Memo

Date: 29 August 2019
To: Monroe County Historical Commission
From: Brian Egen, Chairman MCHC and Andrew Clark, Director MCM
Re: Institutional Reorganization

In the Strategic Priorities document that out consultant, Donna Braden, distributed to the Monroe County Historical Commission during our 14 August 2019, under the section "Audience Awareness and Responsiveness," she wrote, "Create wider public awareness that the Monroe County Museum is not just one building but a system of sites." How do we as an organization accomplish this? My approach is an institutional reorganization that I have outlined in the following pages.

The institutional reorganization below:

- Effectually aligns the Monroe County Historical Commission (MCHC) and Monroe County Museum (MCM).
- Reorganizes Museum Divisions to the MCM's mission.
- Restructures full-time and part-time staff positions to effectively achieve organizational goals.

Historical Commission/Monroe County Museum

- Primary Strategic Purpose: Creation of the Monroe County Museum System

After over fifty years there remains confusion as to who and what the MCHC is and its relationship with the MCM? Though apparent to those closest to MCHC and MCM, to local media and the general public it is still enigmatic. In order for us to create a strong brand identity as integral cultural institution for Monroe County and our out-of-region guests, this needs refinement and solid clarification. This understanding is exceedingly crucial as the MCM is publically funded through a dedicated millage.

This proposal will put in place mechanisms to correct this misunderstanding and further strengthen our strategic plans and vision for the future. In part, the proposal takes a cue from the local library system by creating the Monroe County Museum System (MCMS). The MCMS would include the Monroe County Museum, Territorial Park, Monroe County Archives (further explanation later), Eby Log House and Tool Exhibit (in partnership with the Monroe County Fair), Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum (in partnership with the Vietnam Veterans Association Chapter 142), St Antoine Historic Site (further explanation later), and any future sites or museum entrusted to the system.

The advisory body of the Monroe County Museum System would change from the MCHC to the Monroe County Museum System Board of Trustees. Apart from a change in name, the structure and by-laws would remain the same: the board of trustees would consist of nine members appointed by their member of the board of commissioners along with a past president and a member emeritus.

This plan creates the Monroe County Archives. Currently, our archives have been variously referred to as the Monroe County Historical Commission Archives or the Monroe County Museum Archives. This name change would better define and strengthen the role of our archives within the organization, county government, and align with the primary function to preserve Monroe County's history by providing access to the broader community and national/international users. As archival resources are core to the museum, the Monroe County Archives would be an entity on par with any other of our constituent units of the MCMS. Administrative responsibility for the archives will be addressed later.

At present, the St Antoine Historic Site is outside our sphere of influence. Given its proximity to Territorial Park and the historic Delouil site, its importance to the establishment and development of the River Raisin settlement, and the fact that many past and present members of the historical commission and museum were influential in the site's recognition and development, its oversight and responsibility more effectively aligns with the concept of the MCMS rather than that of the county parks and recreation. The MCMS is the history and culture arm of the County of Monroe and this alignment is both pragmatic and efficient.

Reorganization of Divisions

- Primary Strategic Purpose: Division Reorganization and Creation of Monroe County Archives

At present, the museum is comprised of three divisions (*See Organizational Chart I: Current MCM Positions*):

- **Operations Division**, headed by the Museum Director (full-time) and ultimately responsible for all functions of the museum.

- **Programs Division**, led by the Curator of Programs (full-time) and staffed by Lead Presenters (part-time), Presenters (part-time), and Visitor Services (part-time).

- **Collections Division**, led by the Curator of Collections (full-time) and staffed by Exhibit Specialists (part-time) and Curatorial Assistants (part-time).

Under this reorganization plan, the Monroe County Museum System would have four divisions, reassignment of personnel and the creation of new positions that will be detailed later. The reorganization would be as follows (*See Organizational Chart II: Proposed MCMS Positions*):

- **Programs Division:** Headed by the Deputy Director (new, full-time; repurposes and reassigns the Curator of Programs position) and staffed by Lead Presenters (two regular, part-time) and Presenters (two seasonal, part-time).

- **Local History Division** *(New Division)*: Headed by the County Historian (reassignment of Curator of Collections) and staffed by a Registrar (new, regular part-time; reassignment of Curatorial Assistant) and Assistant Historian (new, regular part-time).

