**MINUTES**

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**June 20th, 2020**

The one hundred twenty-fifth meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History was held at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, June 20, 2020, and hosted by the museum via a *Zoom Conference* during the Governor’s Emergency Declaration related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Trustees Present: Tom Benzing, Chairman Art Evans, Vice-Chairman

Jennifer Burnett, Treasurer Janet Scheid, Secretary

Faye Cooper Melany Stowe

Lisa Moerner Carole Nash

Michael Phillips Roberto Quinones

Cord Cothren Siri Russell

Barry Dorsey Nathan Sanford

Trustees Absent: Makunda Abdul-Mbacke

Staff Present: Joe Keiper Jonathan Martin

Christy Deatherage Ryan Barber

Zach Ryder

Others Present: Audrey Burgess – Attorney General’s Office

Fran Bradford – Deputy Secretary of Education

With fourteen (14) members of the Board of Trustees present, a quorum was established.

**Call to Order and Approval of Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by the Chairman. With no changes to be made to the January 22, 2020 Minutes, the Minutes were approved.

**Chairman’s Report**

Tom Benzing presented the Chairman’s Report.

* Deputy Secretary Bradford was recognized, and she thanked the Board and staff for their service. She described her visit to VMNH last year and was impressed with the museum’s scope and operation.
* Dr. Benzing described the museum’s fish collection, which is historically lacking, and how he will work with the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society to grow the representation of the fishes of the Commonwealth. Carole Nash commented that the Archaeology Collections of VMNH have a large number of fragmented fish skeletons from throughout Virginia’s history and prehistory.
* The Wayne Theatre Science Talks continued the past year, and will continue possibly in a virtual platform in the coming year. Kal Ivanov of VMNH gave a talk on pollinators while Tyler Urgo gave a talk on the DCR property Dogbane Natural Area Preserve.
* Tom acknowledged the help of DPB and the City of Waynesboro regarding navigating the budget approval process for the VMNH-Waynesboro Campus Detailed Planning. This is a line item in the state’s budget, but will only receive funds when state revenue projections indicate there will be sufficient funds for capital projects to continue.
* The Board thanked Joe Keiper for 10 years of service as ED, and had him conduct a scavenger hunt for a well-hidden envelope in his office, which contained a label for a beautifully framed Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Map of Virginia.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Jennifer Burnett presented the Treasurer’s Report.

* Quarter 3 Restricted Gifts were below predictions due to the Covid-19 delayed construction of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion. The complete funding for the project remains in the VMNH-Foundation, and will be transferred when construction begins.
* A proposed FY2020-21 budget was presented with reduced revenues due to the anticipated loss of Festivals. The salary line was reduced due to delays in hiring (e.g., search for Jim Beard’s successor). Lisa Mourner made a motion to accept the budget as presented, and Faye Cooper seconded. A vote by roll call to accept the budget was unanimous.

**Executive Director’s Report**

Joe Keiper presented the Executive Director’s Report.

* Keiper noted the death of Mr. Bruce Wingo of VMNH-F. The museum will memorialize him with a memorial brick on the museum plaza, renaming the TJA Conservation Award in his honor, and an ongoing recognition of his contributions in upcoming issues of *Virginia Explorer*.
* Keiper described the Covid-19 pandemic response, and the museum had opened to the public three days a week starting 19 June.
* Ryan Barber presented the Advancement Report, and described two grant proposals that will be submitted. Admission and attendance overall, along with revenues were strong before the pandemic, as were memberships and Discovery Fund contributions. Obviously, Q4 will be highly reduced.
* The museum is investing in an update to the Blackbaud fundraising software which will be linked directly to an upgraded web site (beginning summer 2020), providing staff with more capability.
* Lisa Mourner spoke positively of the online presence, including Ben in Nature, Tales of Ancient Life, and online live animal feedings. Keiper indicated that staff were eager to continue this work even when we return to full opening.

