

**AGENDA**  
**Board of Trustees Executive Committee**  
**Friday, January 30, 2026, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**  
**All Virtual Meeting**



- I. Welcome Dr. Melany Clark
- II. Approval of Minutes Dr. Melany Clark
- [August 8, 2025](#)
  - [November 14, 2025](#)
- III. Chair's Report Dr. Melany Clark
- New board members
    - [Committee assignments](#)
  - Museum advocacy
- IV. Financial Report Mr. Will Clements
- [Second quarter revenues and expenses](#)
  - Proposed FY 27 Budget
    - Budget amendments
- V. Executive Director's Report Dr. Joe Keiper
- Operations
    - Exhibits Manager and Herpetologist
  - Capital projects
    - VMNH-W Trailer
    - Douglas Avenue
    - Starling Avenue Plaza
  - Waynesboro advocacy
  - [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#) (Requires Full Board Vote)
    - Application of new resources
  - Upcoming Events
    - Bug Day, Saturday, February 7, 2026
    - VA 250 Members Event, Thursday, February 19, 2026
    - Starlington, Ticketed Gala Event, Saturday, March 21, 2026
    - Reptile Festival, April 24 – 25, 2026
- VI. Open Discussion Dr. Melany Clark
- VII. Adjourn Dr. Melany Clark

**Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees  
Quarterly Meeting, Friday, August 9, 2025  
Virginia Museum of Natural History  
Executive Conference Room 236 with remote participation option**

Present In-person: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)  
Ms. Lauren Hall (Secretary)  
Mr. Will Clements (Treasurer)  
Ms. Lauren Coleman (AG Representative)  
Dr. Joe Keiper (Ex Officio)  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Present Remotely: Ms. Lisa Carter (Vice Chair)  
Mr. Zach Ryder (Staff)

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Melany Clark called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Finding a quorum present, voting on action items and remote participation was allowed. No committee members were absent.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion made by Ms. Lauren Hall and seconded by Ms. Lisa Carter to approve the 1.31.25 and 5.16.25 minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Will Clements shared news of a very positive fourth quarter. Expenses remained within the budget and revenue exceeded expectations. Dr. Keiper added the museum had record setting revenue from Dino Festival and there were little to no negative comments about the increase in festival admission price.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Keiper reported the AAM Site Visit Report was very positive. The review team urged continued work on Douglas Avenue to secure an appropriate storage environment.

Secretary Guidera approved our proposal requesting the Waynesboro project be moved to the capital construction pool. Project cost estimates and value engineering work are currently in the hands of an outside engineering firm. The work is expected to be concluded before the mid-October deadline.

Dr. Keiper thanked Ms. Hall and Dr. Clark for attending the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion Ribbon Cutting event. The pavilion is being used, and additional exhibits are expected to be added.

Dr. Clark shared that the Dino festival provided numerous relevant experiences for visitors. She was very impressed with the crowd management and offered her thanks to all the staff for an impactful event.

Looking forward, Dr. Keiper noted the TJ 2026 events and exhibits are being developed with the help of a very generous donor.

VMNH is excited to participate in the August 21<sup>st</sup> ribbon cutting for the South River Preserve. Interpretive signage is being installed with additional signage to be created with leftover funds.

Dr. Clark noted the visitor experience at our festivals, not necessarily the amount of revenue is the most important part of running festivals.

Dr. Keiper provided a review of the Strategic Plan for the next steps. The goal of the committee is to have a meeting next month to identify quantifiable measures of success and establish a timeline. The Strategic Planning Committee will have a final wrap-up meeting in October. The Board will conduct a vote of adoption in November and very quickly the staff will create the final PDF before year end.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Dr. Clark recognized the work to bring Douglas Ave. back as well as a look forward to Starling Ave. expansion.

Dr. Clark also pointed out the multitude of positive VMNH articles recently found in the news.

Dr. Keiper stated the Waynesboro project is in a very good position as we have been contacted recently by elected officials to provide more information as they advocate for the project in Richmond.

Dr. Clark offered to draft a letter from her thanking donors for their contribution to the Pavilion.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Clark spoke about ongoing strategies to engage the existing and potential Board members. She praised Delegate Phillips and Senator Stanley for helping with pay increases for our lowest paid employees and now the effort has turned to employee retention.

