



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

January 21, 2021  
3:00 pm

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

Staff: Richard Conti, Elizabeth Voelkel, Kinsey Peeler, Timshel Purdum, Courtney Moyer, Jim Blow, Brandon Smith

Other Attendees: Cynthia Norwood, Virginia State Attorney General's Office, Dr. Andrew Daire, Dean of VCU School of Education

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Davidson welcomed everyone, verified that a quorum was present, and called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm. Mr. Davidson introduced a new Trustee, Ms. JoAnne Carter. Ms. Carter stated that she is excited to join the SMV Board of Trustees. She lives in Arlington Virginia and works for PFM, a firm which advises state and local governments when they seek to raise capital funding for infrastructure projects.

Mr. Davidson then handed the meeting over to Ms. Voelkel who delivered the Operations update.

**Operations Update**

Mrs. Voelkel discussed the following:

- The Museum was closed for 172 days.
- Currently the Museum is operating 5 days a week, Wednesday through Sunday from 9:30am-5pm.
- The public is strongly encouraged to pre-purchase tickets online.
- Attendance is capped at 20 tickets sold every 15 minutes
- All guests 5 and older must wear a face mask, and it is recommended that guests 3-4 wear face coverings

- Two Dome shows are scheduled on weekdays and three shows are scheduled on weekends
- Educators are engaging with guests on the floor
- Three maker workshops per day are held in the Forge
- The Café has been renovated into a multipurpose space
- Renovation is complete for the Rotunda restrooms and the Zero level restrooms
- The Virginia Senate has returned and is using the Dewey Gottwald Center in addition to several other areas
- Lobby Day was on January 18, 2021, historically this day brings large volumes of people to the Capitol Grounds
- Capitol Police, State Police, FBI, and City of Richmond Law Enforcement coordinated their efforts to ensure the SMV campus was secure during the Senate session
- The Virginia Film Office has extended their lease on the Workers Compensation building through the end of June
- Season 2 of *The Walking Dead: The World Beyond* is currently in production
- Bon Secours Mercy Health has been hosting a drive through flu vaccination hub, and just this week have switched to administering COVID vaccines
- The Museum's Chief Scientist, Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, has established connection with Health Brigade, formerly the Fan Free Clinic, to discuss the possibility of the Museum becoming a large scale COVID vaccination location
- In January, the Museum held an all-day staff training focused on mental health in partnership with Anthem and NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- The mental health focus of the training served to benefit staff members and prepare for the incoming traveling exhibit *Mental Health: Mind Matters* which opens on February 6 2021
- The Museum has received a great deal of positive feedback on social media from guests enjoying the Museum experience

Dr. Walters asked about procedures in place to ensure sanitation and cleanliness of *LightPlace*. Ms. Purdum replied that *LightPlace* is open daily from 9:30am until 1pm. The area is always staffed by an experienced educator. Fifteen people or three families are allowed in the space at one time. Staff is continually cleaning high touch surfaces. The Museum has received positive feedback from parents and families.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Conti discussed the following:

- The Workers Compensation Building continues to be a hot topic of discussion

- A concerted effort to establish a long term partnership with the VCU School of Education to utilize the Worker's Compensation space is ongoing.
- A key area of focus for the VCU School of Education is reaching underserved populations in the Metro Richmond area
- Everyone involved is working diligently to explore all the different ways this business partnership could work
- The best option currently appears to be the Museum temporarily signing over the ownership of the Worker's Compensation building to VCU for a 15-year period, the Museum would retain ownership of the land
- VCU will pay for all renovations and repairs, which is estimated to cost approximately \$6M
- The Museum would not charge rent during this 15 year period
- At the end of 15-year period, the Museum would regain ownership of the building
- At that stage, VCU would determine if it wants to engage in a long term lease or relinquish the building back to the Museum
- The Dean of VCU School of Education will join this meeting at 3:45pm to answer questions
- Danville Science Center has reopened to the public
- The \$9M renovation work and overhaul of the exhibits has been completed
- New exhibits have themes around water, movement, and early learners
- A state of the art maker's space has also been added at Danville Science Center
- Parking Deck progress is well underway
- Approximately a third of the work completed, with an expected completion date of September 2021
- Fundraising is actively underway for the Museum Green. The main source of funding will be private funds
- One of the Museum's General Assembly items is a budget amendment to establish the Museum Green formally as a state project.
- The relationship with the Children's Museum of Richmond is still active and amicable, CMOR did agree to an easement for the area in front of their building to be incorporated into the Museum Green
- The Northern Virginia Science Center design continues to progress and is waiting to enter the preliminary design stage
- The *Flow* gallery concept creates the feel of an art museum but with science content.
- The developer is currently working to get the entire project rezoned by Loudoun County
- The initial funding plan was a 50/50 match between state and private funds. However, recently the state has committed to fund the building hard costs and soft costs
- New concept art for the *Helios* gallery has been received, it features an art deco aesthetic style

