



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

June 17, 2021
3:00 pm

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

Staff: Richard Conti, Elizabeth Voelkel, Timshel Purdum, Courtney Moyer, Kinsey Peeler, Ada Sue Siler

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

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Davidson welcomed everyone, determined a quorum was present, and called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Davidson asked the Trustees to review the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Benton noted a small correction on page 3. Mr. Botkins moved to approve the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes with noted correction. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benton. Mr. Davidson called for a vote by show of hands which passed unanimously without objection.

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

Operations Update

Mrs. Voelkel shared operational highlights:

- The mask mandate for fully vaccinated individuals as well as social distancing requirements and capacity restrictions were eliminated on May 28, 2021
- The moment the restrictions were lifted, operational planning focused on conducting business in the new environment with limited resources.

- A detailed phase out plan has been developed to thoughtfully return operations to pre-COVID levels
- Careful monitoring will be done at every stage of re-opening to adjust as needed based upon financial resources, staffing, and health concerns
- Event rental bookings increased dramatically as soon as restrictions were, including weddings, corporate gatherings, and holiday parties.
- The Museum partnered with Health Brigade to host two free COVID-19 vaccination clinics, May 8th and June 5th, both were successful.
- Attendees of the vaccination clinics were given free admission to the Museum.
- During the closure, the Museum took advantage of the downtime to make improvements to core infrastructure.
- Aging multi-mode fiber was replaced with single-mode fiber and upgraded network hardware.
- These upgrades took internet speeds from 1 gigabyte per second to 40 gigabytes per second
- K-Lot at the corner of DMV Drive and Leigh Street was resurfaced and re-stripped.
- The 25 year-old main building roof of Broad Street Station was replaced.
- The sidewalk at the front Portico of Broad Street Station is currently being hydro-blasted and resurfaced to address cracks and flaking paint.
- The new ticketing system, Ticketure, is installed and operational. It offers guests a smoother and more platform to purchase tickets online.
- Following the rollout of Ticketure, phone calls requesting assistance with online ticket sales have decreased dramatically.
- Exhibit installation is in the final stage for *Tyrannosaurs: Meet the Family*
- The Danville Science Center reopened their very popular Butterfly Garden on April 24th.

Dr. Berry asked about discounts for State employees to visit the Museum. Ms. Moyer responded that the Museum offers a substantial discount on memberships for State employees, which will be offered again in August of this year.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti gave an overview of current projects:

- The \$14M Parking Deck construction project is on schedule.
- S.B. Ballard is the main contractor for the project.
- S.B. Ballard has created a promotional video that captures highlights of the construction process
- The exterior of the structure is mostly complete, efforts now are focused on the interior elements of the structure; including elevators, wiring, and the sprinkler system
- The deck will be open for general use by September of this year
- Upon completion of parking deck, the first phase of the Green Space project will begin
- Northern Virginia Science Center project is continuing to move forward

- Work is continuing on the land transfer agreement with Loudoun County, which will allow the State to take possession of the land
- Mr. Conti will be traveling to Kincora on Tuesday 6/22/2021 to discuss some operational details with the developer.
- Additional funding will be required to offset increases in construction costs
- In the event that a new site is needed, the timelines for the project will be pushed back considerably
- The Museum is at a good place in the development of the internal Center for IDEAs with the goal of exerting more concerted efforts to promote DEAI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion).
- Last year, the Museum held internal staff training to bolster DEAI principles across the organization
- The Museum intends to hire a DEAI consultant firm to take efforts to the next level.
- The Museum will present a resolution to funds from the Trustee Discretionary Fund to pay for a DEAI focused consultant firm to aid the Museum in recruitment, training, and retention of staff and development of action items to improve organizational culture
- A TDF transfer resolution will also be presented to the Board for the creation of two endowed chair positions at the Museum
- Under this resolution, the Director of Education will be named the Virginia Ellett Director of Education to honor Ms. Ellett's lifelong dedication to education, her valuable contributions to the community, and a substantial gift of \$2.4M to the Museum.
- This resolution will also name the Museum Scientist position currently held by Dr. Jeremy Hoffman to the David and Jane Cohn Scientist, to honor David Cohn, former Trustee and Foundation Board member

Dr. Groover asked about the plan for parking for the Northern Virginia Science Center. Mr. Conti replied that general parking will be within 750 feet of the entrance of the center. Initially surface parking will be available and eventually a deck will be constructed.