Dr. Clark spoke about leveraging Board members' expertise and encouraging them to advocate for the museum. She plans to implement a different meeting structure to engage the board.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Hall made the following motion and was second by Mr. Clements.

I move that the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History enter closed session to discuss the assignment, appointment, performance and salary of a specific employee, particularly to conduct the annual performance review of the Executive Director, pursuant to the personnel exemption in Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1), and for consultation with legal counsel regarding the same pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(8).

## **OPEN SESSION**

The committee returned to open session.

## **CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Hall read the closed session certification, and a roll call vote was held wherein all committee members certified the session as lawful.

Whereas, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History convened in closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

Whereas, Virginia code §2.2-3712 requires certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge; (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN DISCUSSION**

No further announcements or discussion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 4:39 PM.

Next Meeting of the Executive Committee  
Friday, November 14, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM  
Virginia Museum of Natural History

**VMNH Board of Trustees  
Executive Meeting  
Friday, November 14, 2025  
Executive Director's Conference Room**



Trustees Present: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)

Trustees Remote: Ms. Lauren Hall (Secretary) (attending remotely due to distance)  
Mr. Will Clements (Treasurer) (attending remotely due to distance)

Absent: Ms. Lisa Carter (Vice Chair)

Staff: Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)  
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Staff)

Others Present: Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Representative)

## **WELCOME**

Dr. Melany Clark welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting at 3:33. No quorum was found to be present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

With no quorum present, the August 8, 2025 minutes could not be approved.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Dr. Clark reported that two vacant seats remain for the Board of Trustees. If anyone has suggestions, or know of interested parties, please encourage them to apply.

In light of budget concerns in VA, the museum is extremely thankful for the gift from Mr. Frank Mariels. Dr. Clark expressed hope that the museum will receive funding from the state to support staff retention efforts.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Will Clements presented a strong financial report with sufficient funds available for operation.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Keiper reported that attendance was down slightly at the latest festival, Bonez and Booz in October, but noted there were many other community activities on the day of the festival which may have contributed to fewer guests. Despite a slight dip in overall attendance, there were over 1000 individuals admitted through the Museums for All program.

Due to overwhelming interest, the Education Department began offering two homeschool sessions running every other week this semester. Both sections are full.

The Natural History of Chocolate was a success and could be ongoing with additional conversation.

In celebration of VA 250, a membership event will be held on February 19<sup>th</sup> which will include a sample of Jefferson's corn beer and other natural history highlights from Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

The museum's annual "gala" fundraising event is scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> with a Bridgerton-inspired theme.

The museum has hired a new Exhibit Manager who will be starting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. She is experienced and looking forward to moving to Martinsville and beginning her work.

The herpetology position is in the Zoom interview phase with several candidates. Following Zoom interviews, applicants will be narrowed to the top three and each will receive an invitation to the museum for a tour and to give a presentation to staff and the community.

Work on the Douglas Ave. rehabilitation project continues in the planning phase. It has been determined that asbestos removal will be completed first before any other phase of work. Following asbestos abatement, HVAC replacement will begin. Additional work will continue as funds are available.

Museum staff are actively supporting the Waynesboro project and are poised to engage community leaders and government officials depending on the outcome of the Governor's proposed budget.

Based on preliminary information from the contracted repair company, the outreach trailer will no longer be mobile. The undercarriage is worn out due to general wear and tear. However, the trailer may be able to be used as a stationary structure for a short period of time especially while the permanent building is under construction. A full scope of work and cost estimate is expected soon.

Following a Strategic Plan Committee meeting, the Strategic Plan document was distributed to Board members for final review. The full board will vote to approve this plan in either November 2025 or February 2026

Dr. Keiper reported that the interest income from endowment investments will begin to be available in October 2026-2027. The initial spending will be focused on developing the Young Explorer Center and the Petra exhibit with additional priorities to be established each October for the following year.

Ms. Jennifer Whitlow shared some preliminary planning information about the Young Explorers Center. Potential element examples along with rationale were shown. Members of the committee were encouraged to submit any additional ideas to staff for consideration.

Dr. Keiper has been in contact with inventors about a potential exhibit involving a 3 D printed Hadrosaur skull. The skull is anatomically correct and includes technology which allows a guest to blow into a microphone and hear what the hadrosaur may have sounded like. Currently, the museum is negotiating borrowing this skull and technology at no cost.

