



APPROVED Minutes  
Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting  
Forum  
2500 West Broad Street

January 19, 2023  
3 p.m.

**Present:** Cristina Ramirez, David Mills, Dr. Denise Walters, Elsa Falls, Fran Bradford, Gina Burgin, Glenn Davidson, John Benton (via Zoom), Dr. Kathy Lu, Lauren Mathena, Patricia Nicoson, Dr. Richard Groover, Dr. Rodney Berry, Suri Ganeriwala and Ukay Jackson.

**Staff:** Rich Conti, Courtney Moyer, Timshel Purdum, Ada Sue Siler, Kinsey Peeler, and Ash Harris

**Other Attendees:** Cynthia Norwood Marquez, Office of the Attorney General and Deborah Love, Office of the Attorney General

**Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Walters called the meeting to order at 3 p.m and verified a quorum was present before reviewing the agenda.

Dr. Walters also introduced the newest Trustee, Dr. Kathy Lu, Virginia Tech.

**Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Walters asked the Trustees to review the October 20, 2022, meeting minutes. Mr. Davidson called a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Berry called the second. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

**Director's Report**

Mr. Conti discussed the following:

- The Science Museum has a new organizational structure. There are now three new Deputy Directors for the corresponding three new divisions: Education, Communications and Administration, and Operations.
- The Education division includes the Experience Development Team. The Communications and Administration division includes Communications, Finance and Administrative Services.
- A catalyst for the restructure was the retirement of Deputy Director, Beth Iglehart.

- The Green Phase 1 is complete, but the fencing was put back up while issues with the walkways are resolved. The resin bond coating in the sidewalks is compromised and cracks are emerging.
- *Cosmic Perception* is under construction. Plans are in place to ship in March and assemble in April.
- Phase II of The Green is under document review. Funding is secured but the Science Museum is waiting for DEB approval. Construction on Phase II should commence later this year.
- The Green Phase III will involve demolishing the Workers Compensation building and the current staff parking lots to expand the green space.
- During the General Assembly session, the Science Museum presented some action item requests.
- The Science Museum was granted more flexible language for utilizing Maintenance Reserve funds.
- The Science Museum also asked for additional funding for demolishing the Workers Compensation building and Northern Virginia Science Center construction cost increases.
- Work continues towards closing on the property for the Northern Virginia Science Center. Leadership is sorting through issues with the Kincora Village Center developer. The Science Museum hopes to close on the land in February.
- The development of the exhibitions and fundraising continues to go extremely well. The project is in the State capital construction pool.
- Progress continues on developing a plan and partnership for the 15 acres of land off of Leigh Street. The City of Richmond Parks and Recreation Department is keen to pursue a partnership.

Dr. Groover asked where the electric charging stations in the front of the main building will move to when Phase II construction begins. Mr. Conti responded that six charging stations are located in the parking deck and the two units in the front circle will be removed. Additional locations are under consideration for the Parking Deck, as utilization has increased.

Dr. Walters asked about replacing the cracked resin in The Green. Mr. Conti replied that conversations are underway with the Office of the Attorney General and DEB to arrive at the best course of action.

Dr. Berry offered accolades to the staff on navigating the organizational restructuring. Dr. Berry also expressed a desire to be notified when key or high level staff transition from the agency. The Board of Trustees shared that they would like to write and send a formal letter to Ms. Iglehart for her many years of service.

### **Operations Report**

Mr. Harris shared operational highlights.

- Special event rentals recently took a pause on booking to reevaluate pricing and contracts.

- Rentals are reopened for booking with a confirmed 102 event bookings representing \$476k in revenue since reopening.
- The concessions stand has also reopened and revenues are excellent.
- Roadwork is currently underway in front of the Children's Museum of Richmond to install a speed table to curb traffic speed.
- Work continues behind the parking deck to clear out brush and install a demonstration garden. The project is expected to take approximately 120 days.
- Mobile ticket kiosks are under development for ticket sales directly at the Dome entrance.
- Upon reviewing the traffic flow during Model Railroad 2022, a new parking plan is in development for Model Railroad 2023.

