

**VMNH Board of Trustees
Facilities Committee
Saturday, November 15, 2025
Executive Director's Conference Room with remote option**

Trustees Present: Dr. Tom Benzing (Chair)

Trustees Present Remotely: Dr. David Furth (distance)

Trustees Not Present: Ms. Lisa Carter
Ms. Lauren Hall

Staff Present: Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Mr. Jonathan Martin
Mr. Ryan Barber
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow

Others Present: Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Representative)

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Tom Benzing welcomed the committee and those online at 8:30 AM. No quorum was present.

MINUTES

Due to the lack of a quorum, no votes could be taken on August minutes. These minutes will be approved at the next Facilities Committee meeting.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Dr. Keiper started the meeting with a report of ongoing projects at the Starling Ave. facility. He highlighted two projects that will utilize Maintenance Reserve funds. The first is a project in the planning phase to include the replacement of aging floor covering and hallway wallpaper in the area outside the future Young Explorers Center. The second project is ongoing work to improve the efficiency of the building's HVAC system by replacing a critical lever which controls air handling. During the Esco project approximately five years ago, some (not all) of the levers were replaced. This initiative will replace all of them.

Mr. Jonathan Martin gave an update about the schematic design work currently occurring for the Douglas Ave. project. A total cost estimate of \$743,000.00 was recently received. This includes a \$427,000.00 estimate for finishes. Staff feel this cost is not in line with our needs and will be thoroughly reviewing the finishes estimate room by room with the architect. Asbestos abatement is

not included in this most recent estimate and will be handled as a separate Maintenance Reserve project.

Mr. Ryan Barber gave a status update about renovations of the Young Explorers Center space. A contractor has been secured to dismantle library shelving December 8-12. The shelving will be stored until renovations are complete, after which time the freestanding shelves will be reinstalled at Douglas Ave. The next steps include painting walls, hallway work, and design of the Young Explorers Center. Mr. Barber noted more information will be presented during the full board meeting later today.

The Waynesboro trailer is currently in North Carolina at a trailer repair facility. The repair company, Spevco, evaluated the trailer and reported that the chassis is rusted. They have also evaluated the electrical system, new wrap, and several other necessary items to make the mobile unit safe and desirable for visitors. We have received a preliminary estimate and are awaiting an itemized cost list. The scope of work includes getting the trailer back to Waynesboro and set-up. Even with renovations, it is likely that the trailer is no longer mobile and once set up in Waynesboro will be stationary. Dr. Benzing suggested that staff consider a rebrand moving away from the “mobile” museum concept.

FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Dr. Keiper reported the new exhibits manager starts on Monday.

Lastly, he reported that the pavilion is being utilized by our educators, and the space has potential for future exhibits. Dr. Benzing noted the new Exhibits Manager may need to sit Ex Officio on the Education Committee.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Dr. Benzing encouraged new members to find their place on a committee. With several vacant Board seats, someone with facility experience may be desirable to contribute to the Facilities Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 AM.