Dr. Keiper concluded by pointing out that the Strategic Plan creates a pathway to study the expansion of the Starling Avenue facility as well as facilitation of a collaborative vision for Wilson Park.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Dr. Clark echoed the need to continue fundraising and to bring public attention to the good work of the museum.

Ms. Hall suggested a vendor that she has worked with in the past called *Free Notes Harmony* which specializes in musical instruments as a potential vendor for the Young Explorer Center.

Mr. Clements suggested staff take time to visit other museums and children's areas to borrow best practices.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion Dr. Clark closed the meeting at 4:20 PM.

DRAFT



**Board of Trustees**  
**Committee Roster 2025-2026**  
**1.15.26 – 6.30.26**

**Executive Committee (VI. §6.2)**

Melany Clark	Chair
Lisa Carter	Vice-Chair
Will Clements	Treasurer
Lauren Hall	Secretary
Joe Keiper	Ex Officio

**Research & Collections Committee (VI. §6.7)**

Art Evans	Chair
Tom Benzing	
Carole Nash	
Melany Clark	
Dave Furth	
Ben Williams	Ex Officio

**Finance (VI. §6.3) & Development /Marketing Committees (VI. §6.8)**

Will Clements	Chair
Nathan Sanford	
Sarah Bowman	
Tyler Carter	Foundation
Ryan Barber	Ex Officio
Jonathan Martin	Ex Officio

**Education & Public Programs Committee (VI. §6.9)**

Nathan Sanford	Chair
Emma Ito	
Cathy Hincker	
Mindy Vandevelder	
Gail Vogler	Foundation
Christy Deatherage	Ex Officio
Lila Dougherty	Ex Officio

**Nominating Committee (VI. §6.4)**

Melany Clark  
Emma Ito  
Lauren Hall

**Facilities Committee (VI. §6.6)**

Tom Benzing	Chair
David Furth	
Lauren Hall	
Lisa Carter	
Richard Bratcher	

**Strategic Planning (VI. §6.5)**

Melany Clark	Chair
Lisa Carter	
Art Evans	
Cathy Hincker	
Steve Powers	Foundation

**Waynesboro Advocacy Committee (ad hoc)**

Tom Benzing	Chair
Carol Nash	
Richard Bratcher	
Len Poulin	
Greg Hitchin (City of Waynesboro)	
Faye Cooper	
Maggie Van Huss	
Stephanie Duffy	<a href="mailto:duffyss@ci.waynesboro.va.us">duffyss@ci.waynesboro.va.us</a>
Rick Kane	<a href="mailto:rmkane@ntelos.net">rmkane@ntelos.net</a>
Ann Peltier	<a href="mailto:ann.peltier@gmail.com">ann.peltier@gmail.com</a>
Herold Nash	<a href="mailto:urbienash@yahoo.com">urbienash@yahoo.com</a>
Bill Alexander	<a href="mailto:alexba@ntelos.net">alexba@ntelos.net</a>
Steve Powers	Foundation

## **Second Quarter FY26 Financials**

<b>Brief Budget Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Balance Sheet Q2 FY26 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FY26 Second Quarter Budget Notes.....</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Capital Projects FY26.....</b>	<b>5-7</b>
<b>Budget Amendment Request FY26.....</b>	<b>8</b>
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<b>Draft Budget Notes .....</b>	<b>10-11</b>

**Second Quarter FY26 Summary**

The second quarter of FY26 began on a positive note for VMNH. We received additional legislative appropriations to cover salary and benefit increases. In mid-December, the Governor’s budget was released, providing level funding for FY27 and FY28, along with a proposed 2% cost-of-living adjustment for staff, subject to approval by the General Assembly.

The positive year-over-year growth trends across key revenue categories continued into the second quarter of FY26, with increases in class, workshop, and admissions revenues meeting or exceeding second-quarter projections and finishing ahead of prior-year results.

Rising marginal costs across the broader economy continues to place upward pressure on museum operations. Increases in utility rates, materials, and labor have led to higher operating expenses and contractor pricing. These conditions require careful cost management, proactive budgeting, and strategic planning to mitigate impacts while maintaining service levels.