Ms. Laufer asked about the level of interactive content planned for the Northern Virginia Science Center. Will it be comparable to SMV and DSC? Mr. Conti responded that the NOVA exhibits will be extremely interactive and feature lots of movement as well as augmented reality features for guests to engage with. In *Flow*, an experience will allow you to adjust variables to create fractals and see 3D objects as a result.

Dr. Groover asked for clarification on the management of the staff at the Northern Virginia Science Center. Will the NVSC staff be managed by SMV upper administration or will they have their own upper administration? Mr. Conti stated that NVSC will be managed just like DSC. All staff at NVSC will be managed by SMV. SMV will provide all the “behind the scenes” support, such as procurement, human resources, finance, and marketing. NVSC will have a small staff on site for direct operations, and will have its own Foundation.

### **Strategic Planning**

Mr. Conti focused on Strategic Planning efforts:

- All four of the sub-planning groups have met recently
- Current work includes codifying some of SMV’s core values
- The Trustees are invited to look for meaningful ways to engage with the strategic planning efforts

### **Foundation Focus**

Ms. Peeler shared the following:

- The Foundation is on track to give \$2M of support to the Museum
- Financially the Foundation is overall in great condition, at \$24M in assets
- The Foundation is not hosting any large in person fundraising events due to COVID
- The current focus is on raising funds for the Annual Fund and the Museum Green project
- The annual fund is currently running at \$100K ahead of budget
- Foundation Staff is working with donors to “bundle” giving; for example, instead of giving \$500 to each of the three usual yearly fundraisers, give \$1500 to the Annual Fund
- Corporate support continues, with giving shifting from sponsorships to the Annual Fund and Museum Green
- The Foundation will be applying for the second round of PPP funding, approximately \$130k

### **VCU School of Education**

Mr. Conti introduced the Dean of VCU’s School of Education Dr. Andrew Daire.

Dr. Daire shared the following:

- The partnership between VCU School of Education and SMV has a lot of potential

- VCU began discussion with SMV about two years ago, when VCU started planning a center for innovation and STEM education
- The two agencies bridge formal and informal learning, and can collaborate to achieve mutual goals
- The partnership will focus on engaging with populations around Richmond that are historically underserved and dealing with hardships
- There is the potential to collaborate for summer programming, research projects, mentorships, and training opportunities
- Other potential goals include an Early Childhood Development Center to offer affordable quality childcare services to faculty, staff, students, and community members, a center for Urban Education and Families, and a free Community Counseling Clinic

Mr. Davidson expressed his excitement about the partnership between SMV and VCU School of Education and its robust potential.

Mr. Benton shared during his time with the Smithsonian, the focus shifted from STEM to STEAM, and incorporating art elements into programming had great results. Mr. Benton asked Dr. Daire about any intentions to incorporate art elements into programming. Dr. Daire replied that curriculums do incorporate art components, such as a graduate track in Art Education. Opportunities to involve multi-departments; art, science, math, etc., in the new Innovation and Early Childhood Center as well as in partnership programs with SMV.

