



APPROVED Minutes  
Special Joint Board of Trustees and  
Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation Meeting

October 29, 2025

**Board of Trustees Present:** Dr. Denise Walters, Gina Burgin, Ram Venkatachalam, Jeff Bentley, Dr. Robert Winn, John Ivins, Karey Malyszko, and Dr. Nisha Patel.

**Board of Trustees Absent:** Dr. Irma Becerra, Kate Hight, Patricia Nicoson, Fran Bradford, Thomas Gottwald, Elsa Falls, and Amishi Amin.

**Staff:** Rich Conti, Courtney Moyer, Timshel Purdum, and Ada Sue Siler.

**Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation Directors:** Chris Powell, Russell P. Reeder, Corbin Neiberline, Kathy Coulter, Robert "Rob" Bertin, Jennifer Bonadio, Sarah Cohn, Gary Crum, Glenn Davidson, Carley Fisher-Maltese, Ph.D., Cheryl Janey, Bobbie Kilberg, Anirudh Kulkarni, Paul Leslie, Lisa Max, Jill Corso McNabb, Ron Meyer, Bruce Roberts, and Robert G. Van Hoecke.

**Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation Staff:** Nene Spivy, Jenn Brunner, Laahiri Chalasani, Dorothy Ready, Colleen Smith, and Sabina Sheridan.

**Balfour Beatty:** Shea Marshall, Gustavo Saldana, Bryson Boone, Pat Sea, Don Morris, and Darrin Lockyear.

**Other Attendees:** J.C. La Riviere, Office of the Attorney General; Emily Parker, Toutman Strategies; and David Mills, Science Museum of Virginia Foundation Board of Directors.

**Welcome and Departure**

Mr. Conti, welcomed the Science Museum Board of Trustees. Dr. Winn called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. The group boarded the charter bus, departed the Science Museum, traveled to Northern Virginia and arrived at the Northern Virginia Science Center construction site at 1:25 p.m.

**Balfour Beatty Presentation and Site Tour**

Mr. Marshall welcomed the group to the construction headquarters. Mr. Marshall and members

of the construction management team shared a brief presentation on the project. The group was led by the construction management team in a tour of the construction site that concluded at 2:30 p.m.

The Trustees and Science Museum staff boarded the charter bus, traveled to the Northwest Federal Credit Union building, and arrived at 3:01 p.m.

### **Joint Meeting of the Science Museum Board of Trustees and the Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation Directors**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Winn at 3:14 p.m.

Mr. Powell welcomed attendees and noted that the meeting brought together representatives from the Science Museum and the Northern Virginia Science Center, two teams united by a shared vision to connect and inspire Virginians through science. Mr. Powell stated that the purpose of the day was to foster connection and relationship-building. Dr. Winn, introduced himself and expressed his enthusiasm for serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Science Museum. Dr. Winn noted that it is rare for two organizational groups to come together to establish a new science center. He emphasized the alignment between the mission of the Science Museum and the purpose of the Northern Virginia Science Center.

The group proceeded with introductions, during which attendees shared personal anecdotes, career backgrounds, and reflections on the significance of science in their own lives.

### **Project Update**

Mr. Conti explained that the purpose of the day's session was to ensure that all attendees left with a unified understanding of the project.

Mr. Conti provided the following project details:

- The building is a \$70 million, 70,000-square-foot facility.
- The exhibit package is estimated at \$29 million.
- The Science Center will be the first development completed in the surrounding district, and additional residential development is expected to follow.
- The target for construction completion is December 2026. At that time staff will move into the facility and exhibits will be installed.
- Exhibit installation is expected to take 3–4 months and all exhibit elements are custom-built.
- A soft opening is anticipated in spring 2027 and a public opening in summer 2027. This timeline will be refined as the project progresses.

### **Construction Considerations**

- Exhibit lighting remains a critical issue; modifications at this stage may significantly increase costs.
- Installation of power lines required more excavation and concrete work than anticipated.
- The retaining wall must be reinforced with an additional internal retaining structure.
- The project benefits from a strong and capable contractor.

## **Operational Structure**

Mr. Conti explained several operational considerations:

- Only six museums in Virginia receive state funding, which creates certain constraints but also provides stability and long-term sustainability.
- Functions like HR, communications, procurement, and finance will remain in Richmond, consistent with the Danville Science Center model.
- New Science Center staff will receive training in Richmond before being stationed in Northern Virginia.
- An operating pro forma has been developed, based on a conservative approach.
- The goal is to secure \$2 million in annual operating support from the state.
- Science Museum leadership continues to meet with elected officials to advocate for the mission of the project.