**Base Budget FY25 and FY26 House Bill 1600, Senate Bill 800 (2024)**

Virginia Museum of Natural History - Museum and Cultural Services (14500)

General Fund	\$3,578,220
Estimated Revenues	\$ 556,011

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**  
**MONTHLY STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES**  
**FOR THE PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 30, 2025**

NOTE	BUDGET	YTD	YTD%
=====			
<b>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>			
<b>Support:</b>			
	Commonwealth	\$3,578,220	3,578,220 100%
1	Add: Appropriation	\$204,414	204,414 100%
	Central Accounts Distribution	\$0	0 0%
-----			
	<b>Total Support</b>	<b>\$3,782,634</b>	<b>\$3,782,634 100%</b>
=====			
<b>Revenues:</b>			
2	Admission to Museum	\$92,075	54,937 60%
	VMNH Publications	\$2,000	272 14%
	Receipts from City & County	\$37,890	37,890 100%
	Honorariums/Misc. Inc.	\$1,000	27 3%
3	Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships	\$270,000	156,723 58%
	Rental of Museum Rooms	\$6,000	2,333 39%
	Exhibit Rentals	\$500	0 0%
4	Souvenirs- Misc. Sales	\$72,800	35,483 49%
5	Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects	\$50,000	27,553 55%
	Federal Funds Budgeted/Rec'd	\$0	0 0%
	<b>Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues</b>	<b>\$510,953</b>	<b>315,217 62%</b>
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	Special Funds Carryover FY25*	\$354,599	354,599 100%
	Federal Funds Carryover FY25*	\$6,561	6,561 100%
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	<b>Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025</b>	<b>\$872,113</b>	<b>676,377 78%</b>
=====			
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP</b>	<b>\$4,654,747</b>	<b>4,459,011 96%</b>
=====			
<b>EXPENSES:</b>			
	Salaries	\$2,214,187	1,143,039 52%
	Payroll Benefits	\$961,261	523,454 54%
6	Contractual Services	\$336,944	292,659 87%
	Supplies	\$80,000	37,723 47%
	Equipment	\$50,000	9,097 18%
	Equipment Maintenance	\$37,703	14,020 37%
	Travel	\$60,000	16,916 28%
	Staff Training	\$14,000	1,955 14%
	Repairs/Construction	\$105,000	30,427 29%
7	Subscriptions	\$1,000	2,494 249%
	Books	\$1,000	0 0%
8	Utilities	\$294,945	157,914 54%
	Telephone	\$15,000	9,077 61%
	Mailing	\$5,000	2,013 40%
	Insurance	\$23,000	0 0%
	Vehicle Maint./Fuel	\$18,000	3,180 18%
	Organ. Memberships	\$20,000	9,324 47%
	Printing	\$5,000	350 7%
	Other:	\$5,000	0 0%
	Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost	\$1,000	0 0%
	Exhibit & Equipment Rentals	\$40,000	18,145 45%
	Building Rentals	\$1,000	515 52%
9	Agency Service Charges	\$185,000	48,507 26%
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	<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$4,474,039</b>	<b>2,320,808 52%</b>
=====			
<b>PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED</b>			
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	<b>TOTAL INCOME BALANCE</b>	<b>\$180,708</b>	<b>2,138,203</b>
=====			

\*\*\* Central accounts distribution includes payroll and health care adjustments.

\*\* Memberships Income has been combined with Restricted Gifts Income.

\* Numbers are subject to change due to end of year fiscal adjustments.

## **Revenues:**

### **1.) Additional Appropriation**

As is typical, the museum began Fiscal Year 2026 in a deficit position. During the second quarter, the museum received an allocation of \$204,414 from Central Accounts to offset the \$70,702 amendment for staff salaries, 3% staff salary adjustments, increased health insurance costs, and property insurance premiums that took effect in July, resulting in a positive impact on the agency's financial position for the remainder of the fiscal year.

### **2.) Festivals**

The positive revenue trend continued into the second quarter, with admissions revenue running approximately 10% ahead of the prior year's second-quarter results. Admissions performance in the early part of Fiscal Year 2026 was driven primarily by the success of Dino Fest in July, and Bonez and Booz in October.

### **3.) Foundation**

Transfers are in line with expectations for the second quarter of FY26. As new projects come online, we expect funding levels to exceed initial projections.

### **4.) Store Sales**

During the second quarter of FY26, Museum Store revenues reflected level revenues compared to the same period in the prior year. A combination of factors is likely to influence this performance. Fiscal staff will continue to track sales activity and report on any material changes.