Dr. Goover asked about the top tier of the parking deck and if it will be used for anything other than parking. Mr. Harris responded that options are under consideration, but for now it is for parking. The space could be used for a solar carport.

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

Mr. Benton discussed the following:

- The financial position of the Science Museum continues to impress.
- Six months into the fiscal year, revenues are above projections and expenses are down.
- Currently, revenues are 5.5% over projections and expenses are 4.9% under expectations.
- The Working Capital fund balance and the Trustee Discretionary Funds are all in a positive stage, well above desired thresholds.
- Special thanks to The Foundation and Bob Feeser on the fundraising work for The Green.
- Mr. Benton reviewed the two proposed resolutions for Trustee approval.

### **Resolution #003-2023**

#### **Approval to allocate funds for signage and marketing.**

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

\$350,000 for interpretive and donor signage for The Green as well as an interior wayfinding signage plan and subsequent plan implementation.  
\$200,000 for additional advertising purchases.

As Phase I of The Green is completed for public use, additional signage is needed to recognize the donors who helped make the project possible and to provide educational information for the community as they explore the space. Additionally, while Broad Street Station is a majestic home for the Science Museum, the layout presents wayfinding challenges that can best be addressed with a comprehensive wayfinding plan to better direct guest flow.

Augmenting the advertising budget for the Science Museum will help increase awareness of programmatic offerings, largely the upcoming touring exhibitions *Playing With Light and Space: An Out-of-Gravity Experience*.

The Board authorizes the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation to transfer up to \$550,000 from the Trustee Discretionary Fund held in account #817 for the above expenses.

Mr. Benton called a motion to approve Resolution #003-2023 as presented. Ms. Bradford called the second.

Dr. Lu asked how much funding remains in the Trustee Discretionary Fund after the transfer. Mr. Conti clarified the remaining balance. Ms. Peeler shared that the Trustee Discretionary Funds policy is to remain around \$500k.

Mr. Benton reviewed that showing movement of funds shows support for the Science Museum.

A vote was taken, all approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

### **Resolution #004-2023**

#### **Approval of Delegated Authority to the Museum Director for Northern Virginia Science Center**

The Board of Trustees desires to confirm, supplement and clarify the approval of the Museum Director's authority to take all actions necessary to close the acquisition of the 3.5 acre property at the site of the Northern Virginia Science Center on behalf of the Museum. This resolution is additive to and does not replace or limit the 2020 Resolutions, such 2020 Resolutions remaining in full force and effect.

Mr. Benton called a motion to approve Resolution #003-2023 as presented. Ms. Nicoson seconded the motion.

Dr. Lu asked about plans for staffing the Northern Virginia Science Center. Mr. Conti shared that a skeleton plan is currently in place, but the project is still about three years out from hiring and staffing. Most of the back-end administration and finance will be through the Science Museum.

Dr. Walters called for a vote to approve Resolution #004-2023. A vote was taken, all approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Benton called the group's attention to the two memoranda provided in their packets. The first is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation and the other is a Tripartite Agreement between the Science Museum, Loudoun County, and the Northern Virginia Science Center.

Mr. Benton called a motion to affirm the two memoranda as presented. Mr. Davidson seconded the motion. The floor was opened for discussion.

Ms. Bradford asked if the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation will need approval to change the name of the agency or the logo. Mr. Conti confirmed that all changes will have to be approved by the Deputy Director for Communications and Administration.

Dr. Walters added that the Board has seen these documents previously. These are just updated versions.

Ms. Falls expressed preference for receiving copies of documents, such as these, in further advance of scheduled Board meetings. Mr. Conti reiterated that the Board was provided versions of these documents years prior. The Science Museum administration just wants to ensure that the Board is aware of the updates and minor changes.

Dr. Walters called for a vote to affirm these documents as presented. A vote was taken by show of hands, all approved, non opposed. The documents were affirmed.

### **Communications and Marketing Report**

Mrs. Moyer recapped important figures from the last quarter for marketing and attendance.