**Nominating Committee Report**

Lisa Moerner presented the Nominating Committee Report.

* The slate of officers for FY2020-21 was presented as Tom Benzing (Chair), Art Evans (Vice Chair), Jennifer Burnett (Treasurer), and Nathan Sanford (Secretary), with Barry Dorsey remaining as Immediate Past Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. As the slate was a recommendation from the Committee no motion was required. A vote by roll call to accept the slate as presented was unanimous.

**Strategic Planning Committee Report**

Lisa Moerner presented the Strategic Planning Committee Report.

* The strategic planning process will be delayed until at least the state releases budget projections this summer.
* When a “state of normalcy” is present, staff and the Board will evaluate the 7 areas of focus to determine if they are still relevant.

**Waynesboro Advocacy**

Faye Cooper presented the Waynesboro Advocacy Committee Report.

* The good news is that VMNH is still in the budget for detailed planning. No money, however, will be allocated until revenue projections allow for funding.
* Jonathan Martins described the Detailed Planning process.
* Barry Dorsey asked if the City of Waynesboro was still committing $1 million, and Faye Cooper indicated that the City renewed the resolution in March 2020.

**Research and Collections Committee Report**

Art Evans presented the Research and Collections Committee Report.

* Art Evans described the newest publication in the Insects of Virginia series *The scorpionflies, hangingflies, and allies (Mecoptera*) *of Virginia* by Flint et al.
* Liberty Hightower was senior author on a publication of the Deer Ked Fly in Virginia.
* Dr. Ivanov is overseeing the updating of the mollusk collection.
* Dr. Moncrief continues work on squirrel genetics.
* Dr. Pritchard had a new article in the *Journal of Paleontology*.
* Jill Harris provided a list of accessions.
* Haley Cartmell is preparing an update for the collections database.
* Dr. Evans complimented the staff on their online efforts.
* Dr. Evans announced the hiring of Dr. Hayden Bassett as Assistant Curator of Archaeology, and he will start this summer. He is preparing a 2 year study of continuously occupied villages along the Smith River, with potential funding from DHR.
* The search for Dr. Jim Beard’s successor will begin this Fall.

**Education Committee Report**

Cord Cothren presented the Education Committee Report.

* Cord Cothren praised Christy Deatherage’s work during the shutdown.
* Christy reviewed numbers through Q3 and they showed great momentum.
* To engage the public during a time of limited school interactions, Christy Deatherage described online resources and mailable education kits.
* Online Teacher Professional Development is being considered.
* Barry Dorsey asked if Homeschool Programs will continue. Deatherage will be polling the homeschool families for interest.

**New Business**

* Roberto Quinones asked if, during the pandemic and possible funding reductions, VMNH and VMNH-F are coordinating. Benzing and Keiper explained the funding request process.
* A resolution (attached) in appreciation of Janet Scheid’s 10 years of service was read by Tom Benzing.

**Announcements**

* The next board meeting will be held on August 15, 2020, with the venue and/or format to be determined.
* With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Nathan Sanford Thomas R. Benzing, Ph.D.

Secretary Chairman

RESOLUTION LANGUAGE FOR JANET SCHEID

***WHEREAS, Ms. Janet Scheid was instrumental in the success of VMNH for 10 years as a member of the Board of Trustees, including long service as Board Secretary;***

***WHEREAS, Ms. Scheid has demonstrated an abiding interest in education and natural history through the years;***

***WHEREAS, Ms. Scheid’s expertise in environmental conservation has been an asset to the Virginia Museum of Natural History;***

***WHEREAS, Ms. Scheid helped lead the museum energetically and tirelessly, supported the pursuit of museum growth and success, ensuring that the museum focused its effort to better fulfill its mission and serve the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Museum Without Walls;***

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History gratefully expresses to Ms. Janet Scheid its appreciation and thanks for service to the Commonwealth and the Virginia Museum of Natural History.***

***Done this 20th day of June, 2020, in Martinsville, Virginia, by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.***