### **5.) Educational Programs**

While education program revenues may appear below estimates in certain periods, many of these funds are collected through the Foundation and fluctuate based on the timing of inter-entity transfers rather than program demand. The addition of new staff in the previous fiscal year has allowed educational revenues and program delivery to remain strong and consistent.

## **Expenses:**

### **6.) Contractual Services**

Operating costs in the second quarter were higher than projected due to the timing of planned expenses rather than ongoing cost increases. Costs reflect carryover expenses from Q1 to close out the Pavilion, continued work on the Waynesboro project, and replacement of worn parts in the HVAC system. These costs were anticipated and remain consistent with the approved operating and project plans.

### **7.) Subscriptions**

Subscription fees originally budgeted for FY25 were deferred into FY26 due to a Governor-issued directive prohibiting prepayments. As a result, payments for services that would typically have been made in FY25 were intentionally held and processed in the current fiscal year.

### **8.) Utilities**

VMNH fiscal staff continue to monitor consumption and report to the VMNH administration. Building and Grounds staff continue to work to reduce variability in utility costs and to navigate the challenges posed by aging facility equipment, Martinsville's aging infrastructure, and the impact of winter weather conditions. Their diligence and adaptability have ensured that building operations remain consistent despite these ongoing variables.

### **9.) Agency Service Chargers**

Agency service charges lag the fiscal year much like every year. Service charges for Payroll Service Bureau, Department of Engineering and Building, Department of Accounts and the Payment to Treasury for the ESCO project all fall near the end of the fiscal year.

## **Second Quarter FY26 Capital Projects Summary**

### **Capital Projects – Maintenance Reserve Funded**

#### **Douglas Renovation Project**

**Update:**

Fiscal, administrative, and curatorial staff completed the first round of the Agency's Value Engineering. The MEP engineering teams will conduct a final on-site walkthrough between February 4 and 10 to verify system coordination, constructability, and design compliance. As part of the Maintenance Reserve program, this initiative allows for a deliberate and methodical approach, unlike a Capital New Construction Project.

**General:**

The Museum has received approval from the Department of General Services (DGS) to proceed with an Architectural and Engineering (A/E) term contract, consolidating several smaller projects, including HVAC installation, into a single, efficiently managed initiative. After reviewing and scoring three proposals, the Purchasing Department awarded the contract to Raymond, P.C., which has executed the agreement and will begin work in accordance with project timelines and state procurement standards.

This bundled approach is designed to save time and achieve economies of scale, reducing costs. The project will efficiently address weatherization, plumbing, electrical, structural, and HVAC systems. Total costs will be covered by the Maintenance Reserve.

#### **Waynesboro Trailer Renovation Project**

**Update:**

Staff requested that the company review all possible alternatives, resulting in a plan to maintain limited functionality to support general operations. The trailer will be returned to the site and remain in limited service until the completion of the VMNH–Waynesboro satellite facility.

**General:**

The VMNH Exhibit Trailer, located in the City of Waynesboro adjacent to the municipal lot, is scheduled for renovation over the next several months. Fiscal staff engaged three contractors through the formal bidding process to assess the condition of the museum's outreach trailer. SPEVCO was awarded the contract, removed the trailer from the site for a full evaluation, and determined that complete renovation was not feasible due to its condition. Project expenses will be funded through the Maintenance Reserve.

## **Capital Projects – Pool Funded**

### **VMNH-Waynesboro – New Facility Construction**

#### **Budget and Legislative**

Governor Youngkin did not move the VMNH–Waynesboro Branch Campus project into the Capital Construction Pool. VMNH staff and stakeholders are now following the next steps outlined by the City’s consultant, McGuire Woods. Staff are currently working with Senate and House Finance Committee members, as well as legislators, to amend the budget and place the project into the Capital Construction Pool.

The project continues to have strong legislative support from Senator Chris Head and Delegate Ellen H. McLaughlin.

#### **Cost Estimate**

VMNH staff, under the direction of Scott Watchner from JMU, completed the cost estimation study. A comparison of the Independent Cost Estimate with the A/E’s estimate yielded the following results:

- **Independent Cost Estimate: \$20,809,373**
- **Glave & Holmes (A/E Estimate): \$19,223,085**
- **Difference: \$1,586,288 (8.25%)**

Because the difference is below DEB’s 10% reconciliation threshold, no reconciliation is required. However, as a best practice, both firms will review each other’s figures to identify and explain significant discrepancies. This process will be completed in the coming weeks.