Mr. Davidson shared his support of the DEAI Consultant contract, and added that ensuring a holistic approach is vital. Mr. Davidson offered his advice with selecting and procuring the best candidate for the contract. Dr. Walters commented on the appropriateness of the timing for securing this consultant.

Mr. Davidson also expressed his encouragement and support for the creation of the two endowed chair positions. He added that he found it to be an appropriate use of funds and an excellent way to honor generous contributions.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Conti provided updates on the Strategic Plan:

- Great progress is being made on the strategic planning process

- A joint strategic planning meeting with the Foundation is planned for September
- During this meeting the sub-committees will take the opportunity to present and share ideas.
- The finalized Strategic Plan will be voted on by the full Boards at the October meetings.

Finance and Business Operations Committee Report

Dr. Groover discussed the following:

- Board members are encouraged to attend and participate in the Finance and Business Operations Committee meetings
- These meetings are an opportunity to review the financial statements and key operational details in greater detail

Mr. Conti then provided highlights from the Trustee Summary Report:

- Overall, the Museum's finances are in a very stable position
- Previously the Museum was running at 90% of earned revenue, however currently operating at 80% of earned revenue
- Attendance has recovered after occupancy caps have been lifted, with weekends showing especially strong performance.
- Special events and retail revenues have strengthened considerably, though Group Sales are projected to remain soft due to lower field trip bookings.
- \$2.4M in costs were cut from budget compared to last year at same time in order to reduce overhead expenses
- One time rentals from the Virginia Senate and Virginia Film Office filled the remaining gap in earned revenues
- Reserves are strong, with over \$2M in working capital, the Museum will present a proposal to use some of these funds towards one time expenses associated with the Green Space project
- The Discretionary fund balance stands at just over \$1M, and the Museum will add an additional \$400k by the close of the fiscal year
- The budget process has improved this year, largely due to external support from financial contractor Donald D. Darr
- The process included consulting with all departments to create a needs and wants list, then establishing a baseline budget
- FY22 budget is streamlined, and less than FY21, but the Museum is very confident in its construction
- The FY22 budget includes some security enhancements and additional wage positions
- The proposed budget totals \$9.8M including a one-time transfer of \$1M for the Green Space

Dr Goover complimented Mr. Conti and the Museum staff for the adjustments that were made during the early period of the COVID outbreak, which allowed the Museum to save money and be well-positioned to re-open when restrictions were

lifted. Dr. Walters expressed encouragement and appreciation for staff taking on new roles and responsibilities to help keep things running smoothly.

Dr. Goover made a motion to accept and approve the FY22 budget as presented. Mr. Benton called the second. Mr. Davidson called for a vote by show of hands. The motion to accept the FY22 budget passed unanimously without objection.

Trustee Discretionary Fund Transfer Resolutions

Mr. Conti reviewed the details of the three TDF Transfer Resolutions presented in the Finance and Operations Meeting earlier today.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to approve all transfers from the Trustee Discretionary Fund. Management is requesting the following action.

Resolution #003-2021

Approval to allocate funds to replenish Trustee Discretionary Fund - Interior Refurbishment, Account #817.5.2

This is an additional allocation of \$75,000 to replenish TDF Interior Refurbishment account to cover the ongoing costs of refurbishing the interior of Broad Street Station. These costs may include but are not limited to, paint, fixtures, furnishings, flooring, and décor in both the public and staff spaces of Broad Street Station

Resolution #004-2021

Approval to allocate funds to hire a Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Consultant, Account #817

New allocation of \$150,000 to fund the hiring of a DEAI consultant. The purpose of this consultant would be to evaluate current Museum DEAI initiatives and make recommendations for improvements.

Resolution #005-2021

Statement of support for the creation of the Virginia Ellett Director of Education and the David and Jane Cohn Scientist chairs.

In anticipation of the establishment of the Virginia Ellett Director of Education Endowment Fund made possible by the generosity of the late Virginia Ellett; the Science Museum of Virginia proposes the renaming of the Director of Education position to **The Virginia Ellett Director of Education** at the Science Museum of Virginia. This is to be effective upon completion of the gift agreement with the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation.

Additionally, in anticipation of the establishment of the David and Jane Cohn Scientist Endowment Fund, made possible by the generosity of David and Jane

Cohn; the Science Museum of Virginia proposes the renaming of the Museum Chief Scientist position to the **David and Jane Cohn Scientist** at the Science Museum of Virginia. This is to be effective upon completion of the gift agreement with the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation.

Dr. Groover made a motion to accept all three resolutions as presented. Mr. Benton called the second. Mr. Davidson called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously without objection.

