



Draft Minutes
Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting
Zoom
2500 West Broad Street

October 22, 2020
12:00 pm

Present: David Botkins, Patricia Nicoson, Cristina Ramirez, Dr. Richard Groover, Glenn Davidson, Dr. Denise Walters, Eucharia Jackson, Elsa Falls, Cristina Ramirez, David Mills, Lauren Mathena, John Benton, Molly Ward, Amy Laufer

Staff: Richard Conti, Elizabeth Voelkel, Kensey Peeler, Brandon Smith, Jim Blow

Other Attendees: Cynthia Norwood, Virginia State Attorney General's Office

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Davidson welcomed everyone, verified that a quorum was present, and called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm. Mr. Davidson introduced a new Trustee, Mr. John Benton. Mr. Benton shared some highlights of his professional background and 47 years of experience.

Mr. Davidson called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the June 18th and August 27th 2020 board meetings. Mr. Botkins made the motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Mills. Mr. Davidson called for a vote, which passed without objection.

Mr. Davidson then handed the meeting over to Mr. Conti, who delivered an overview of the agenda and introduced Ms. Voelkel for the Operations update.

Operations Update

Mrs. Voelkel shared operational highlights

- The Museum was closed for 172 days.
- It was reopened for members on September 2nd, 2020, and to the general public on September 5th, 2020.
- To prepare for reopening, the Museum recalled 10 wage employees
- Robust training was conducted for all floor staff, focusing on safety and new procedures.

- New operating hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 9:30am to 5pm.
- Guests are required to pre-purchase tickets for specific time slots.
- A touchless entry system is in place, and signage is posted throughout the Museum reminding guests to wear masks and social distance.
- New air quality measures include, installation of MERV 13 air filters, twice daily air purging, and adjusted humidity levels.
- Two high-touch exhibits have been removed: “Endless Buffet” from *Boost!*, and “Movies Don't Move” from *Speed*.
- The Museum has purchased two electrostatic sprayers, a new piece of technology optimized to sanitize large spaces and uneven surfaces.
- All public restrooms have been converted to single family restrooms, with new occupancy locks installed on all doors and new signage.
- *LightPlace* reopened on September 30th as an unstaffed experience with new cleaning protocols and participant limits.
- Social media response from guests and members has been extremely supportive and positive
- Programming focus has shifted to a virtual platform, offering digital demos, virtual Lunch Break Science lectures, and short educational videos.

Dr. Groover complimented the Museum staff on the outstanding job with safety protocol, cleaning procedures, and adjustment to digital platforms.

Ms. Nicoson asked what features are being shown in the Dome and what the attendance limits are. Ms. Voelkel responded that up to 125 guests are allowed in the Dome per guidelines, but the Museum has set the cap at 50. Three Dome shows are offered per day, two astronomy programs and one giant screen film.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti highlighted the following points:

- The Museum was closed for 6 months and has been open for 6 weeks
- Approximately \$3M of earned revenue and half of the Museum's work force were lost during the closure.
- During the closure the Museum gained a great deal of new knowledge and made significant adjustments.
- A keen emphasis was placed on delivering solid digital content and programming.
- The current year to date admission number is at about 40% of last year at this time.
- Currently the Museum is not hosting school groups
- Very few special events are being booked, and the Museum is continuing to host the Virginia Senate.
- *Giant Insects* will remain in the Garner Gallery until January 3, 2021
- *Mental Health: Mind Matters* will open in the Garner Gallery in February of 2021 and leave September 2021.

- *Tyrannosaurus Rex: Meet the Family* will be in the Dewey Gottwald Center from June 13, 2021 to October 3, 2021
- *Hot Wheels: Race To Win* will be in the Garner Gallery from September 25, 2021 to January 22, 2022
- *Planet Shark: Predator or Prey* will be the summer exhibit in the Dewey Gottwald Center for 2022.
- Last year the Museum received an IMLS Grant for a local air quality research project.
- A NOAA Grant was awarded this year, which will be used for working with local community groups.
- Danville Science Center renovations and exhibit installation, a \$9M project, is almost completed for a projected November opening.
- Re-branding for the Danville Science Center is now completed.
- New DSC maker space is modeled after the Forge.
- Exhibit spaces have been redesigned and optimized for the space.
- Parking Deck construction at Broad Street Station is well underway, with a projected opening in summer of 2021.
- Fundraising efforts are underway for the Museum Green.
- The Northern Virginia Science Center project will be completing the schematic design phase within the next week
- The process of transferring the land to the Museum is currently underway.
- Design of the building facade highlights elements of “the Cloud” as a nod to its presence in Northern Virginia.
- The design for the back of the building still needs fine tuning to include elements of the natural landscape on the north side of the building.
- Planned themes for the galleries are: *Flow, Cosmos, Wonder, Habitat, Human*
- Total exhibit space at the NVSC will be just at 68,000 square feet.

