading all of the systems. It has the original
19 heating system that is 40 years old. We have had
20 breakdowns in the fire alarm system, and those need
21 to be replaced. Lighting, we could save money in
22 terms of electrical, by upgrading some of the
23 electrical systems.

24 Also, the exhibitions are also, many of
25 them, 30 and 40 years old and desperately need to be

1 upgraded and renewed.

2 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: So there is a
3 lot of major work, in your opinion, that really needs
4 to be done to keep the quality of that facility
5 really what it should be. Is that correct?

6 MS. FRANCO: Absolutely, and the concern
7 that we have, of course, is that if you leave
8 anything of that size and scale and the nature of
9 that building go too long, then you really do have
10 the, you know, the possibility, as we did, where our
11 entire fire alarm system shut down.

12 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Do you have a
13 figure? If someone would say tomorrow, we are going
14 to write you out a check to take care of those
15 things; this is our archives; it is important to us
16 and we want to have quality, what would that be?

17 MS. FRANCO: The cost to replace the
18 Archives is about \$30 million, and completely
19 redoing, including exhibitions, for the State Museum
20 is about \$170 million.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: 170 what?

22 MS. FRANCO: \$170 million.

23 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: So that would
24 take care of everything you want to do?

25 MS. FRANCO: Exactly.

1 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Even the
2 maintenance, the lights, the heat, and the exhibits.

3 MS. FRANCO: Yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE McILHATTAN: Okay.

5 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative Scavello.

7 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chairman, and I see Representative Keller happen to
9 smile, but let me start, and thank you for being in
10 front of us today, Director Franco.

11 Let me go over a scenario, and it has to do
12 with the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant
13 Program. Myself and Representative Siptroth lobbied
14 for a church in his district, a historic church, for
15 under that program, and they were denied.

16 So what I did was, I looked for the grant
17 programs that you distributed on the 29th of
18 November, and I went through it, that \$1.5 million,
19 and not to my surprise that I looked at, \$831,427, 54
20 percent of that \$1.5 million, went to Philadelphia,
21 and for some of the same things that we were looking
22 for in Monroe.

23 How does Philadelphia get over 54 percent of
24 the program, and there is nothing left for anyone
25 else?

1 MS. FRANCO: Well---

2 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: This is a
3 beautiful old church in Hamilton Township that is
4 over a hundred years old that we tried to get some
5 money to help.

6 MS. FRANCO: Well, I actually thank you for
7 asking that question, because it is one of the ways
8 that all of you as Representatives can help us, which
9 is that each year, the majority of the requests that
10 we receive in that program are from Philadelphia and
11 southeastern. So we would like to see, we go out, we
12 send staff out to try to encourage them to take
13 advantage of some of these programs.

14 That is a competitive program, so they are
15 reviewed, and we encourage you to work with our staff
16 to make it a more competitive grant. We also try to
17 look at how we can distribute that money in terms of
18 geographic, and we really encourage other communities
19 to also apply for that so that in fact it does not
20 all go to the more urban areas.

21 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: But in this
22 particular case, we did have a community that did
23 apply and a church, a 100-year-old church, with two
24 legislators out there making calls to try to put them
25 in that position, and we didn't get it.

1 So, you know, what do we do? The
2 decisionmaking on the board, I hope they are not all
3 from Philadelphia to make this---

4 MS. FRANCO: No, not at all.

5 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: No; okay.

6 MS. FRANCO: There are panels that go and
7 review them, they are rated, and then it is basically
8 the money is handed out on the basis of those
9 ratings. So I don't even see them to tell you the
10 truth.

11 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: Yeah.

12 The other question is, you are saying that
13 some of the other parts of the Commonwealth are not
14 taking advantage of this. What can we do to get the
15 information out? Are we doing a good enough job to
16 get the information out to these communities?
17 Because there are a tremendous amount of beautiful
18 old churches and beautiful old buildings throughout
19 the Commonwealth that people just, you know, need a
20 little help, and they might be missing the boat here.

21 MS. FRANCO: Well, let me just say that
22 right now I am just signing letters that are going
23 out to members of the Legislature, and it is to your
24 offices and to you to let you know that in each of
25 the regions, we have a designated person from our

1 Historic Preservation Office---

2 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: Okay.

3 MS. FRANCO: ---and we are encouraging you
4 to have your constituents get in touch with them,
5 work with them. We really want to do planning on the
6 community level, work more with the Main Street
7 programs, really be able to have historic
8 preservation as being a part of how communities are
9 looking at their future and do that planning.