Education Report

Ms. Purdum gave an overview of the Education Teams recent work:

- The Gallery Education team served over 8000 youth and adults via Live Digital Demos
- Animal Lab, Art Lab, and Lighplace are open again
- Maker Workshops had over 2000 participants
- Drop-in Maker Challenges will return at the end of June
- Science on a Sphere, Rat Basketball, and Live Demos are back in the building
- Over the past year, over 8600 guests enjoyed a Dome movie or Live Astronomy presentation
- 532 students participated in the final Streamable virtual astronomy demonstration hosted by Justin Bartel
- The Content Development team is working on developing material for the ProtoPath
- Content Development also created new display called “Bringing the Dead to Life” and is currently working on creating a Coprolite Curiosity Case
- Content development has also scripted and filmed a segment on cicadas
- Preparations are underway for what is expected to be a busy summer season
- Programming and content for *Mental Health: Mind Matters* are still ongoing, including hosting community partner mental health groups on weekends.
- Summer Camps are back and are expected to sell out quickly.
- Two new summer educators, and four summer camp counselors have been hired
- The Dome team has welcomed 2 new Astronomy staff members
- Summer Internships have also returned, with 21 new interns hired for this summer
- A large amount of tie-in programming for *Tyrannosaurs: Meet the Family* has been created.

Mr. Benton asked if any of the internships were paid positions. Ms. Purdum clarified that several of the internships are paid, and added that part of the Museum’s Strategic Plan included offering more paid internships for students. Mr. Benton also suggested the possibility of using paid internships as a named fundraising opportunity. Mr. Mills added his thanks to the Education Team for bringing back Summer Camp.

Marketing Update

Ms. Moyer shared developments from the Marketing team:

- The Danville Science Center's new website has launched.
- Construction of the site included a professional photoshoot to capture custom images that can be used for marketing purposes.
- The Northern Virginia Science Center website has also launched.
- Currently the NVSC website has limited content, and is mainly serving as a fundraising tool at the moment
- The NVSC website will flip to a transactional website once the project reaches that point
- the Museum main website has added translation services
- Marketing efforts to reach out and make meaningful connections with the Hispanic community to bring awareness of inclusion efforts are ongoing
- The Museum website has also added an upcoming exhibitions section to feature the docket of rotating exhibits for the next few seasons
- *Skin: Living Armor, Evolving Identity*, will be coming to the Garner Gallery next year. Select staff will travel to Minneapolis to see the exhibit this summer to better plan and program for the exhibit's arrival
- *Planet Shark: Predator or Prey* will run in the Dewey Gottwald Center next summer.
- In summer of 2023, the DGC exhibit will be *Space: An Out of Gravity Experience*, contract details are still being finalized.
- *Tyrannosaurs: Meet the Family* is opening to members tomorrow, June 18 and to the general public on June 19.

Ms. Ramirez offered her connections and experience in furthering the marketing efforts to connect with the Hispanic community. Ms. Ramirez hosts a Spanish radio broadcast once a month and offered a feature segment for the Museum to showcase the ongoing efforts to better serve the Hispanic community.

Foundation Focus

Ms. Peeler shared updates and key points:

- Fundraising during the pandemic was very challenging
- The biggest negative impacts were in decreased membership numbers and the lack of in-person fundraising events
- Most sponsors shifted support from specific sponsorships to Annual Fund contributions, which are on track to raise approximately \$600k
- More focus is being given to raising funds for the Museum Green Space project, including exploring alternative means of recognizing higher level contributions
- The Foundation has introduced a robust new donor recognition plan, including new digital platforms for name recognition opportunities
- The Foundation Board of Directors has raised over \$685K for the Green Space project
- Trustees are invited to contribute to the Green Space project

Mr. Davidson mentioned the percentages of the Foundation Board of Directors and Trustees that have contributed to the Annual Fund, 96% and 87% respectively; and reminded the Board that the goal is 100% participation by all Board members. Dr. Groover added that no specific dollar amount is requested, simply participation.

New Business

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

Mr. Davidson then added that Mr. Botkins is leaving the Board of Trustees after two consecutive 5 year terms of service. Mr. Davidson offered sincere recognition and appreciation for Mr. Botkins' dedicated service. Mr. Botkins shared some remarks recounting his time working with the Museum team. Mr. Conti thanked Mr. Botkins for his friendship and dedication to the Museum's mission.

Adjournment

Mr. Davidson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Botkins made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Falls. Mr. Davidson called for a vote, which passed unanimously without objection.. The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

The next meeting will be on October 21, 2021