**Finance/Advancement Committee Minutes**

Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees

Monday, November 13 at 10 a.m.

Danville Family YMCA

215 Riverside Dr., Danville, VA 24540

Attendance: Cord Cothren, Ryan Barber, Joe Keiper, Jonathan Martin, Mary Zell Galen

Virtual: Anne Burnett, Nathan Sanford

Absent: Sherri Jordan, Joan Montgomery

1.Welcome and remarks – Cord Cothren, Chair

2.Status of budget and upcoming priorities

Jonathan Martin:

* First quarter is in-line with expectations
* Haven’t received central account distribution to cover new raises (given in May and December, but don’t need to receive the funds until the end of the year).
  + Joe Keiper: Been through central accounts distribution before, and VMNH is not using the funds.

3.Recent and pending support

Ryan Barber:

* Advancement report has lots of charts expanding on this report.
* Continuing to impletment lots of grants, ranging from Community Foundation to research grants:
  + New grant to support the *Museums for All* program from the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, underwriting the program by 50%.
  + VMNH will continue to promote the program and work with state and federal partners to communicate the benefits.
* Will meet with Harvest Foundation to supplement need-based scholarship support
  + No timeline on current project, but more to come
* Lots of activity on federal grants
  + Microspsy lab grant due by the end of the year, which has been big success on bringing in students
  + Signed contract with Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative to fund the CHML
* Lots of areas are up on the report, including memberships. Shown benefit of signing up for museums at festivals and renewals have increased.
* Endowment changes frequently but has shown strong growth. Will be throwing celebration once reach the million-dollar mark.
* Best first quarter ever for admissions and retail sales
  + Joe Keiper: VMNH had skyrocketing growth pre-pandemic and hasn’t quite hit 2019 numbers because of school field trip attendance. Staff will look at historic data to separate school groups from overall visitation numbers, allowing VMNH to see a more accurate look at current visitation.

4.Upcoming events, programs and initiatives

Ryan Barber:

* Bonez and Booz had around 2,600 visitators over a roughly 4 hour period. About 1,000 visitors were *Museums for All* participants, and visitors were very appreciative.
* *Dinosaur Discoveries* up through January. In late January and early February, will have tear down and set up of new exhibit.
* On February 10th, *Masters of the Night* exhibit will be open through all of 2024. Will be same day as the BOT meeting, and a smaller festical will be happening on the same day.
* Repitle Festival coming in April.
* Jonathan Martin: Education Pavilion is next major project, supported by funds from both the VMNH Foundation and state funding.
* Page 7 of Advancement Report looks at donor distribution, showing number of gifts geographically, and number of dollars donated. Most donors are local, but most dollars come from outside the area.
* Cord Cothren: Complimented the visitor breakdown of visitor distribution map, which shows high number of outside visitors.
  + Joe Keiper: *Museums for All* program has really increased local visitiation.

5.Questions, comments, recommendations

Joe Keiper:

* Strategic Planning Committee recently met, and this is an opportunity to combine work of two committees on the work to develop the next strategic plan. Mark Buss will share more information, including a timeline, at the next BOT meeting. Would like to hold a retreat for strategic planning at the August 2024 Board Meeting, which will be similar to the streategic retreat in Harrisonburg in May 2022.

Cord Cothren:

* Looking at graphs on page 7, would like to see somehow that businesses in Danville can provide support from the Danville area. Either businesses don’t know about VMNH, or they’re not being approached. Thinks we can grow VMNH’s reach in Danville.
  + Joe Keiper: need to find something that visitors will value that they can’t get otherwise. Danville Science Center is a very different visitor experience, and we need to think about what we can offer of value to Danville.
* Would like to target the *Museums for All* program in Danville and think people will travel for it.
* Danville brought in huge amount of tourist revenue for past year, and thinks VMNH can build on that.
* Anne Burnett: Thinks VMNH should talk to local economic development director, and what VMNH should be selling that we’re in the same MSA. Look at VMNH as one of the pluses of the region, as businesses look for amenities.
  + Cord Cothren: Has connection with economic development team. Thinks VMNH can get SOSE? To share email announcements about events.
  + Anne Burnett: suggests reaching out to head of chamber of commerce.
    - Cord Cothren: used to be Alexis Earnhart, but she’s now at UVA.

Nathan Sanford:

* Times for the weekend Board of Trustee meeting?
  + Joe Keiper: provided meeting times.

Anne Burnett:

* Asked calendar for all 2024 dates
  + Joe Keiper: Will provide calendar and make it official on Friday.

6.Adjournment