10 So the more you can do that rather than
11 just--- I mean, obviously, one project is important,
12 but the more that that is put into the whole planning
13 process and the local governments, it is very
14 important. So we really want to work with those
15 communities.

16 So you can help us tremendously by
17 encouraging your constituents to contact us early,
18 take advantage of those. We can't always assure you
19 that we are going to have a check to write for it,
20 but there is a lot of free and very helpful advice
21 and consulting that our office provides that we wish
22 people would take more advantage of.

23 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: In this particular
24 case with the church in Hamilton Township, would it
25 help Representative Siptroth and myself if we wrote

1 "Hamilton Township in Philadelphia"? Would that,
2 would that be a--- I just want to see this church
3 helped, because I hate to--- It is a beautiful old
4 church, so.

5 MS. FRANCO: And we have another program
6 actually for and specifically with churches, which we
7 have been trying to work with the Partners For Sacred
8 Places, to work with churches, to figure out how to,
9 because many of the churches in our communities are
10 extremely important in terms of their architectural
11 integrity.

12 REPRESENTATIVE SCAVELLO: Okay. Thank you
13 very much.

14 MS. FRANCO: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Representative Scott
16 Conklin.

17 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: I'm hiding over in
18 the corner over here.

19 Hello. How are you doing today?

20 Just a quick question. First off, as
21 someone who, I guess, was on the flip side of what
22 your organization does, I was a county commissioner
23 in Centre County, which you awarded the courthouse
24 and some other things we have done with some awards,
25 and I thank you for it.

1 Just two quick questions. I'm looking, and
2 one is, am I correct in seeing that the little town
3 of Philipsburg where I am from will be designated as
4 a historical community this year in '08? I'm looking
5 at the map.

6 MS. FRANCO: I'm not exactly sure.

7 MS. CUTLER: I don't know how they--- Are
8 you talking about how they determine the National
9 Register districts?

10 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: Yes.

11 MS. CUTLER: Do you know when they submitted
12 their application?

13 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: Well, I'm looking
14 at your map---

15 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Excuse me. Can you hold on
16 a second? Excuse me a second. Hold up, Scott.

17 You have to come over to the mike and
18 identify yourself please, for the record.

19 MS. CUTLER: Sorry.

20 Good morning.

21 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Good morning.

22 MS. CUTLER: My name is Jean Cutler, and I'm
23 Director of the Bureau for Historic Preservation, and
24 the question was directed at Philipsburg.

25 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: Pennsylvania, not

1 New Jersey, just for those folks who, you know, are
2 from Philadelphia.

3 We are, you know, the one that could not
4 afford the second "1."

5 MS. CUTLER: Right. I know where
6 Philipsburg is. I have been through there and enjoy
7 it. Thank you.

8 We have a Historic Preservation Board
9 meeting on, I believe, March 11. I have not looked
10 through the nominations. Have they submitted a
11 nomination to---

12 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: You actually have
13 us listed here on the little map---

14 MS. CUTLER: Oh, then you are definitely.

15 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: ---and I was not
16 aware of it, which is good news for the community,
17 and I want to thank you for that.

18 MS. CUTLER: It is good news for the
19 community, because many of our grant programs are
20 attached to a National Register designation.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CONKLIN: And just a
22 follow-up question, only because we all, you know, we
23 all worry about our own little communities.

24 The Boalsburg Museum, which is the military
25 museum, have you had any insight, and if you don't,

1 it's fine, because I have a call in to them to ask
2 them other questions as well. So I'll let that one
3 pass.

4 But you did answer my question, and I thank
5 you for that.

6 MS. CUTLER: You're welcome. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN EVANS: The only question I have
8 is, did you want that just for exhibit or do you want
9 to explain to us all of the material you brought with
10 you?

11 MS. FRANCO: Sure.

12 Well, I think there's no better way to sort
13 of explain what we do as preservers of Pennsylvania's
14 past than to show you some of that past, and what we
15 have brought today are some early items that deal
16 with William Penn, because this year is the 325th
17 anniversary of Penn's first coming, last December,
18 and last December was the first meeting of the
19 General Assembly, so it is your birthday as well.

20 What we have brought along are some of our
21 really earliest documents, and this is what the
22 Archives does: the first frame of government, from
23 1682, which is the basis of why we are here today;
24 the Great Law passed December of 1682; we have
25 Patrick Robinson's law book, which is a very early

1 member of the government; and Volume I of the minutes
2 of the Provincial Council, 1683 to 1688.

