



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

April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
3:00 pm

Present: Mary Ellen Pauli, Patty Nicoson, Dr. Denise Walters, Glenn Davidson (teleconference), Missy Neff, Lauren Mathena, David Mills, Sunita Gupta, Elsa Falls

Staff: Richard Conti, Courtney Moyer, Elizabeth Voelkel, Timshel Purdum, Kinsey Peeler, Brandon Smith, Saa'dia Walker, Britt Thurman, Ada Sue Siler

Other Attendees: Cynthia Norwood, Attorney General's Office

Ms. Pauli called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Pauli welcomed the Board members and proceeded into a round table introduction of all present members. Members shared their name and a memory of their favorite/most memorable science teacher.

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Pauli asked the Board to review the draft minutes from the January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting and asked for a motion to approve them. Correction requested to update the date in the last sentence of the minutes to reflect the upcoming meeting date at April 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 and not January 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. Mr. Mills made the motion approve the minutes as amended which was seconded by Dr. Walters. The amended minutes were unanimously approved without objection.

**Science Within Reach**

Ms. Thurman shared the following updates on accessibility, diversity and inclusion:

- Aim to remove barriers and ensure quality experience for all guests, no matter age or ability level

- Overview provided of all available resources in the museum
- The Museum has mobility devices available upon request
- Specific programming includes Minds of All Kinds (MOAK) events, geared towards those who require a more sensory-friendly experience.
- The Museum broadening the scope to accommodate more than autism, and to include blind, low vision, hard of hearing, or those with sensory needs.
- MOAK is free for guests and offers a no judgement atmosphere, the next one is scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup> 2019, last year 1,272 guests attended MOAK events
- Science for the Young at Heart (SYH), is a free program for seniors with limited financial resources
- Next SYH is set for May 7<sup>th</sup> 2019, the average number in attendance is 25 but attendance is growing to the 30s
- SYH is funded with a grant from Genworth Foundation
- Museums for All Initiative is also growing, 555 family memberships and 1,358 single admission guests through program last year
- Museums for All offers discounts and reduced priced admission for individuals and families that are EBT card holders
- The marketing campaign was successful, included some direct marketing strategies
- 19% of these members have attended the Museum more than 10 times in the last year
- The Museum has 35 active community partners
- Currently researching ways to engage the Hispanic population more
- MOAK, SYH, Museums for All and similar programming is almost entirely private funded

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Conti highlighted the following:

- Tremendous growth in attendance over the past year, exceeded 500K in attendance this last year
- Up 18% over last year's record attendance
- Events are operating at full capacity
- Memberships have grown from 4000 to 7500 member households
- Curious George has proven to be a great draw for early learners
- Science After Dark performing well, recent February event featured sheep heart dissection
- Science After Dark Slime Night, had over 3000 in attendance over a 3-hour period
- Up and Atom event with the Foundation saw a great turnout, double last year's participation
- Girls in Science Camp in hosted 300 girls in attendance
- We are switching to digital membership cards

- Homeschool education week and Volunteer appreciation week both went very well
- The Foundation's Illumination Gala has a date set for next year
- Science On Tap saw fewer attendance for the Planeteers themed event, but those who did attend raved about a quality experience
- Next SOT is set for July 11<sup>th</sup> 2019
- Danville Science Center updates
  - The removal and archival of Womack Collection was successful
  - Private funding for Building rehabilitation
  - New early learner space, "Crescent Crossing"
- Northern Virginia Science Center
  - Detailed planning funds from governor's budget
  - Draft documents for the next steps are in place.
  - Currently working on the name development, trying to gauge reactions to variations
  - Maker space incorporated into the design, a "maker core"
- Decisions still being made on future of Workers Comp building, i.e., demolish or keep and renovate?
- Some interest from film office and VCU School of Education to use the space for their school
  - Looking into the idea of partnering with VCU if they occupy the location

Ms. Pauli asked about the term "museum" used in our name and if it is seen as an archaic term. Do we need to look at changing our name? Mr. Conti responded that we have thought about the term "museum" and considered the pros and cons of keeping term or change it up. Name change would require a legislative action.

### **Pompeii Exhibit**

Ms. Voelkel shared details regarding the upcoming *Pompeii: The Immortal City* exhibit

- First trucks start arriving in 16 days, scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup>
- Biggest traveling exhibit in museum history
- Over 100 original objects
- Robust public education schedule
- Hosting two thematically-tied art exhibitions on campus
- Dome will show *Volcanoes: Fires of Creation* to reflect theme
- Programming for all areas in the museum will tie in, from The Forge, Science on a Sphere, Lightplace, Art Lab, and Lunch Break Science lectures series, etc.
- SOT and SAD will also correlate
- Robust marketing plan in place, including an insert in the local paper

Ms. Peeler added that Pompeii gives the Museum a new opportunity to pull in community. The Foundation is hosting a preview event for Pompeii, Crystal level donors will be invited to a special talk on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2019.

### **Finance Committee Report**

Ms. Walker provided the following updates:

- Overall, finances are in really good shape and the Museum is doing amazingly well
- Earned revenue is up
- Store and Café revenue up in conjunction with increased admissions
- DGC brought in \$142k from rentals in the last year

### **Education Committee Report**

Ms. Purdum and Dr. Walters shared Education Committee updates:

- Highlights from the Inspiration Index
- Review of findings from compiled data collected from school groups and field trips
- The Forge has also collected survey data which provides insight into repeat visitors and areas that will need continued development.

### **Brand Strategy Report**

Ms. Moyers discussed some Marketing points:

- Considering the next temporary exhibit to occupy the “ring” after Curious George leaves, the front runners are “World of Giant Insects” and “Hot Wheels Race to Win”
- STEM award winners have been selected, two student Phenom awards and a teacher award will be given this year, but no business met criteria to receive an award this year

### **Strategic Planning**

Mr. Davidson reviewed points from the Strategic Planning committee:

- Foundation board was well represented
- The team overall was quite successful
- A SWOT analysis has been conducted
- A long term strategic plan exercise has also been conducted
- Plans are reviewed periodically to ensure they are being abided by
- Plans are underway to improve some tech/audio visual infrastructure as well as overhaul website
- Continue to develop a plan for Workers Comp building

Ms. Nicoson asked how we approach the substance of content for the museum and if we need to refresh vision. Mr. Conti responded that is talked about every day and work to improve content whenever needed is constant. The Museum constantly aims to continue to be relevant and refresh the topics. Sometimes that involved hiring new staff if there is a need. The goal is to engage in citizen science and engage the public. Topics to consider are GMOs, vaccines, genetic

modification and its ethics. Ms. Purdum added that the Museum provides the venue and act as a conveyor of citizen science.

Ms. Pauli asked about the plan for after Pompeii. Ms. Moyers responded that the Museum has a plan for main exhibition for summer of 2020 (*Planet Shark*) and 2021.

Ms. Pauli called for motion to approve the Strategic Plan. Mr. Davidson made the motion, which was seconded by Dr. Walters. Motion passed without objection.

### **New Business**

Ms. Pauli asked for any new business.

Ms. Peeler shared that the fundraiser dates for next year are March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 for UP and Atom and April 18<sup>th</sup> for the Gala.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business, Ms. Pauli called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was made by Ms. Nicoson which was seconded by Ms. Falls. The motion passed without objection and the meeting adjourned at 4:16 pm.

The next meeting will be on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 3 pm.