



Approved Minutes
Quarterly Full Board of Trustees Meeting
RF&P Forum, Level 1
2500 West Broad Street

April 21, 2022
3:00 p.m.

Present: Dr. Denise Walters, John Benton, Dr. Richard Groover, Glenn Davidson, Gina Burgin, Fran Bradford, Cristina Ramirez, Dr. Rodney Berry, Elsa Falls, Patricia Nicoson, Lauren Mathena, Dr. Surendra Ganeriwala, David Mills

Staff: Rich Conti, Elizabeth Igelhart, Courtney Moyer, Timshel Purdum, Kinsey Peeler, Jim Blow

Other Attendees: Cynthia Norwood, Office of the Attorney General

Sarah Spota, Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education

Dr. Arthur Evans, Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees

Steve Holdych, Immediate Past President, Science Museum of Virginia Foundation Board of Directors

Alex Kurland, Finance Committee, Science Museum of Virginia Foundation Board of Directors

Welcome

Dr. Walters welcomed everyone, verified a quorum was present, reviewed the day's agenda and called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Walters asked the Trustees to review the January 20, 2022 meeting minutes. Ms. Nicoson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benton. Dr. Walters called for a vote, which passed unanimously without objection. Dr. Walters then turned the meeting over to Ms. Iglehart.

Operations Update

Ms. Iglehart discussed the following:

- April's *Science after Dark* is open to the general public. Attendance at the first three events after restarting was 300 to 400 participants per event.
- School field trips were slow in January and February, but they are now picking up.
- Facility rentals are picking up with wedding reservations increasing this past quarter.
- All-staff training was conducted in cybersecurity and accessibility.
- On March 31st a tornado warning was issued while the facility was filled with students from visiting schools. Staff quickly and safely led all visitors to the designated shelter locations on track level.
- The Science Museum is actively seeking new employment candidates and currently hiring for mostly part time summer positions.
- Volunteer positions are also being filled.
- *Skin: Living Armor Evolving Identity* is currently open.
- *Planet Shark: Predator or Prey* will arrive soon for a Memorial Day weekend opening.
- The Butterfly Garden and the new Maker Challenge will be opening soon at the Danville Science Center.

Dr. Ganeriwala asked what type of volunteer positions are being filled. Ms. Iglehart replied that the Museum is seeking volunteers for both long term and short-term positions.

Ms. Iglehart turned the meeting over to Mr. Conti.

Mr. Conti introduced Sarah Huang Spota, Virginia Deputy Secretary of Education, who briefly introduced herself to the Board.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti discussed the following:

- The parking deck is open to the public, and adjustments to signage in order to improve traffic flow are ongoing. The electric charging stations are installed and working.
- Phase one of The Green is progressing well and could be completed by the end of summer.
- The *Cosmic Perceptions* sculpture demo piece arrived and is positioned outside the building. The completed, full sculpture is expected in mid-September.
- The Northern Virginia Science Center (NovaSci) is progressing, the preliminary design documents for the building are expected mid-summer
- Construction costs may be 50% higher than initially anticipated.
- It appears that land closure will happen in September once the due diligence process is complete. Exhibit designs are progressing well and are in a good position currently.

- Steele Strategies has been hired as the DEAI (diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion) consultant.
- Steele has started gathering information and has scheduled information gathering meetings with staff in May.
- The Science Museum is going through the process of re-accreditation for the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) over the next few months.
- AAM will conduct a site review this summer.
- Three percent of science museums are accredited by AAM.
- There is an ongoing review of Museum policies and other core documents as part of the self-study portion of the re-accreditation process.
- New hands-on feature exhibits for Broad Street Station will include "Digital Fish Tank", "Giant Lever", and "By the Numbers". These will be installed over the next few weeks.

Dr. Groover asked if there are any new plans for the top of the new parking deck. Mr. Conti replied that there has been no decision as of yet but options are being explored.

Dr. Ganeriwala asked where NovaSci will be located. Mr. Conti answered that the building will be in the Kincora mixed use development in Loudoun County.