### **By-Law Update**

Mr. Davidson called on Ms. Norwood to highlight the changes to the by-laws

Ms. Norwood commented on the following:

- Since 2014 the Code of Virginia section has changed, and is no longer Title 23 but now Title 23.1
- All board members were asked to review the new by-laws
- A section was added to address regulations related to the increased use of electronic communications
- Trustees can request to attend meetings electronically due to medical need or personal need, even on the day of the meeting.
- If a personal need is justifying the request to participate electronically, additional information may be required for documentation, two personal requests per year
- The Board secretary must be included on communication related to requests to attend meetings electronically
- In situations where the Governor has declared a State of Emergency, such as the current COVID pandemic, electronic meetings will be the default platform for Board meetings
- The public must be given the opportunity to comment during virtual meetings

- Officers will now be elected to a two-year term
- The term can be lessened or extended given extenuating circumstances and approved via vote of majority of members present at meeting
- The committees have been updated and now include Executive Committee, Finance and Business Operations Committee
- An allowance is included for Ad Hoc committees that may become more permanent at a later date

Dr. Groover asked about the required attendance for board meetings and the number of allowed missed meetings. Ms. Norwood stated that if a member misses more than two scheduled meetings in a year it could be grounds for removal from the Board. The Board Secretary and the SMV Administrative Coordinator, Jim Blow, are responsible for recording attendance. Mr. Conti stated that attendance records are submitted to the Governor's office every year.

Ms. Laufer commented that the Zoom video meeting platform offers convenience and has boosted participation and attendance, and asked if the Zoom platform could be used as a default after the state of emergency is lifted. Ms. Norwood clarified that according to the State law, a quorum must be physically present at a designated location at board meetings.

Mr. Davidson asked for a motion to approve the new By-Laws. Ms. Laufer called the motion. Dr. Walters seconded the motion. Mr. Davidson called for a show of hands to accept the motion. No opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Davidson asked for a motion to extend his appointment as Chairman for another year and appointing Dr. Walters as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Mills as Secretary. Ms. Nicoson called the motion. Dr. Walters seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all approve, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Davidson asked for a motion to approve the Minutes from the October 22 2020 Board of Trustees meeting. Dr. Groover called the motion. Mr. Benton seconded the motion with a note of sending minor edits to be incorporated. Mr. Davidson asked for a show of hands to approve the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

### **Finance and Business Operations Committee Report**

Dr. Groover gave a brief overview of the Finance meeting and then invited Mr. Conti to add his comments.

Mr. Conti added the following

- The Museum has retained \$1.9M in working capital.
- Trustee Discretionary Fund account is sitting at \$1.1M.
- The TDF is usually kept at around \$500K
- Expense controls are working well.

### **Trustee Discretionary Fund Transfer Request**

Mr. Conti asked the Board for approval of the appropriation of \$80K from the Trustee Discretionary Fund to start the initial operating costs and access fees that the Museum will need for a new Point of Sale ticketing system called Ticketure.

- The new system integrates with member management system and provides a better and more secure user experience
- The amount requested covers startup costs and operating costs through June of 2022.

The resolution requests that \$80,000 of available funds be transferred from the Trustee Discretionary Fund to fund the initial and near-term operating costs of the new Ticketure ticketing system.

### **TDF Resolution #002-2021: Approval to allocate funds for costs of new ticketing/membership system.**

Mr. Davidson requested a motion to approve resolution #002-2020. Mr. Benton moved to do so, Dr. Walters seconded the motion. Mr. Davidson asked for a show of hands for all those in favor. The motion passed unanimously without objection.

### **Marketing Update**

Ms. Moyer highlighted the new SMV website

- The new ticketing system will “talk” with the new website and upload real time information on ticket availability
- User experience and what guests needed and wanted to see on the home page drove the design of the website
- The top navigation bar will highlight the hours of operation and announcements
- A new smart search feature with predictive text will assist guests in finding what they are looking with ease
- A Field trip planner will aid schools and groups to create a custom field trip quickly and easily
- The website will launch January 26th 2021

### **Quick Reminder**

Mr. Davidson reminded all Trustees to submit their updated “Conflict of Interest” form. A reminder email will be sent out with the form attached. Please complete the form and submit it as soon as possible.

### **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 Mr. Benton. Mr. Davidson called for a vote, which passed unanimously without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

The next meeting will be on April 22, 2021