Ms. Nicoson asked for additional details on the upcoming phases of the Northern Virginia Science Center project. Mr. Conti shared that the four main galleries are still in the concept development phase, but the building design probably has another year of development. Construction could begin as early as the end of 2021.

Mr. Benton asked if the 68,000 square feet plan includes the Dome. Mr. Conti clarified that the existing plan does not include the Dome as it will be constructed in a later phase. The Dome is contingent upon appropriating private funds, so if funds are raised during the main project, it may be possible to start Dome construction at the same time.

Ms. Falls asked if Mr. Conti is the Director of Danville Science Center and Northern Virginia Science Center in addition to the Science Museum of Virginia. Mr. Conti replied yes, all three entities will be under the SMV administration.

Mr. Mills asked about plans at Northern Virginia for retail and dining. Mr. Conti stated that the limited space does not allow for retail or dining at this time, although it may incorporate kiosk style retail or a vending machine suite.

Ms. Laufer asked about tracking income and expenses for the different entities: SMV, DSC, and NVSC. Mr. Conti stated that all finances are tracked individually for each entity. Generally, the numbers and metrics are presented to the Board in total, but they can be split out if needed.

Dr. Groover asked for an organizational chart to be shared with the Board members that highlights the administrative hierarchy and connections between SMV, DSC and NVSC.

Mr. Conti outlined Resolution #001-2021. "Statement of Support for the Memorandum of Agreement between the Science Museum of Virginia and the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation." The resolution provides Board support for the Memorandum of Agreement on the proposed facility in the Kincora development in Loudoun County, VA.

Mr. Davidson called for a motion to approve Resolution #001-2021. Dr. Groover made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Mills. Mr. Davidson called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously without objection.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Conti discussed the following:

- The committees have two Trustees each as members.
- The groups include: Education Planning, Northern Virginia Science Center, Site Planning, Great Organizations
- More time will be needed for the committees to develop and adjust to current constraints.

Finance Committee Report

Dr. Groover said that the Museum's actions and careful steps to cut expenses during the pandemic was successful and effective. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Conti.

Mr. Conti reviewed highlights of the Trustee Summary

- General Fund support from the State is not going to be cut.
- Admission revenue for all of 1st Quarter of FY 21 is the equivalent to one day during peak attendance in the last FY.
- Reserves still remain in the Foundation to pull from if required.
- Rent payments continue to be received for the Workers Compensation building and the Bon Secours Training Camp
- Payroll has been cut from \$525k per month to \$375k per month.
- The working capital cash balance stands at \$1.9M
- The Trustee Discretionary Fund stands at \$1.1M

Mr. Conti requested the Board's support to end the Temporary Workforce Reduction 10% pay cut for full time staff which started earlier this year and return all full time staff salaries to Pre-COVID amounts effective January 1, 2021. Funds will come from the operating budget and will amount to about \$80-90K per month.

Dr. Groover made a motion to approve the restoration of full time staff salaries to their full amount effective January 1, 2020. Mr. Benton seconded the motion. Mr. Davidson asked for a vote and the motion passed unanimously without objection.

Foundation Focus

Ms. Peeler said that the Foundation is not planning any large in person fundraising due to COVID. The current focus is on raising funds for the Annual Fund and the Green Space project.

Board Officers

Mr. Davidson told the Board that he has served his two-year term as Chairman as specified under the by-laws of the Board of Trustees, but Mr. Conti has asked him to remain as Chairman for an additional year. Mr. Davidson asked the Board to continue in the conversations about available roles of Vice Chair, Secretary, and Committee Chair. Hope to draw up a roster of roles to present to the Board for approval.

Ms. Norwood stated that the by-laws will be reviewed to ensure that Mr. Davidson can continue to serve as Chairman beyond the standard two-year term.

Dr. Groover made a motion to accept the proposal of Mr. Davidson remaining Chairman for an additional year. Dr. Walters seconded. Mr. Davidson called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

New Business

Mr. Davidson asked for any new business with nothing heard.

Adjournment

There being no new business, Mr. Davidson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Walters made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Laufer. Mr. Davidson called for a vote, which passed unanimously without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

The next meeting will be on January 21, 2021