- **Cost to the Agency: \$26,739**

#### **Value Engineering Study**

VMNH staff collaborated with Grace Hagan of Axias (Alexandria, Virginia) to complete the Value Engineering (VE) study. The process included a kickoff meeting, four full days of virtual workshops, and an exit meeting to summarize findings. The study reviewed 19 options, of which six cost-saving measures were adopted. All six measures reduce costs while fully supporting the Museum’s mission requirements.

- **Cost to the Agency: \$64,720**

## **Project Scope and Timing**

Glave & Holmes submitted the Preliminary Design documents to the Department of Engineering and Buildings (DEB). DEB returned the documents with comments, which were reviewed in a joint meeting attended by VMNH staff, Glave & Holmes, DEB, and Scott Watchner (JMU). The Preliminary Design has been approved, and the project is now ready to advance to the Working Drawings Phase.

### **The next steps include:**

- **Legislative Approval to move into the Capital Construction Pool**
- **Allocation of funds to complete Working Drawings**
- **Final project approval from Mike Coppa, enabling the project to advance to working drawings.**

With the continued support of the Board of Trustees and the VMNH Foundation, Dr. Keiper and museum staff have worked diligently with contract partners, including Glave & Holmes and JMU, to ensure all submissions are timely and accurate. The goal is to position the project for inclusion in the Governor's December budget.

### **Additional Projects FY26**

- **Reseal Front Patio: Near completion.**
- **Repair Concrete Roof Accent: Near completion.**
- **Window Film Installation: Completed.**
- **Library Compactors: Removed and Stored**
- **Library Hallway Renovation: Preliminary Discussion Stage**
- **Exhibit Rails: Complete**

**Fiscal Year 26: Virginia Museum of Natural History**

**SUCCESSFUL - FY26 Budget Amendment Request:**

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) requests a budget amendment to address salary alignment challenges and strengthen staff retention. This funding will enable VMNH to establish competitive base salaries for educators and provide modest incentive increases to support workforce stability. These efforts are essential for attracting and retaining skilled professionals, maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements, and ensuring the Museum can fulfill its mission of education, community engagement, and scientific research. This strategic investment will help VMNH remain competitive in today's job market while safeguarding its long-term operational capacity.

Total Request \$70,702

Program	Fund	Subobject	Definition	FY 2026 Dollars Increase Req
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1111	Employer Retirement Contributions – VRS Defined Benefits program	\$8,317.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1112	Federal Old-Age Insurance for Salaried State Employees (Salaried Social Security and Medicare)	\$3,680.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1114	Group Life Insurance	\$699.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1116	Retiree Health (Medical/Hospitalization) Insurance Credit Premium	\$666.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1117	VSDP and Long-term Disability Insurance	\$295.00
Museum and Cultural Services (14500)	01000	1123	Salaries, Classified	\$57,045.00
			Total	\$70,702.00

**VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
MONTHLY STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES  
DRAFT BUDGET FY27**