Ms. Bradford asked about the availability of mass transit at the NovaSci site. Mr. Conti said it would not be on the Metro line, but there will be a bus line. Mr. Mills asked if a field trip could be scheduled to see the NovaSci site. Mr. Conti said the groundbreaking is estimated to be 13 months away, so there is nothing currently at the site.

Dr. Walters asked about arranging a visit to the Danville Science Center. Mr. Conti said that a visit to the site could certainly be discussed. Ms. Mathena added that the Danville Science Center is a catalyst for downtown Danville and strongly encouraged a site visit. Mr. Conti added that Danville is the best science center per capita in the world.

Mr. Conti then turned the meeting over to Mr. Benton.

Finance and Business Operations Committee's Report

Mr. Benton discussed the following:

- The financial position of the Museum is quite strong due to the efforts of the leadership and staff.
- The increase in admissions has served to strengthen overall revenue.
- Special Event revenue has continued to lag and is returning more slowly.
- Expense controls have continued to be highly effective.
- The situation has changed significantly from a year ago when the budget was approved.
- During COVID guests were limited to approximately 100 per day, with limited events and zero group activity.

- An anticipated a cut in general fund revenue from the General Assembly did not happen
- Revenue has exceeded budget expectations
- Currently membership and admission revenues are tracking at over \$1M ahead of budget.
- The anticipated revenue for the entire fiscal year has already been reached as of March 31, 2022.
- The Science Museum is arguably in the best financial position it has ever been.
- The \$2.3M Shuttered Venue Operating Grant (SVOG) has also contributed greatly to the Museum's current financial position.
- Attendance is currently tracking at about 75% pre-pandemic numbers.
- Currently the Museum is focused on investing in infrastructure and one-time expenses.
- Staffing levels are clearly insufficient at present, focus is shifting to mindful hiring.
- Trustee Discretionary Fund and Restricted Fund allocations function as cash reserve.
- Working Capital is building up and needs to be spent down.

Mr. Benton then discussed Resolution #2022-02, Statement of Approval for the Transfer of \$1M from Fund 200 - Special Revenue to Support the Green. Mr. Benton added that the resolution had been reviewed by the Finance and Business Operations Committee, which recommended forwarding it to the full Board.

Mr. Benton then made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

Mr. Benton then turned the meeting over to Ms. Moyer.

Marketing Report

- Ms. Moyer discussed the following:
- Guest attendance was 70K for the first quarter of 2022. This is a large increase from the pandemic period.
- School and other group field trips are still recovering.
- Spring Break attendance is up 100% from the previous year.
- Memberships are also recovering after significant decreases during the pandemic.
- Online admission tickets and membership sales have been helpful and are increasing.
- The first price increase in the adult admission price since 2019 is set for May 1st. Regular adult admission will increase by \$.50.
- There will be a group discount rate that will be higher than the field trip rate, but can be applied at point of sale by Guest Services.

- The Museums for All membership rate is increasing from \$20 to \$25. Summer exhibitions are free for Museums for All members.
- The Museum is working to schedule upcoming exhibits as far in advance as possible.
- Currently scheduled are the following: *Planet Shark*; *Predator or Prey*; *Space: An Out of Gravity Experience*; *Playing with Light*; *Wild Kratts-Creature Power*; *Steampunk* and a *Body Worlds* exhibition yet to be selected.

Mr. Mills asked if there is a preview scheduled for *Skin: Living Armor, Evolving Identity*. Ms. Moyer replied no pre-opening is planned for this exhibition, but there will be one for *Planet Shark*.

Ms. Moyer then turned the meeting over to Dr. Berry.

Education Report

Dr. Berry discussed the following:

- School and guest programs are going well and running daily at the Museum.
- Summer camp is completely sold out again this year.
- Girls in Medicine was well attended and successful.
- Science after Dark: Skin Rocks will be open to the general public
- Lunch Break Science is now back in person instead of just solely online.
- The Exhibit Development Team continues work on new guest experiences for both the Science Museum of Virginia and the Danville Science Center.
- The Museum has updated the collections management policy
- Currently the Museum is undergoing the American Alliance of Museums re-accreditation self-study process.
- The collections management policy is one of the core documents that must be provided as part of the re-accreditation process.
- A peer reviewer committee will perform a site visit as a part of the process, tentatively planned for July or August of 2022.
- Two main changes have been made to the collections management policy.
- First, the Womack collection at the Danville Science Center was deaccessioned in January of 2019 and has been removed from the policy.
- Second, the policy now states that the Museum will follow industry best practices for expending realized proceeds from the disposal of objects at public auction.

