



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

January 18, 2024
3 p.m.

Present: Cristina Ramirez, David Mills, Dr. Denise Walters, Elsa Falls, Patricia Nicoson, Dr. Richard Groover, Dr. Rodney Berry, Amishi Amin, Gina Burgin, Ukay Jackson, Dr. Robert Winn, Karey Malyszko.

Staff: Rich Conti, Timshel Purdum, Courtney Moyer, Kinsey Peeler, Ash Harris, Rose Basom, Dan Ney, Jamie HongKham, and Ada Sue Siler.

Other Attendees: Deborah Love, Office of the Attorney General
Cindy Norwood-Marquez, Member of the General Public

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

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

Dr. Walters asked the Trustees to review the October 19, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Mills called a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Berry called the second. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection.

Mr. Conti reviewed the agenda for the meeting then introduced Rose Basom, Dan Ney and Jamie HongKham. Ms. Basom shared about her new role at the Science Museum as the David and Jane Cohn Scientist. Mr. Ney recapped his first few months as the new Director of Exhibits and Ms. HongKham expressed excitement as the new Director of Guest Experience.

Director's Report

Mr. Conti highlighted the following:

- The Green Phase II is progressing towards completion by March 2024.
- In general at the Science Museum, construction activities have been ongoing since the commencement of the parking deck construction four and a half years ago.

- Next phase of The Green, The East Green, will be our next major onsite project .
- The Science Museum has fully acquired ownership of the land for the The Northern Virginia Science Center, in the Kincora development in Loudoun County.
- The Northern Virginia Science Center is the largest project for the Science Museum to date.
- The construction for the site will go to bidding process soon.
- The project is expected to take 3.5 years to complete.

Ms. Falls inquired about the opening date of the Northern Virginia Science Center. Mr. Conti responded that at this time it is difficult to estimate a firm date.

Mr. Conti then shared an update on the Work Plan.

- Plans are in place to address staff capacity, knowledge transfer and continuity of leadership within the organization.
- A transition plan has been established to facilitate recruitment and knowledge transfer for high level positions.
- The Science Museum is developing the source material to highlight the history of the train station.
- Third-party expertise is being sought to manage the cafe and food services.
- Efforts are underway to expand the volunteer program, including the recent hiring of a new full-time volunteer coordinator.
- An interpretive plan is in development, including audience surveys and funding initiatives to bolster engagement.

Outside of the work plan, the Science Museum has a budget amendment to study the refurbishment and reallocation of interior space will merge modern elements with historical aspects. Spaces within the Science museum will be rearranged to optimize functionality.

The Workers' Compensation building is slated for demolition, with a budget of \$2.5M to take it down.

Operations Report

Mr. Harris provided a brief overview of operations.

- The Science Museum is focusing on a modest solution for our food service needs until a full-service restaurant is established.
- The past six months have been very busy, with significant growth in all operational areas.
- Security and housekeeping services are being transitioned in-house, with both full-time and part-time staff hired for housekeeping and security services.

- Special events have been particularly successful, with gross revenue exceeding last year's figures by 55%, totaling over \$350k, including numerous wedding bookings.
- Merchandise gross revenue has increased by 14% to over \$280k, and food and beverage gross revenue is up by 42% to \$152k, with the introduction of a Hamilton Beach ice cream robot as part of a pilot program.
- Technology services' focus includes equipment upgrades and improvements in various areas such as microphone systems and an LED display wall in the Dewey Gottwald Center.
- Horticulture efforts include ongoing soil health projects, tree planting and landscaping designs.
- Thalhimer Pavilion, a large multi-use facility, generates significant revenue hosting large events.
- Considerations for greenhouse construction include size and offerings, with suggestions to explore partnerships and experiences related to hydroponics and winemaking.

Dr. Winn asked about the flooring considerations for the Thalhimer Pavilion. Mr. Harris responded that carpeting in the Pavilion was chosen for its cost-effectiveness and maintenance efficiency.

Ms. Falls asked about the addition of a greenhouse on the campus. Mr. Harris said that discussions about a potential greenhouse on campus are already in the works. This opportunity would lend itself to partnerships with local schools for horticultural programs. Dr. Walters also added about additional opportunities to partner with local schools. Mr. Mills added that home hydroponics are popular in the area and might be worth reaching out to. Ms. Malyszko shared about the potential of incorporating a winery experience in the greenhouse.

Finance and Business Operations Committee's Report

Ms. Moyer reviewed the Trustee Summary and confirmed that the organization is on track with its budget.

- Admission figures were initially lagging but are now catching up and aligning with actuals year over year.
- Some expenditures have exceeded budget projections, due to a delay in the central appropriation of \$441k to support new classified bonuses.
- Higher wage expenses are attributed to organizational shifts.
- Variances in the budget are mainly due to timing issues.
- The working capital for The Green project will decrease as the allocated \$1.5M is spent.