## **Fundraising Update**

Ms. Spivy provided a comprehensive fundraising update:

- The project has received \$19 million in local funding from Loudoun County, primarily supporting exhibit development.
- \$22 million in private funding has been secured to date, with a formal commitment to reach \$25 million.
- Ms. Spivy described the fundraising effort as a strong story of community partnership and investment.
- Many long-standing funders who have historically supported the Science Center's Lab programs are continuing their support.
- The Foundation will continue to expand the funding base to ensure long-term sustainability for the Science Center.
- Loudoun County will provide \$250,000 in annual operating support once the Science Center opens.

## **Children's Science Center Transition**

- The Children's Science Center Lab at Fair Oaks Mall is expected to close 4–6 months before the new Science Center begins its soft opening.
- Transition planning is focused on developing operational plans, fostering relationships with partners, expanding the donor base, and supporting staff through the process.

- Guests remain a key stakeholder, and their needs continue to guide planning efforts.

## **Gallery Overview**

The following galleries and sponsorships were reviewed:

- *Flow* – Sponsored by Dominion Energy
- *Helios* – Sponsored by the Shrivastava Family
- *Wonder* – Sponsored by the Craig Family
- *Habitat* – Sponsored by the Bolos-Powell Family
- Innovation Center – Title partner available
- Innovation Hub – Principal partner: Kalkarni Family Foundation
- Innovation Studios – Founding partner: Catalyst Development Corporation

Mr. Conti noted that the region contains a significant amount of intellectual capital, presenting valuable opportunities for future partnerships and community engagement.

A call for questions was opened to the group.

Mr. Meyer stated that outreach should be expanded to other counties to ensure they are fully informed and engaged in discussions. He suggested determining if these jurisdictions would be willing to provide annual support for the project. Dr. Patel agreed with Mr. Meyer's suggestion.

Ms. Cohn inquired about the request for operating support from the General Assembly. Mr. Conti responded that, if necessary, the Science Museum could request a budget amendment in the Governor's proposed budget as an alternative route.

Dr. Walters raised a question regarding long-term educational programming, emphasizing the importance of serving all age groups. Ms. Spivy explained that the most effective approach would be to leverage the expertise of the Science Museum and mirror its proven program models. Discussion continued, reinforcing the importance of sharing best practices across all three locations to strengthen all institutions collectively.

Mr. Powell asked Mr. Conti to elaborate on the relationship between the Science Museum and the Foundation Board of Directors. Mr. Conti explained that while each board has its own structure and areas of expertise, all parties operate as part of the same team. Mr. Mills added that the Foundation Board has been strengthening two-way communication between the boards. He highlighted the significance of this work, noting that the organization is building a museum system that does not exist elsewhere in the country.

Mr. Roberts noted the significance of the Museum's upcoming 50th anniversary. Mr. Conti added that 2027 will include the launch of a new fundraising plan, the opening of the Northern Virginia Science Center, and the Science Museum's rebranding initiative.

Mr. Roberts asked Mr. Conti about the Science Museum's operating budget. Mr. Conti explained that approximately half of the operating budget is funded by the state. He stated that the Science Museum follows a strategic approach when making state funding requests.

Ms. Burgin asked a technical question regarding Trustee appointments. Mr. Conti clarified that the Trustees will remain the same across all three sites. Each site will have its own Foundation, and each Foundation will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining its relationship to the respective location.

Mr. Conti noted that the Science Museum operates with a relatively small and efficient team—currently 70 full-time staff members, which will increase to 85 with the addition of the new Science Center. He stated that this size allows for meaningful conversations while still enabling the organization to achieve substantial outcomes.

Mr. Venkatachalm asked about the current activity of the Danville Science Center Foundation. Mr. Conti responded that many Danville Foundation members are long-serving and highly engaged. He described the Danville community as smaller but noted that the Foundation operates effectively within its own dynamics.

Dr. Robert Winn commented on the importance of demonstrating statewide alignment when speaking with legislators. He noted that the three-museum system serves as a strong example of coordinated effort and will yield substantial long-term benefits.

The meeting concluded at 5:16 p.m. The group traveled to Cooper Hawk for dinner.

### **Dinner and Networking**

Dinner began at 5:40 p.m. Mr. Powell and Dr. Winn shared remarks. The group continued with dinner.

At the conclusion of dinner, Ms. Parker of Troutman Strategies provided an update on government relations efforts related to the Northern Virginia Science Center project. She noted that the Science Museum is pursuing a \$2 million operating budget request for the Northern Virginia Science Center, with several strong legislative champions already engaged.

Ms. Parker emphasized that awareness and recognition of the project are high among lawmakers, an outcome she credited to strong advocacy from board members and local supporters.

Mr. Parker explained that the formal budget documents will be filed in January 2026, with the budget process continuing through March 2026.

At the conclusion of dinner, the Board of Trustees members and Science Museum staff boarded the charter bus and traveled to Richmond Virginia. Upon arrival at the Science Museum, Dr. Winn adjourned the meeting at 9:54 p.m.