Dr. Berry made a motion for the board to approve the final draft of the updated collections policy. Dr. Ganeriwala seconded the motion. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

Ms. Nicoson asked about the meaning of "Skin Rocks?" Ms. Purdum responded that this refers to things made out of animal parts, specifically musical instruments.

Dr. Walters asked what kind of feedback was received from the Girls in Medicine program. Ms. Purdum replied that feedback was uniformly positive.

Dr. Berry then turned the meeting over to Mr. Mills.

Building and Site Committee Report

Mr. Mills discussed the following:

- The Virginia Film Office has committed to leasing the Workers Compensation building space lease until the end of the year.
- A final plan for the disposition of the building is still pending.
- The committee conducted a walking tour of the entire campus including the Bon Secours Training Camp.
- Several committee members are interested in engaging the city of Richmond regarding its future development.

Dr. Groover asked if the Washington football team would be returning to the Bon Secours practice facility. Mr. Mills said that it is highly unlikely and added that the terms of the lease specify that the property can only be used as a professional sports training facility. The site cannot be developed for any other purpose without the Museum's consent.

Ms. Burgin asked if the Workers Compensation building could be renovated. Mr. Conti said that the opinion of the committee is that the estimated renovation cost of \$10M is not justified given the age and current state of the building. Mr. Mills added that it is not likely a permanent tenant could be found without significant renovations.

Mr. Conti added that the consensus among the committee members is that the building should be demolished, but since the Virginia Film Office has leased the space again through the end of the year, a plan for final disposition is still pending.

Mr. Mills then turned the meeting over to Ms. Peeler.

Foundation Committee Report

Ms. Peeler discussed the following:

- The Foundation currently has \$34M in total assets with \$8M of it in cash.
- \$2M is from endowments and \$1.8M from estate gifts.
- Currently \$131K over projected operational support
- Up and Atom was held virtually this year, raising \$72K while saving \$25K in expenses.
- Currently at 93% of the goal for the Annual Fund.
- Not as many multi-year pledges.
- \$2.8M in pledges for The Green have been received.
- Currently the Foundation is pursuing two large challenge grants,

- One of these is the Mary Morton Parsons Foundation grant challenge to raise \$500K.
- It will be announced in May if the Foundation is awarded the grant,
- If awarded, the Foundation would have one year to raise \$500K.
- Another \$550K challenge grant award will be announced in September.
- The two grants cannot be used to match each other.
- The challenge grant funds are to be committed to The Green.

Mr. Davidson asked what percentage of the Board has contributed to The Green project. Ms. Peeler said currently there is not 100% participation, but that is the goal.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Davidson discussed the following:

- Draft objectives for FY23 have been collected.
- The objectives include raising corporate participation and working to strengthen organizational culture.

Mr. Conti asked for the board's approval of the FY 23 draft objectives.

Ms. Bradford asked if there is a way to measure improvement in corporate partnership building. Mr. Conti said that new ads, logos and collaborative advertising packages can be done for all corporate partners and also be reworked to implement current corporate objectives.

Ms. Nicoson made a motion to approve the FY 23 objectives. Dr. Ganeriwala seconded the motion. Dr. Walters then asked for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

Ms. Iglehart then asked for the board's approval of changes to the code of ethics and the scientific integrity policy.

Mr. Mills made a motion to have the board adopt the approved changes. Dr. Berry seconded the motion. Dr. Walters asked for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

New Business

Dr. Walters asked for any new business.

Ms. Falls said that the Virginia Academy of Science is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. The Virginia Academy of Science was instrumental in the founding of the Science Museum of Virginia.

Adjournment

With no further new business heard, Dr. Walters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Mills. Dr. Walters then called for a vote which passed unanimously without objections. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be on June 16, 2022.