



**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF THE RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE
Sept. 15, 2026, 1 P.M.
Online Zoom meeting**

Present at the meeting were Dr. Carole Nash, Dr. Tom Benzing, Dr. Melany Clark, Dr. David Furth, Katherine McGuire, Zach Ryder, and Ben Williams. There were no committee members absent.

Ben Williams called the meeting to order and finding a quorum present asked the board to approve the minutes from the Nov. 15, 2025 and May 16, 2026 meetings of the committee. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The next action item was two changes to the VMNH Live Animals Policy. Williams outlined the two changes. The first proposed change was the removal of text relating to the museum's leaf cutter ant colony, as the museum no longer keeps leaf cutter ants following the colony's collapse. The second proposed change was regarding the care sheets for the live animals. Previously, board approval was required for any changes to the care sheets, but given how frequently these sheets change, staff asked that the committee recommend to the full board that board approval is no longer required for these changes. The action items regarding the changes to the live animals policy passed unanimously and the committee will recommend these changes to the board at its full meeting in November.

The committee also considered five candidates who have applied to be VMNH Research Associates: Dr. Paul Sattler, Dr. Kevin Bezy, Dr. Ben Kligman, Dr. Keiko Meshida, and Jeff Carpenter. Katherine McGuire asked whether Research Associates incur any expenses for the museum and also asked whether the museum receives any of the overhead if a Research Associate has a grant disbursed through the VMNH Foundation. Williams said that Research Associates do not cause any expense for VMNH and that the Foundation generally receives a percentage of the overhead on Research Associate grants. The committee unanimously voted to recommend to the full board that the five Research Associate candidates be approved.

Dr. Tom Benzing made a motion that the Research and Collections committee recommend to the full board that the board ask the VMNH Foundation to examine current rates of overhead for grants in order to make sure the Foundation isn't being shortchanged. The motion passed unanimously.

Ben Williams adjourned the meeting at 1:22 PM.