



Approved Minutes  
Quarterly Board of Trustees Meeting  
Executive Conference Room  
2500 West Broad Street

January 23rd, 2020  
12:00 pm

Present: Dr. Richard Groover, Eukay Jackson, Amy Laufer, Lauren Mathena, Dr. Denise Walters, Missy Neff, Patricia Nicolson, David Mills, Sunita Gupta, Glenn Davidson

Staff: Richard Conti, Elizabeth Voelkel, Courtney Moyer, Brandon Smith, Kinsey Peeler, Pat Murphy, Jim Blow

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

Mr. Davidson called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Mr. Davidson began with a round table introduction and welcomed Cristina Ramirez as a new Trustee. Mr. Conti gave the Board an overview of how the new committees would be structured for the Museum 2030 strategic planning process.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Davidson invited the Trustees to review the minutes from the meetings on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Neff made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Mills. Mr. Davidson asked for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously without objection.

**Science Museum of Virginia Foundation Update**

Mr. Peeler discussed the following:

- The Foundation currently has \$23M in assets
- Will transfer \$2.7M to the museum in restricted and unrestricted funds
- Transferring \$127K more than budgeted this FY
- Up & Atom and Illumination Gala fundraisers will take place later in the year.

- 2020 Ms. America Camille Schrier will be the keynote speaker for Up & Atom

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Conti highlighted the following recent events:

- Ms. America recently conducted a science demonstration at the Museum for local schoolchildren
- Science after Dark: Glow saw over 1600 guests.
- Science after Dark: Bug Out will be the next Science After Dark
- Metropolitan Business League in the Forge
- George Mason University Climate Change Summit
- Dr. Temple Grandin gave a lecture in the Museum
- National STEM Day in partnership with Kaboom and Carmax
- Science after Bark featured agility and Richmond Police K-9 demonstrations
- Model Railroad Weekend was another highly successful event
- The Water Bottle Wall and Dancefloor are installed in Boost!
- Bionic Me had a successful run, Giant Insects is now open
- Science on Tap: Medieval Time saw 1,100 guests

Ms. Moyer reviewed the following:

- Total attendance up 15% year over year in the first 6 month of FY 20
- Event attendance and field trip attendance are also up over last FY
- Membership is up over last year
- Members make up about 25% of overall attendance
- Science after Dark is showing steady attendance
- Model Railroad Weekend holding steady year over year, 12K guests over 3 days.
- Fruitcake Science showing some decreased attendance, it may be time to retool.
- Noon Year's Eve attendance up 25% over last year
- Already at 61% of forecast attendance for the year

Mr. Conti then discussed the status of the Northern Virginia Science Center project:

- Architectural and engineering teams now under contract
- The State will own the land and the building
- The Northern Virginia Science Center will be a division of the Science Museum of Virginia
- The Children's Science Center Foundation will serve as fund-raising entity
- The Governor allocated funding for the project in the 2020 budget
- Roto will be the exhibit fabrication firm
- Northwest Federal Credit Union has donated a \$10M gift
- Efforts are underway to reach Millennial philanthropists
- Currently exploring a new site in the development, which is more open and next to a nature area.

- The oversight board will have two representatives from each body, Children's Science Center, The Museum and Loudoun County

Mr. Davidson outlined Resolution #001-2020. "Statement of Support for the Advancement of the Northern Virginia Science Center Project." Agreement between the Loudon County Board of Supervisors, The Science Museum of Virginia Board of Trustees and the Children's Science Center, Unlocks the \$15M budget Item from Loudon County. Resolution provides full endorsement to move forward in partnership with Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation (dba) Children's Science Center on the proposed facility in the Kincora development in Loudoun County, VA.

Mr. Davidson called for a motion to approve the Statement of Support, Resolution #001-2020. Ms. Nicoson made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Neff. Mr. Davidson called for a vote and the motion passed without objection.

Mr. Davidson detailed the Delegation of Authority statement, which entrusts Mr. Conti with full responsibility for leadership, operation maintenance and management of all aspects of the Science Museum of Virginia under the general direction of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Davidson called for motion to approve Delegation of Authority. Ms. Neff made the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Walters. Mr. Davidson called for a vote and the motion passed without objection.

