

Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
Friday, January 31, 2025
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Executive Director's Conference Room 236 with remote participation option

Present In-person: Dr. Melany Clark (Vice Chair)
Ms. Abby Gump (Attorney General's Office ex officio)
Ms. Lauren Coleman (Attorney General's Office ex officio)
Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director, ex officio)
Lisa Carter (Past President)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (minutes)

Present Remotely: Ms. Lauren Hall (Secretary)
Mr. Cord Cothren (Treasurer)
Ms. Elizabeth Carter Bailey (Foundation Liaison)

Absent: Mr. Mark Buss (Chair)

Dr. Melany Clark called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM and welcomed all in attendance both in person and participating remotely. No quorum was physically present therefore, no votes were taken.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Ms. Gump reported that her colleague Ms. Coleman will be taking over primary legal counsel for the museum. Ms. Gump expressed appreciation for the positive experience of representing the museum and assured the committee she will be available should the need arise.
- Dr. Keiper mentioned the recent acquisition of a first English edition copy of Thomas Jefferson's book, "Notes on the State of Virginia" to be exhibited in 2026.
- Ms. Carter noted a contemporary book by Derek Baxter, "In Pursuit of Jefferson: Traveling Through Europe with the Most Perplexing Founding Father". Ms. Carter suggested selling the books in our gift shop as a supplement to the planned Thomas Jefferson exhibit.
- Dr. Clark noted three new Board members will all be present at tomorrow's meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Mr. Cothren spoke about growth in all areas; visitors, giving, endowment, and revenue.

- Visitors from outside the Martinsville region is increasing. Possibly attributable to increased museum exposure in the Shenandoah Valley.
- Ms. Carter asked about the loss of funds (potential loss of funds) from the National Science Foundation which has been used for the dinosaur dig program in Wyoming. Dr. Keiper said we are looking for ways to secure \$13000 to continue the program and/or will evaluate if this program can be adjusted for continuation.
- Ms. Hall mentioned that the federal funding is labeled a temporary pause. February 10th all agencies must submit a report to Federal Management and Budget Office.
- Staff believe the summer intern program funding stream through the Smithsonian Trust will continue uninterrupted.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Strategic Planning Synopsis

- Dr. Keiper noted the Strategic Planning Committee did not meet this quarter. The reaccreditation process should be finished this summer. Staff will look at the reaccreditation report and adjust the 2025-2030 strategic plan based on feedback. Staff is targeting November to publish all documents for extra publicity for the annual fund campaign and as a leave behind document for the members of the General Assembly.
- Ms. Carter asked if staff contributed to strategic plan content. Still time to contribute feedback if they want to. Mr. Buss will chair the strategic plan committee since the former chair is no longer on the Board.
- Dr. Keiper will cover the Executive Director's Report in more detail at the full board meeting tomorrow.

Events

- Upcoming Event includes the Speakeasy – February 22nd
- Dinosaur exhibit opening in two weeks. State employees may attend for free and is publicized through the Governor's Office
- Natural History of Food series –The Natural History of Chocolate is the inaugural event.

Waynesboro

- Architects and exhibit design team are currently working collaboratively on detail design for electric, technology, and live animal exhibit placement.
- In the future, Dr. Keiper plans to ask for congressionally directed funding to match the Waynesboro Foundation gift.

Board Member Involvement

- This weekend there are several ways Board members can be involved.
 - A donor thank you note which will be provided with instructions at tomorrow's full board meeting.
 - Write the Secretary of Education in support of the Waynesboro project.
 - Review personal historical giving and membership.
- Dr. Keiper gave a brief explanation of the difference between being a member and annual giving. He will give a brief explanation to the full Board.

- Staff will provide the Vice-Chair with percentage of board members who gave in 2024 and percentage who are members to be announced at tomorrow's full Board meeting.
- Mr. Cothren noted using travel reimbursement funds as a means of annual giving.

OLD BUSINESS

- Douglas Avenue next phase of securing renovation funding is underway. Physical work is scheduled to begin in late spring or summer 2025.
- Sell of compactors in the library space is ongoing. First round of state surplus auction was unsuccessful.
- Pavilion work is at a standstill. More discussion about completion needs to occur.
- There is no set date yet for the AAM Reaccreditation site review team to be at the museum. Staff anticipates March or April.

Ms. Carter made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Mr. Cothren. Motion passes by unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 4:26

The next meeting of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees, Executive Committee

Friday, May 15, 2025, 3:30 PM
Virginia Museum of Natural History
21 Starling Ave.
Martinsville, VA 24112