

Minutes of the SEAC Executive Committee Meeting

February 20, 2026

In attendance: Jane Eastman, Ashley Dumas, Amanda Regnier, Mary Beth Fitts, Shawn Lambert, Heather Lapham, Elliot Blair, Trevor Duke, Michelle Rathgaber, and Karen Stevens.

President Jane Eastman called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

Jane explained that the meeting had two purposes. First, to vote on the Public Outreach Committee grant and second to discuss a fraud incident on the website and changes to website hosting.

The first order of business was to approve the awarding of the Public Outreach Grant. The Public Outreach Committee recommended that \$5000 be awarded to the Arkansas Archaeological Survey to host a public outreach event focused on the Boarding School for the Arkansas Cherokee. This is a collaborative project between the Arkansas Survey, the United Ketoowah Band, and the Cherokee Nation. Michelle recused herself from vote due to association with the grant and Ashley r recused herself as a member of the committee. Jane moved to vote, Shawn seconded, and the vote to approve the grant was unanimous.

The second order of business was a discussion of a fraud incident that occurred on the SEAC website.

Mary Beth pointed out that the transition to a new payment service needs to happen regardless of this fraud incident. No one is really sure what happened with this incident. Mary Beth has reached out to Bank of America, where the SEAC account is kept, and they recommended opening a fraud dispute, which would trigger a deeper investigation by the bank on what happened to our payment system.

SEAC had multiple substantial fees taken from the Bank of America account by EVO International, the service SEAC uses for payment processing, in November and December 2025 and January 2026. EVO took those payments out in a chunk and did not itemize what those fees were. This has not happened to SEAC before, so previous treasurers were unaware. It was difficult to determine what was happening because the EVO account was in still in Nick Herrmann's name. Nick was Treasurer some time ago. This made it nearly impossible for Mary Beth to get any information from EVO because they refused to accept her as a legitimate owner of the account. Mary Beth was finally able to get access and submitted a table (pasted below) showing the fees EVO charged before this meeting.

The company charged several fees SEAC has not been charged in the past. These include a \$450 upgrade fee, which was taken out of our account without any notification before or after. The only way to see this was if Mary Beth logged into the website.

The fraud incident happened on October 31, when someone made 6500 attempts to pay for a regular membership in two minutes. It is unclear whether this was a hacker or someone from the compliance side of the industry. All were declined by VISA, but SEAC was charged per failed transaction. SEAC did not collect any money from those transactions. Somewhere around 20 card numbers from five different addresses were used. One of these was listed as the Virginia State Capitol. One was from Tucson, Texas and another was from a zip code typically only used for bulk mailing, suggesting fraud.

This suspicious activity was brought to Mary Beth's attention with authorize.net, which the Treasurer uses to capture membership data. They pass transactions on to VISA, who decides whether to approve the transactions, then EVO does the processing and pays SEAC. This incident generated roughly \$4000 in fees from EVO. We also had about \$400 in non-compliance fees because we had not scanned the website to make sure back-end safety was updated. EVO charged about \$1000 for other fees and did not notify SEAC.

Trevor Duke pointed out that this is a clear case of fraud and it seems like a pattern that we should submit a fraud claim with VISA and then block EVO from using our bank account.

Mary Beth noted that we were non-compliant but EVO did not send any notifications that we were out of compliance. Mary Beth worked with Nick Herrmann to get account access changed over. It took EVO five business days just to email a form to get the account ownership changed over from the previous treasurer. Mary Beth suggests we cut ties with them and block their access to our accounts.

Amanda pointed out that we likely cannot block them from our accounts until we officially stop doing business with them, which seems like a good idea. Amanda also asked to clarify what funds we would be reporting and expecting to recoup. It seems that their fees may be gone but at least we could get the \$4500 from the fraud attempt back.

Michelle asked what the "Annual Fee" that EVO charged was for? Was it for use of their services in 2025?

Mary Beth is unable to discern that from the information she has and communicating with EVO has been difficult.