Mr. Conti shared the updated virtual fly through of the plan for the Parking Deck and Green Space.

- The updated plan places more emphasis on green space
- A joint meeting is happening this afternoon with the Foundation Board of Directors to review the plan
- The Trustees will need to be as engaged as possible and keep momentum
- New group structure for Strategic Planning groups will be instituted.

Ms. Norwood reminded Trustees to only attend committee meetings as assigned. When more than two Trustees participate, the meeting must be public and prior notice must be given. Regarding email communication, only message one other Trustee at a time, otherwise the same legal requirements apply.

### **Finance Report**

Dr. Groover reviewed points from the Finance committee:

- Year to Date numbers comparing 2020 to 2019, revenue operations admissions and programs at \$338K, 29% above last year
- Revenue 20% above this time last year for Enterprise
- Total revenue 6% above same time last year
- Keeping personnel expenses controlled and right on target

Ms. Voelkel reviewed Enterprises in further detail; including facility rentals, special events for groups and individuals

- Off to an unbelievable start in first half of FY 20, 26% ahead of budget in revenues
- Revenues are 16% ahead of same period in FY 19
- FY 19 was a record year for Special Events, brought in more money to the institution than any year in the Museum's history,
- Made investments into personnel
- New marketing efforts and strategy, paying off huge dividends for The Museum

Dr. Groover detailed Resolution #002-2020, "Approval to reduce the fund transfer for Performance Bonuses and allocate funds for Planet Shark Advertising, Website Redesign and Tent Repair." These actions will return \$3,000 to the Trustee Discretionary Fund and transfer \$100,000 of the available funds from the Trustee Discretionary Fund to fund advertising efforts for the summer 2020 exhibit, Planet Shark: Predator or Prey; \$125,000 to fund the redesign of the Museum's website, and an additional \$3,000 to replace doors and panels in the Thalheimer Pavilion to extend the life of the tent.

Dr. Groover called for a motion to approve Resolution #002-2020. Ms. Nicoson made the motion. Mr. Mills called the second. Dr. Groover called for a vote and the motion passed without objection.

Dr. Walters provided the following updates on the Education Committee

- Progress is occurring at the State level to develop unified vision for STEM education and align Museum programming in tandem
- Efforts are underway to secure additional funding for chemistry based programming
- Giant Insects is performing well.
- There is a new structure for Forge programming, with workshops better engaging members
- Getting ready for Planet Shark exhibit for Summer 2020
- Summer camp planning is underway and on track to sell out again this summer

Mr. Davidson prompted an open discussion and opportunity for questions. The Strategic Planning teams will dive further into the topics presented.

Ms. Nicoson inquired about current efforts of the Museum related to climate change and the work of Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, and asked in what ways can the Museum raise awareness and better engage with the general public on the subject. Mr. Davidson mentioned that the Governor has identified climate change as a key area for concerted efforts. Ms. Moyers added that Dr. Hoffman continues to broaden the Museum's efforts on climate change and develop easy

to understand content. Dr. Hoffman and the Marketing Department have worked to develop a relationship with Richmond Family Magazine that has proved to be mutually beneficial.

Dr. Walters shared an education tool model from a Junior Achievement budget activity geared toward youth. The model utilizes tablets and set parameters for allocating scarce resources to accomplish a set goal and may be adaptable for a climate change education challenge. Ms. Purdum emphasized current Science on a Sphere programming, one key area of focus is climate change.

Dr. Walters asked about the Earth Day plans for 2020. Previously, Richmond has hosted two separate festivals. This year a collaboration with Enrichmond has brought about a joint festival plan for April which will be at a larger scale; featuring vendors, educational activities, and local partners like the American Chemical Society. Efforts are also underway to pull in professors from VCU to engage in a Citizen Science Biology activity aimed at helping to identify biodiversity in the city.

### **New Business**

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

### **Adjournment**

There being no new business, Mr. Davidson adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

The next meeting will be on April 21, 2020