- **Exhibits Division** *(New Division)*: Headed by the Exhibits Coordinator (new, regular part-time; reassignment of Exhibits Specialist) and staffed by one Exhibits Specialist (regular part-time; likely transfer-in of current staffer).

- **Visitor Services Division** *(New Division)* : Headed by the Visitor Services Coordinator (new, regular part-time; reassignment of current staff member) and staffed by Visitors Services Specialists (two regular, part-time; one seasonal, part-time; new hires).

Under the Monroe County Museum System model, the Museum Director would become Director of the Monroe County Museum System.

Reorganization of Museum Staff

- Primary Strategic Purpose: Redistributes museum staff, eliminates old positions and creates new ones.

Aside from retasking current staff members, one of the goals of the reorganization is to create a competitively compensated workforce and further encourage the development of local history talent within the County of Monroe.

Programs Division Reorganization

At full capacity, the museum operates the Monroe County Museum seven days a week year round, the Museum Archives five days a week year round, the Territorial Park two days a week between May and September (with anticipated expanded hours of operation in coming years), the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum one day a week between May and September, and the Eby Log House during Fair Week. This does not take into account other outreach opportunities or special events the museum participates in or in which it could participate.

At present, day to day operations of the organization rests with a single manager, the Museum Director. This is an unsustainable model and to better serve our mission and deliver our programs, the currently vacant Curator of Programs position should be repurposed to create the position of Deputy Director. For several years, the museum had the position of Assistant Director but it was eliminated due to budgetary constraints in the pre-millage years. The Deputy Director's primary responsibilities would be to oversee the day to day operations of the Programs Division and assigned staff, develop an active living history program for outreach and on-site activities throughout the MCMS and, specifically, serve as site manager of Territorial Park during its operating season. The Deputy Director would also continue and expand programming opportunities to youth and adult audiences, public relations (old and new media), serve as head of the MCMS in the director's short and long term absences, and be available to answer or assist in security issues.

No new additional positions need to be created. Within the Programs Division, the Lead Presenters and Presenters are currently existing positions.

Local History Division Reorganization
The new position of County Historian (which repurposes the Curator of Collections position) would oversee the day-to-day operations of the Monroe County Archives along with the museum's three-dimensional collections, ensure access and aid to researchers using the museum's archival collections, assist in providing programs based on the museum's archival collections, and serve as the manager and liaison of the Monroe County Historical Marker program.

Additional changes would be the creation of the Registrar, an integral position in the museum field with regards to proper stewardship of historical assets and collections. The Registrar would be a regular, part-time position, that would assist with the archival collections and maintain incoming and outgoing loan agreements, new accessions, insurance paperwork, and other best practices of the museum field.

The Assistant Historian position would be a regular, part-time position and would replace the Curatorial Assistant position. Among the duties of the Assistant Historian would be to respond to research requests, process incoming collections and collections backlog, and provide routine cleaning of exhibited items.

Both the Registrar and Assistant Historian would aid the County Historian in maintaining public access to the Monroe County Archives.

Exhibits Division Creation
Once a part of the Collections Division, Exhibits would stand on its own under the day-to-day operational responsibility of the newly created, regular, part-time position of Exhibits Coordinator. Besides the production of exhibits across all sites and

travelling exhibits, the Exhibits Division would be responsible for all of the museum's graphic design efforts, care and presentation of exhibit spaces, and routine cleaning and maintenance, and work collaboratively with other divisions for a cohesive and functioning organization.

In order to successfully accomplish all these tasks, the Exhibits Coordinator would be assisted by a regular, part-time Exhibit Specialist.

Visitor Services Division Creation
Visitor Services was once part of the Programs Division. To allow the Programs Division staff greater focus on core responsibilities and enhance visitor engagement, the Visitor Services Division would become its own unit and be headed by a Visitor Services Coordinator. The Visitor Services Coordinator would be responsible for frontline efforts of the museum system, gift shop operations, museum membership program, business office operations, and integrate accessibility opportunities for all guests.

The Visitor Services Coordinator would be assisted in their duties by regular, part-time and seasonal, part-time Visitor Services Specialists.

Next Steps
Provided the Monroe County Historical Commission approves the recommendations, the Chairman of the Historical Commission and Museum Director, will draft a joint memo for the reorganization and forward it to the central office for submission to the Monroe County Board of Commissioners.