



## Minutes of South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum Commission (March 19, 2026)

The South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum Commission met on March 19, 2026, at 10:30 am in the Education Room located in the Columbia Mills Building at 301 Gervais Street. A notice was put on the website on March 17, 2026, and sent out to the news media. The meeting was conducted in person.

Commission Members present: Leland Summers, Voight Shealy, Walter Curry, CW Bowman and Allen Gantt

Commission Members attending remotely: Sam Howell, William Craver and Martha Van Schaick

Staff Members present: Allen Roberson, Rachel Cockrell, Megan Brigman

A copy of the Agenda and Minutes of the January 15, 2026, meeting, as well as all other handouts, were emailed to each Commissioner prior to the meeting.

### I. Greetings to the Commission, Members of the Media, and Visitors

Leland Summers called the meeting to order at 10:36. A quorum was present. Members were thanked for their attendance. CW Bowman and Allen Gantt were welcomed to the Commission.

### II. Review of January 15, 2026, Minutes

Minutes of last meeting on January 15, 2026, were reviewed. They were unanimously approved.

### III. Old Business

- A. Congaree Room Feasibility Study – Mr. Roberson referred to the handouts, and that this expansion has been needed and requested since 2015. This is the primary request in this coming year's budget. In previous years, the SCSM has been opposed, but this time they are supporting our request because they were able to absorb the first and fourth floor of the West Wing of the building when DHEC moved out. Mr. Roberson talked through the photographs in the packet. The Atrium work will add a stairwell, the Congaree Room will include a meeting room using 2/3 of the space, storage

space, and a hallway leading to a small exhibit gallery. The space has no HVAC, and the floors need a complete rework.

- B. Small temporary (Gist) Gallery – renovation is behind schedule because of Mr. Roberson’s recurring illness and absences, but the US Army Corps of Engineers just requested a year’s extension this past December for final review of all artifacts from Congaree River archeological project before the museum can install an exhibit, which put the delayed renovation schedule in line with the new exhibit timetable. The Gallery will host a short-term exhibit in the interim, before the renovation begins sometime in the summer of 2026.
- C. Personnel – Chelsea Sigourney left in August, and there is currently no staff over Exhibits
  - 1. Chief Curator Hire – Third attempt at hiring, the position has been posted since February and will be open through end of March. The Chief Curator will be supervising all Curatorial staff, managing their budgets, and will work parallel with Rachel Cockrell, Administrative Operations Chief, in reporting directly to Mr. Roberson.
  - 2. Collections Manager – Applications have been reviewed, and interviews have begun. They will report to the Registrar.
  - 3. Megan Brigman has been promoted to a supervisory position as Registrar over the Museum Collection.
  - 4. Rachel Cockrell has been promoted to the rank of Administrative Manager but continues with her same agency title of Administrative Operations Chief. She will have some increased duties, as well as the recognition of what she has taken on over the past nine years.

#### IV. Ongoing Museum Operation

##### A. FY26 Approved Non-Recurring Budget

- 1. Approved Non-recurring Funds totaling \$1,430,000 were transferred on February 19.
- 2. Funds allocated:
  - a. \$30,000 - Develop Vietnam War Oral Interviews Traveling Exhibit
  - b. \$150,000 – Purchase of two Conrad Wise Chapman paintings from the Valentine Museum in Richmond, appraised at \$385,000. 45 sketches of Civil War Charleston are included.
  - c. \$500,000 - Main Gallery Updates - adding a section on the PoW experience, a case for some of the C. A. Huey Collection, repair and clean the casework, and rotate of artifacts.
  - d. \$750,000 – To develop major exhibit on the International Aspects of the American Civil War, utilizing the McRae Papers Archival Collection and the C.A. Huey Collection of European Imported Confederate Arms and Equipment.

- B. Rachel Cockrell has completed the Museum's response to the State Auditor's Office Agreed Upon Procedures Audit, but the report will not come back until Admin Shared Services submits their portions of the materials.
- C. Collections (Megan Brigman): Traditional Japanese Tanto knife displayed for Commissioners, looking forward to receiving Vietnam artifacts from Andy Rice Collection – rucksack, field telephone, binoculars, boots
- D. Rogers, Desportes, and J. Moore Confederate Frock Coats at Conservation labs - some estimates have increased. The remainder of the General Assembly appropriated conservation fund is being used for fine arts shipping for these uniforms.
- E. Wade Hampton Sword – half paid for. Delivery is expected at end of this month. A celebration was discussed for when the sword goes on display.
- F. FY27 Non-Recurring Budget Request passed SC House of Representatives. Recurring Requests appear not to have passed at this time. The Senate hasn't voted yet.

- 1. \$73,000 Increase in Existing Personnel Budget (Annual Recurring) for raises to retain staff.
- 2. \$1,448,000 (Nonrecurring) for Expansion of the SC Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum into the Congaree Room in the Columbia Mills Building (may increase amount to cover atrium floor updating). The Director of the State Museum is supportive of this project. The space will include program/event space and a small gallery.
- 3. \$81,279 FTE Position Curator of Interpretation & Exhibits (Annual Recurring) for a new position to assist with relating the collection to our exhibits and programs.
- 4. \$118,263 Additional Annual Rent for Museum Expansion area (Annual Recurring) for the Atrium and Congaree Room.

- G. Exhibit Schedule – all dependent on staff. With Chelsea's departure, we no longer have dedicated Exhibit staff.
  - 1. Keep A War with No Front Lines: SC and the Vietnam War, 1965-1973 up through December 2026. This has been a very popular exhibit, which we will continue to update.
  - 2. Gist Gallery possibilities before renovation (scheduled for late 2026) Rev. War exhibit precursor - Reprise of "The Twilight of Revolutionaries and the Dawn of Photography" exhibit of Rev. War photos is set to open on Rev War Day on March 28.
  - 3. Congaree River Exhibit Spring 2027, delayed because of the Corps of Engineers request.
  - 4. Updates of Main Gallery Fall 2026 - Spring 2027
  - 5. Bid Congaree Room Renovation & complete 2026-2027
  - 6. Exhibit on Huey & McRae Collections for 2027 – we have the best collection of purchasing records and artifacts of importing materiel

