

**Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees
Quarterly Meeting, Friday, August 9, 2025
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Executive Conference Room 236 with remote participation option**

Present In-person: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)
Ms. Lauren Hall (Secretary)
Mr. Will Clements (Treasurer)
Ms. Lauren Coleman (AG Representative)
Dr. Joe Keiper (Ex Officio)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Present Remotely: Ms. Lisa Carter (Vice Chair)
Mr. Zach Ryder (Staff)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Melany Clark called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Finding a quorum present, voting on action items and remote participation was allowed. No committee members were absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Ms. Lauren Hall and seconded by Ms. Lisa Carter to approve the 1.31.25 and 5.16.25 minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Will Clements shared news of a very positive fourth quarter. Expenses remained within the budget and revenue exceeded expectations. Dr. Keiper added the museum had record setting revenue from Dino Festival and there were little to no negative comments about the increase in festival admission price.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Keiper reported the AAM Site Visit Report was very positive. The review team urged continued work on Douglas Avenue to secure an appropriate storage environment.

Secretary Guidera approved our proposal requesting the Waynesboro project be moved to the capital construction pool. Project cost estimates and value engineering work are currently in the hands of an outside engineering firm. The work is expected to be concluded before the mid-October deadline.

Dr. Keiper thanked Ms. Hall and Dr. Clark for attending the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion Ribbon Cutting event. The pavilion is being used, and additional exhibits are expected to be added.

Dr. Clark shared that the Dino festival provided numerous relevant experiences for visitors. She was very impressed with the crowd management and offered her thanks to all the staff for an impactful event.

Looking forward, Dr. Keiper noted the TJ 2026 events and exhibits are being developed with the help of a very generous donor.

VMNH is excited to participate in the August 21st ribbon cutting for the South River Preserve. Interpretive signage is being installed with additional signage to be created with leftover funds.

Dr. Clark noted the visitor experience at our festivals, not necessarily the amount of revenue is the most important part of running festivals.

Dr. Keiper provided a review of the Strategic Plan for the next steps. The goal of the committee is to have a meeting next month to identify quantifiable measures of success and establish a timeline. The Strategic Planning Committee will have a final wrap-up meeting in October. The Board will conduct a vote of adoption in November and very quickly the staff will create the final PDF before year end.

OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Clark recognized the work to bring Douglas Ave. back as well as a look forward to Starling Ave. expansion.

Dr. Clark also pointed out the multitude of positive VMNH articles recently found in the news.

Dr. Keiper stated the Waynesboro project is in a very good position as we have been contacted recently by elected officials to provide more information as they advocate for the project in Richmond.

Dr. Clark offered to draft a letter from her thanking donors for their contribution to the Pavilion.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Clark spoke about ongoing strategies to engage the existing and potential Board members. She praised Delegate Phillips and Senator Stanley for helping with pay increases for our lowest paid employees and now the effort has turned to employee retention.

Dr. Clark spoke about leveraging Board members' expertise and encouraging them to advocate for the museum. She plans to implement a different meeting structure to engage the board.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Hall made the following motion and was second by Mr. Clements.

I move that the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History enter closed session to discuss the assignment, appointment, performance and salary of a specific employee, particularly to conduct the annual performance review of the Executive Director, pursuant to the personnel exemption in Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1), and for consultation with legal counsel regarding the same pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(8).

OPEN SESSION

The committee returned to open session.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Hall read the closed session certification, and a roll call vote was held wherein all committee members certified the session as lawful.

Whereas, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

Whereas, Virginia code §2.2-3712 requires certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge; (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN DISCUSSION

No further announcements or discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 4:39 PM.

Next Meeting of the Executive Committee
Friday, November 14, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History