

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, 11.15.24, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

VMNH Director's Conference Room 236 with remote participation option

Present in Person: Mr. Mark Buss, Chair
Dr. Melany Clark, Vice Chair
Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)

Present Remotely: Ms. Lisa Carter (Past Chair)
Ms. Abby Gump (OAG representative)
Ms. Lauren Coleman (OAG representative)

Absent: Mr. Cord Cothren
Ms. Lauren Hall

Mr. Buss opened the meeting and welcomed everyone both in person and online at 3:30 PM.

Mr. Buss asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2024, executive committee meeting. Dr. Clark moved to approve and Ms. Carter seconded. Minutes were approved.

Chairs Report

- We are still learning about the 360 Degree Review process and hope to improve the utilization of that tool. Mr. Buss plans to recommend to the committee online resources and to move the new evaluation process into the overall organization beginning with the next annual review cycle.
- Mr. Buss recognized the boards desire to review the senior staff job descriptions and occupational titles for equitability with senior staff members at other agencies in Virginia. Mr. Buss, Dr. Keiper, and Ms. Gump will meet in Richmond for further discussion of this issue near the beginning of December. The preliminary hope is to incrementally request funding to equalize senior management salary funding.
- American Alliance of Museums, *Museum Board Leadership: A National Report*. Mr. Buss called for additional discussion of the findings at the Board of Trustee meeting. He also called upon the Strategic Planning Committee to investigate DEI trends as it relates to the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Mr. Buss hopes to allocate some time during future board meetings to discuss in detail the findings and strategies to improve the DEI operations of the museum. Mr. Buss suggested a written letter from the board to the secretary urging DEI considerations be made in board appointments.

- Ms. Carter mentioned some things found in the national report that can easily be incorporated into the VMNH board.
 - Strive to diversify the age of board members
 - Strive for greater engagement of board members
 - Have the board complete a self-assessment – What are their strengths and weaknesses?
 - Have senior staff assess the board
- Dr. Clark reminded the chair that the board members should be participating physically and financially. Mr. Buss said he would remind the entire board.
- Dr. Clark asked Dr. Keiper to create a list of the ways that the board can engage in events and contribute financially.

Executive Director's Report

- Dr. Keiper reported that our festival attendance trend has plateaued. Seeking ideas about how to boost numbers using our current building.
- Pavilion project is ongoing.
- Seeking mobile museum trailer rehabilitation contract to fix hydraulic lifts and other ongoing needs.
- Dr. Bassett is now operating a submarine in local lakes to look for archeological sites. He intends to take it to the Chesapeake Bay where he will be looking for near shore submerged Virginia Indian sites.
- Douglas Avenue site has been cleaned and readied for collections.
- AAM reaccreditation package sent on November 1st.
- Celebration of foundation \$1M milestone

Ms. Carter asked about a ribbon cutting for the pavilion. Dr. Keiper isn't sure of the completion and installation of all the exhibit components, so at this time no time has been planned. It was noted that the Friday before the next board meeting (January 31) would be convenient. The May meeting may be a more likely date for ribbon cutting.

Old Business

- Strategic Plan one page synopsis will be used as a preliminary document as the committees meet and flesh out the details.
- Dr. Keiper reminded the committee that our reaccreditation visit is in late spring, so the board may want to consider delaying the adoption of the 5-year strategic plan until after the peer review. There may be things that the peer reviewers note that should be incorporated in the next five years. Dr. Keiper recommended waiting until the fall to release the strategic plan.

Open Discussion

- Christy Deatherage has been tasked with completing a salary survey for her staff.
- Dr. Keiper shared an idea of Dr. Evans. He suggested that the board meeting structure change into using a consent agenda for committee reports and use the remainder of the time in deeper discussion of opportunities or challenges of the museum.

- Ms. Carter was supportive of the idea but recognized that board members may not read the reports themselves beforehand.
- Dr. Clark suggested that staff present an issue to the board and ask for expertise to help solve the problem.
- Mr. Buss raised the idea of moving some committee members around to best utilize their expertise.
- Dr. Keiper and Mr. Buss reminded the committee that in the next few months many current board members will be rotating off leaving several vacancies. Dr. Keiper prefers board members be recruited by the Secretary or by current board member contacts.
- No updates from the Office of the Attorney General.

Meeting adjourned at 4:22 PM.