- Attendance figures show a 26% increase compared to the same quarter last year, particularly strong in the fall (October to December), with over 250k visitors, a 5% increase year-to-date.
- Group visitation is up by 27% compared to last year, with spring bookings progressing as expected.
- Holiday programming, such as Model Railroad Weekend, saw significant success, with 12.5k in visitation, 36% member attendance, \$90k in admin revenue, and a total of \$117k.
- Participation in Favorite Things programming saw an 11% increase over the previous year.
- Review of upcoming exhibitions:
 - *Discover Steampunk* - February 10 – August 18, 2024
 - *BODY WORLDS: Anatomy of Happiness* - May 25 – September 2, 2024
 - *Math Alive!* - September 28, 2024 - January 12, 2025
 - *Towers of Tomorrow with LEGO® Bricks* - February 1 – August 24, 2025
 - *Ultimate Dinosaurs* - tentative summer 2025
- Review of upcoming films:
 - *Ancient Caves* - opened October 1
 - Extended *Into America's Wild* and *Antarctica* leases for another year
 - Spring film about water (ideally sharks)

Ms. Falls asked for clarification on the content of the *Ultimate Dinosaurs* exhibition. Ms. Moyer shared that the “ultimate” term alludes to the largest species of dinosaur, which is the central specimen of this exhibition.

Mention was made that the Finance and Business Operations Committee voted to recommend Resolution #003-24 to the full board for approval and formal vote.

Trustee Discretionary Fund Transfers, Resolution 003-24

Mr. Conti reviewed the proposed transfers.

Resolution #003-24

Approval to allocate funds for website maintenance and advertising.

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

- Allocation of \$150,000 to support BODY WORLDS: The Anatomy of Happiness advertising.
- Allocation of \$15,000 to replenish the fund used to improve and maintain the Science

Museum's website.

Management is requesting \$150,000 in advertising support to increase awareness and drive attendance to the summer 2024 touring exhibition, BODY WORLDS: The Anatomy of Happiness. This funding will augment the Science Museum's state-supported budget which is needed to advertise the increased programming being offered this year.

In resolution #002-2020, the Board approved a \$125,000 transfer from the Trustee Discretionary Fund to support the redesign of the Science Museum's website. As websites are "living things," continued funding is needed to support ongoing maintenance as well as improvements to increase accessibility and further improve the user experience.

Management is requesting an additional \$15,000 to be added to the fund to support this work. The Board authorizes the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation to transfer \$165,000 from the Trustee Discretionary Fund held in account #817 for the above expenses.

Ms. Nicoson made a motion to approve #003-24. The second was called by Mr. Mills. A vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Education Report

Dr. Berry provided the following highlights of team Education's recent work.

- The team had a very successful quarter.
- Programming included the addition of Senior Mornings activities geared towards local seniors.
- Minds of All Kinds sensory friendly evenings continued with great feedback from guests.
- The Science Museum also hosted Girls in Science Camp In's and Boys in Business programming.
- A new installation in *Speed* of a life size Quetzalcoatlus is in the works.
- The Dome will undergo an additional upgrade involving a laser system.
- The new laser system will equip the Science Museum to offer laser shows.
- Upcoming programming includes Science After Dark, Teacher Open House, GLOW!, Sunrise Science and additional Senior Mornings.

Dr. Groover asked about the Science Museum's plans for Earth Day. Ms. Purdum said that a festival is scheduled for Earth Day 2024. Over 30 groups are already signed up. The Science Museum will host the event.

Ms. Burgin asked about advertising efforts for educational programming. Ms. Moyer shared that social media and mailings are the primary method. However, for senior programming, Chertia Paul physically goes to senior centers and hands out flyers to garner participation and interest in senior programming.

Ms. Falls asked about any plans for the upcoming solar eclipse in the spring. Ms. Purdum said that the weather will dictate how well any programming goes. Richmond is not in the main path; however, the Science Museum does plan to utilize The Green to host a gathering.

Foundation Report

Ms. Peeler shared an overview of the Foundation's recent efforts and progress.

- The Foundation is in excellent financial standing.
- \$7.5M has been raised for Phase I and II of The Green project.
- Successful attainment of the Mary Morton Parsons challenge grant and a new Cabell Foundation grant opportunity.
- There is also an additional \$250k challenge from Rob and Jean Estes.
- A total goal of \$10M has been set for The East Green project.
- Projections estimate \$640k in operating support will be transferred to the Science Museum this fiscal year, surpassing the budgeted \$391k, including income from non-endowment investments such as interest on market accounts.
- Investments are managed by Spider Management and TIFF Investment Management, totaling \$32.1M in assets, with \$9.5M designated for current use and \$21.9 M for the endowment.

New Business

Dr. Walters asked for any new business.

Adjournment

With no new business heard, Dr. Berry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Jackson. Dr. Walters called for a vote which passed unanimously without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

The next meeting will be on April 18, 2024.