- Attendance numbers continued in a positive direction during the second quarter of FY23.
- Year to date attendance is at 239,000, up 8.8% from last year during the same period.
- Danville Science Center's attendance is up 98.8% over the same period last year.
- Field trips and group attendance continues to rebound, reaching 11,000 guests during the second quarter and earning almost \$78k in admission revenue.

- The cafe and concessions along with the gift shop generated \$19k in revenue during the Model Railroad Show.
- The Sizzling Science programming during the holidays brought in over 10,000 guests, which was a 33% increase over Fast and Curious programming in 2022.
- The holiday membership push was very successful, bringing in 699 new memberships and over \$100k in revenues.
- Upcoming programming includes *Towers of Tomorrow with Lego Bricks*.

### **Foundation Report**

Ms. Peeler shared an overview of the Foundation's recent work.

- As seen in the quarterly report, the Foundation's financial position remains strong.
- The Foundation's fundraising focus is on The Green.
- The Foundation recently raised \$1M and met the Mary Morton Parsons challenge grant, which now provides \$500k for meeting the goal.
- The Foundation was awarded another challenge grant from the Cabel Foundation and now must raise another \$500k to receive the \$250k grant.
- So far, fundraising efforts have amounted to just over \$4.5M in total.
- A press release will be sent out soon regarding the success of the fundraising push.
- Plans are in the works to host a donor cultivation event on March 19.
- The Foundation would like the Board of Trustees to participate and recommend additional attendees.
- The annual Up & Atom women's leadership breakfast is taking place on March 1.

Mr. Ganeriwala asked about details regarding the March 29 event for donors to The Green. Ms. Peeler said she would send out further information to the Trustees after this meeting. Dr. Walters added that participation in the event is not a big ask. Mainly, the Foundation is looking for recommendations on prospective donors.

Dr. Groover added a note that all Trustees should give to the Foundation. There is not a dollar amount limit or max. The aim is 100% participation. Dr. Walters also said that giving drives investment into the mission of the Science Museum and the Foundation.

### **Education Report**

Dr. Berry provided highlights from the Education Department.

- The Education Department continues to develop and deliver great programming such as Science After Dark, overnight camp ins, Model Railroad Weekend, and more.
- Upgrades for The Dome are in development.
- Upcoming events include a teacher open house, more Science After Darks, another camp in, and Minds of All Kinds.

**Closed Session**

At this time, 4:06 p.m., Dr. Walters called for a motion for the Board to go into a closed meeting to discuss personnel matters related to the employment, assignment, appointment, or performance of specific employees pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), specifically relating to the Director.

Mr. Davidson replied to Dr. Walters request by saying “so moved,” Mr. Mills seconded the motion and the Board took a vote by show of hands. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Closed session occurred.

Dr. Walters asked for a motion to reenter the open session. A Board member called the motion and was seconded. A vote was taken by show of hands. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Dr. Walters called the current time, 4:37 p.m. During its closed meeting, the Board discussed only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only those public business matters identified in the motion convening the Board in closed session.

Dr. Groover made a motion to recommend further discussion at a deliberate speed with the Executive Committee to discuss a topic that was raised during the closed session. Mr. Davidson called the second.

Dr. Walters asked for any additional discussion.

Ms. Nicoson asked if the Trustees could discuss what the closed session pertained to.

Dr. Walters recommended that Dr. Groover clarify the motion and state that the Executive Committee should convene promptly and resolve compensation for Mr. Conti.

Dr. Groover responded and stated to amend the motion as noted by Dr. Walters.

A roll call vote was taken from the Trustees present.

Cristina Ramirez-Aye  
David Mills-Aye  
Denise Walters-Aye  
Elsa Falls-Aye  
Fran Bradford-Aye  
Gina Burgin-Aye  
Glenn Davidson-Aye

John Benton-Aye  
Kathy Lu-Aye  
Lauren Mathena-Aye  
Patricia Nicoson-Aye  
Richard Groover-Aye  
Rodney Berry-Aye  
Suri Ganeriwala-Aye  
Ukay Jackson-Aye

**New Business**

Dr. Walters asked for any new business.

**Adjournment**

With no new business heard, Ms. Ramirez made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Dr. Berry. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

The next meeting will be on April 20, 2023.