

MINUTES
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
August 21, 2021

The one hundred thirtieth meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History was held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, August 21, 2021, at the Virginia Museum of Natural History

Trustees Present:	Jennifer Burnett, Chair Nathan Sanford, Secretary Dr. Tom Benzing Cord Cothren Melany Stowe	Roberto Quinones, Treasurer Dr. Makunda Abdul-Mbacke Mark Buss Dr. Art Evans
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Trustees By Zoom & Reasons:	Anne Burnett – travel limitations, caregiving Lisa Carter – work commitments Faye Cooper – concerned about COVID Dr. Carole Nash - caregiving Michael Phillips – home inspection
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Trustees Absent:	Siri Russell
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Staff Present:	Dr. Joe Keiper Dr. Hayden Bassett Mary Zell Galen Zach Ryder Rhonda Casey (minutes, by zoom)	Ryan Barber Christy Deatherage Jonathan Martin Ben Williams
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Others Present:	Audrey Burges – Attorney General’s Office (by Zoom) Earl Armstrong – VMNH Foundation Board of Directors
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Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Jennifer Burnett, Chairman. A roll call vote of trustees was held and it was determined that there were nine members present which established a quorum.

VMNH Mission: To interpret Virginia’s natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Art Evans moved that the minutes of the May 2021 Board meeting be approved and Dr. Makunda Abdul-Mbacke seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

Chairman's Report

Ms. Jennifer Burnett presented the report. Ms. Burnett introduced Ms. Audrey Burges, who gave a presentation on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Roberto Quinones, Treasurer, presented the report.

- Profit and Loss statement (information)
Mr. Quinones said that he had met with museum staff earlier this month. Everything is on target, all income and expenditures are in line. There are no problems.

Dr. Tom Benzing moved that the financial report be accepted; Mr. Mark Buss seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Joe Keiper, Executive Director, noted that most information would be covered in the committee reports. He highlighted two areas:

- The staff has been creative and worked hard under difficult circumstances. Safety measures will be reimposed as needed. By September 1 every employee has to be vaccinated or take a COVID test every week.
- VMNH has become a single use plastic free facility.

Advancement Report

Mr. Ryan Barber, Deputy Director, presented the report.

Mr. Barber said that Foundation monies are up based on contributions to the Discovery Fund, grants, and memberships.

A membership campaign is currently ongoing through mail, email, and social media.

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Mr. Barber said that there were several corporate partnerships in place:

- Hooker Furnishings – \$2,500 – scholarships for underserved schools plus underwriting of remaining admissions charge for *Museums For All* participants
- Harvest Foundation - \$5,000 – grant to provide multilingual elements for the upcoming Science of Flight exhibit
- Boxley Materials Company - \$10,000 – scholarship support for distance and outreach programming in regional schools

Mr. Barber also said that visitation has been strong, with 74 percent of visitors from outside Martinsville and Henry County. He noted that Dragon Festival is October 15-16.

Mr. Barber included statistics on monthly visitation and revenues, exhibits, upcoming events, media coverage, and Facebook statistics. He also included information for staff and visitor demographics.

Facilities (Operations) Committee Report

Ms. Jennifer Burnett, Facilities (Operations) Committee Chair, presented the report. She highlighted a few items on the report.

The Facilities Committee met recently and discussed the Energy Service Company (ESCO) presentation, VMNH-Waynesboro, Education Pavilion, overhaul of audio system in Hall of Ancient Life, and the proposed early childhood learning center.

Dr. Tom Benzing moved that the Board go forward with the ESCO proposal. Dr. Art Evans seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

Research and Collections Committee Report

Dr. Art Evans, Research and Collections Committee Chair, presented the report.

Dr. Evans highlighted the work of each curator and commended the curatorial staff for adding to and caring for the collections as well as expanding museum reach in terms of programming and professional contacts.

Development/Marketing Committee Report

Mr. Roberto Quinones, Development/Marketing Committee Chair, presented the report.

Mr. Quinones said that most had been covered in other reports. He noted that good work has been done with the repatriation of the Guatemalan artifacts, internships, and the diversity, equity and inclusion initiative.

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Education and Public Programs Committee Report

Mr. Cord Cothren, Education Committee Chair, presented the report.

Mr. Cothren said a Home School Open House was held on August 11; 70 people attended and 40 people registered for the homeschool academy.

Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Report

Ms. Faye Cooper, Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Chair, presented the report.

Ms. Cooper said that the Waynesboro project is going into its sixth year. The project has had some great success with the Waynesboro community and with the local government. Preplanning has been completed and we are on hold with the state for detailed design funds. Once the go-ahead is given, an RFP will be posted.

Ms. Cooper said that Dr. Keiper and the staff have continued to keep the community engaged. There are five teams headed by museum staff that will cover various areas of the process.

University Partnerships Committee

Dr. Tom Benzing, Chairman, said there was no report. He said that the committee will meet in September.

Strategic Planning Committee Report

Ms. Lisa Carter, Strategic Planning Committee Chair, said there was no report.

Executive Session

Mr. Mark Buss moved that the Board meet in executive session. Dr. Tom Benzing seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

Motion to go into closed session pursuant to Code of Virginia pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711.A.1 to discuss personnel matters, namely assessment and evaluation of the Executive Director.

Conduct roll call vote (Secretary)

Following an executive session of twenty minutes, Mr. Nathan Sanford moved that the Board reconvene in open session; Mr. Mark Buss seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

Motion to end closed session pursuant to Code of Virginia pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711.A.1 to discuss personnel matters, namely assessment and evaluation of the Executive Director.

Conduct roll call vote (Secretary)

Adjournment

Ms. Burnett offered a resolution to honor the Center for Coldwaters Restoration. Mr. Benzing made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Quinones seconded the motion. With no discussion, a roll call was vote was held and the motion unanimously passed.

With no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Burnett adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Sanford
Secretary

Jennifer Burnett
Chairman