Michelle pointed out that the website has already dropped EVO for processing transactions and switched over to Stripe because of these issues. Stripe combines the services provided by EVO and authorize.net into one. Michelle also pointed out that whatever

happened with the payment issue was not a website issue. Michelle and Karen thoroughly checked the website to verify this.

Jane asked if SEAC needed to involve their lawyer since this seemed to be an attack on our merchant account.

Mary Beth was unsure. She will start by initiating a fraud investigation with Bank of America, who would decide what charges would be refundable. For now, we should try this and contest all the fees before we incur the costs of consulting with our lawyer.

Mary Beth moved that the Treasurer contest the fees on the SEAC bank account from EVO during October – December of last year. Trevor and Michelle seconded.

Jane thanked Mary Beth for the hard and frustrating work she has been doing and the vote was unanimous.

Michelle Rathgaber then presented on changing over hosting for SEAC's website.

When Michelle ran for the office, she and Karen discussed updating the website. Michelle noted that making small changes to the website were easy, but major problems were difficult to fix. There were issues with the website back-end and upgrades were needed since the site is built on an old WordPress framework. As they were trying to fix these problems, Michelle and Karen learned that Steve White, who is the website host and fix-it guy for big problems, will be retiring.

SEAC's domain name expires every year in April. Because Steve set the site up, he holds the domain name for SEAC and SEAC does not have an account. It would be easy to set one up. After polling various IT experts, it was suggested that SEAC moves to a Membership Management Software, which will be easier to use. Michelle did research and Wild Apricot seems to be the best solution.

The change to Wild Apricot would impact the Webmaster and Mary Beth the most, and based on what they have seen, this looks possible from the Treasurer and from the Webmaster side. Michelle suspects we would not run into the fraud problems we encountered recently if we moved to Wild Apricot. This would also allow everyone on the board to access the back-end of the site if they so desired. It is made to be much more user-friendly and we could customize it.

Wild Apricot also handles event sign-up, which would allow a conference planner to access to the site. It also has email services, which means SEAC could stop paying Mail Chimp \$45 per month for email services. It can have texting capabilities for members (paid service). We can import all current members onto the new site. They will be prompted to

log in and create passwords but would not have to pay dues again. The Wild Apricot website can also accept donations.

This would be a bit more work on the part of the Treasurer to transfer money to the conference organizers, but still possible. Wild Apricot also allows for merch sales. The Student Affairs Committee has expressed interest in this. They also offer a jobs board where people can post job listings, and it would be possible to charge for these or keep them free.

Wild Apricot also offers a conference app, which is an extra cost. Michelle isn't familiar with the current conference app and would need to work with conference organizers to see if this would be worthwhile.

Wild Apricot will provide two months free, then we pay, get our merchant account set up, and go live. We would need to get our domain name set up as well (probably via godaddy).

Mary Beth pointed out that she was initially nervous about her work separating conference funds, but since Wild Apricot allows easy report generations, it would be simple to track conference funds and transfer them to the conference organizers.

Michelle noted that we will have 2 GB of storage. The current website has a lot of PDFs and there is some concern about how those are hosted so we don't go over this limit. We may need to think about how to archive these materials.

Jane asked if it was possible to add more space. Michelle was not sure that existed, but we may be able to use the Google Non-profit account that Karen set up as an off-site storage and link to that for some of the documents.

Karen pointed out that Wild Apricot would take a lot of the time-consuming responsibilities away from the Webmaster and Treasurer. Several organizations similar to SEAC use this service.

Michelle moved that the Webmaster opens an account in SEAC's name on Wild Apricot and start moving the SEAC website over and pay for a two-year membership. Shawn seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Shawn asked that the EC be allowed to review the website content before everything goes live. Jane pointed out that this could potentially be part of the spring EC meeting and asked Michelle if she would be ready for this by April. Michelle confirmed this would be possible.

Jane opened the floor for any new business.

Michelle requested photographs for the website because she was unsure where to find the files for the photographs on the current website. She will put out a call on social media. Shawn also suggested contacting tribal partners for photographs.

Jane thanked everyone for attending the meeting and it adjourned.