3 So what we are doing today will end up in
4 the Archives, just as this material that we are so
5 interested in looking at now. But this is part of
6 the ongoing story of our State and the Commonwealth
7 and the democratic process.

8 We also, because it is still Black History
9 Month, brought the Act for the Gradual Abolition of
10 Slavery from Pennsylvania, which was passed in 1780.
11 I believe that was the first of those acts, of which
12 we are very proud.

13 In front of me is a charger that belonged to
14 William Penn, and this was brought down today from
15 Pennsbury Manor, which, as you know, is one of our
16 historic sites and the recreation of Penn's home on
17 the Delaware.

18 And we have two early prints showing William
19 Penn from a collection that we received, and when
20 talking about the renovations to the State Museum,
21 one of the things that we are looking at is changing
22 and redoing some of the exhibits in Memorial Hall to
23 really put William Penn more center stage for his
24 importance, not only for the State of Pennsylvania
25 but our national history and as an international

1 figure who is known throughout the world. So we feel
2 that that is a very important story and one that we
3 are uniquely situated to tell.

4 CHAIRMAN EVANS: I thought when you
5 mentioned the part about the archives, you had a
6 little space for Mario and I. We have both been
7 around a little while.

8 Representative Thaddeus Kirkland.

9 REPRESENTATIVE KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 And thank you for your presentation and
12 being here, especially with the historical
13 perspective of William Penn, and I just want to make
14 sure that my colleagues, I love my colleagues from
15 Philadelphia and every other place, but I want to
16 remind them that William Penn landed in the first
17 city of Pennsylvania, which is the city of Chester,
18 unbeknown to you all.

19 MS. FRANCO: And there is a historical
20 marker to say that.

21 REPRESENTATIVE KIRKLAND: My colleague just
22 asked me, "Was he lost?" Maybe, but he was there
23 first. He was lost but now he is found in the city
24 of Chester.

25 I was looking through this booklet, and this

1 is a great resource; I appreciate it. I found
2 something, I came across something in here in the
3 county of Delaware, an old museum that was left as an
4 inheritance to the citizens of Chester, the Alfred
5 Deshong Museum, and I see where it is on your
6 Pennsylvania at-risk list. It is a museum that has
7 been dormant for quite some time, a beautiful
8 building -- a beautiful building -- and that has not
9 been utilized or fixed up in quite some time.

10 My question is, has the county, has county
11 council come to you for assistance or talked to you
12 about the restoration or financial assistance and
13 securing financial assistance to restore that
14 property?

15 MS. FRANCO: Not to me personally. I don't
16 know whether or not they have been working with our
17 staff, but again I would encourage you, the more that
18 we can be involved and thinking of it as a resource,
19 not just as a money resource but as really a
20 technical and professional and consulting resource,
21 we are really, really anxious to work with
22 communities in that way.

23 One of the things that I would say is people
24 often look to the State and say, the State should
25 save this, or, you know, the Federal government

1 should save this. But actually, preservation is most
2 effective at the local level. It is the local
3 government; it is the local planning group; it is the
4 zoning; it is the certified local governments; it is
5 the historic district; it is the citizens of that
6 community who really have the most power to save the
7 things that they hold dear.

8 REPRESENTATIVE KIRKLAND: Well, once again,
9 I appreciate this book, because we have been trying
10 and I think folks have kind of given up in trying to
11 get the Deshong Museum restored, but by taking this
12 information back, I'm trying to inspire and encourage
13 folks to go back to the table, to the county, and
14 say, this is a worthwhile project that we need to
15 save and we need to fight for.

16 So I thank you for this information, and
17 thanks for your testimony.

18 MS. FRANCO: And thank you for calling it to
19 my attention as well.

20 REPRESENTATIVE KIRKLAND: Sure, and thank
21 you for talking about William Penn and Chester.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Kirkland.

24 I would like to thank you sincerely and all
25 of your staff, and particularly for bringing the

1 exhibits. I think it is helpful to us. Thank you
2 again.

3 What I would like to do is announce to the
4 members that at 1 o'clock, instead of 1:30, the
5 Department of Revenue will be here -- 1 o'clock. So
6 I encourage the members to be back here at 1 o'clock.

7 This meeting is now recessed until
8 1 o'clock. Thank you.

9 MS. FRANCO: Thank you.

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11 (The hearing concluded at 11:35 a.m.)

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1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
2 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
3 notes taken by me on the within proceedings and that
4 this is a correct transcript of the same.

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Debra B. Miller, Reporter

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