<b>NOTE</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
<b>SUPPORT &amp; REVENUES</b>	
<b>Support:</b>	
1	Commonwealth <b>\$3,782,634</b>
	Add: Appropriation <b>\$89,772</b>
	<b>\$3,872,406</b>
<b>Revenues:</b>	
2	Admission to Museum <b>\$101,283</b>
	VMNH Publications <b>\$2,000</b>
	Receipts from City & County <b>\$37,890</b>
	Honorariums/Misc. Inc. <b>\$1,000</b>
3	Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships <b>\$315,031</b>
	Rental of Museum Rooms <b>\$8,000</b>
	Exhibit Rentals <b>\$500</b>
4	Souvenirs- Misc. Sales <b>\$70,000</b>
5	Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects <b>\$62,000</b>
	Federal Funds Budgeted/RecVd <b>\$0</b>
	<b>Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues \$510,953</b>
	Special Funds Carryover FY25* <b>\$354,599</b>
	Federal Funds Carryover FY25* <b>\$6,561</b>
	<b>Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025 \$872,113</b>
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP \$4,744,519</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>	
6	Salaries <b>\$2,331,799</b>
	Payroll Benefits <b>\$1,046,907</b>
7	Contractual Services <b>\$400,000</b>
	Supplies <b>\$80,000</b>
	Equipment <b>\$50,000</b>
	Equipment Maintenance <b>\$38,000</b>
	Travel <b>\$40,000</b>
8	Staff Training <b>\$7,000</b>
	Repairs/Construction <b>\$105,000</b>
	Subscriptions <b>\$1,000</b>
9	Utilities <b>\$284,000</b>
	Telephone <b>\$17,000</b>
	Mailing <b>\$5,000</b>
	Insurance <b>\$23,000</b>
	Vehicle Maint./Fuel <b>\$18,000</b>
	Organ. Memberships <b>\$20,000</b>
	Printing <b>\$5,000</b>
	Other: <b>\$5,000</b>
	Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost <b>\$1,000</b>
	Exhibit & Equipment Rentals <b>\$40,000</b>
	Building Rentals <b>\$1,000</b>
	Agency Service Charges <b>\$145,000</b>
	<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES \$4,664,706</b>
<b>PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED</b>	
	<b>TOTAL INCOME BALANCE \$79,813</b>

\*\*\* Central accounts distribution includes payroll and health care adjustments.

\*\* Memberships Income has been combined with Restricted Gifts Income.

\* Numbers are subject to change due to end of year fiscal adjustments.

## **Revenues**

### **1.) Commonwealth Appropriation**

VMNH received level funding in Governor Youngkin's budget this fall as expected. The legislature now has its turn to produce an amended budget. Staff will follow the process and provide updates.

### **2.) Admission Revenue**

Revenue is running approximately 10% ahead of the prior year's second-quarter results; therefore, staff believe that a 10% increase to the forecast is warranted.

### **3.) Foundation**

We anticipate that new Foundation-funded projects will come online in FY27, resulting in an increase to the forecast. In addition, with the continuation of funding for Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab activities, we anticipate an increase in transfers in FY27 and FY28.

### **4.) Store Sales**

VMNH Museum Store sales appear to have softened on a year-over-year basis. Several variables may be contributing to this trend, resulting in an approximately level forecast. Fiscal staff will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates accordingly.

### **5.) Education**

Now fully staffed and following recent programmatic price increases, we expect education programs to outperform expectations over the next few years.

## **Expenses**

### **6.) Salaries and Benefits**

General compensation is expected to increase over FY27 and FY28. Governor Youngkin's budget increases agency wages by 2 percent and provides for a bonus. This is subject to change, as the legislature now has its turn at producing an amended budget. Staff will continue to follow the process and provide updates.

### **7.) Contractual Services**

As new projects come online and economic headwinds persist, contracted expenses are expected to increase.

### **8.) Staff Training**

Increases in Foundation support for staff training allows for the movement of funds to other areas of the operations.

### **9.) Utilities**

Building and Grounds staff continue work that is expected to result in improved utility efficiencies.

## Virginia Museum of Natural History Strategic Plan: 2025–2030

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The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) is one of the Commonwealth’s most vital scientific and cultural resources. Its collections, research, and education programs connect Virginians to the deep history of our natural world. VMNH plays a critical role in providing citizens and decision makers with the data and tools needed to manage the Commonwealth’s natural and cultural resources. In providing resources statewide, VMNH also provides significant services (education, tourism draw, and event offerings) to the museum’s surrounding communities.

As Virginia approaches major milestones—most notably the 250th anniversary of the Commonwealth—VMNH stands ready to inspire, educate, and serve as a trusted leader in science communication. From the facilities in Martinsville and outreach programs in communities across the state, including planned expansion into the Shenandoah Valley, VMNH is positioned to reach more Virginians than ever before.

Yet to fully achieve our mission, we must continue to invest in people, spaces, and science education programs that connect natural history to some of today’s pressing issues: climate change, biodiversity loss, and science literacy.

The VMNH Strategic Plan 2025-2030 outlines clear, measurable actions that will:

- Modernize and expand our facilities, ensuring safe stewardship of collections and inspiring exhibits for the public.
- Tell the stories of our researchers and to reveal the significance of their collections-based discoveries.
- Deepen our educational impact by launching the Young Explorers Center, strengthening science festivals, and reaching every region of the state through mobile and traveling exhibits.
- Strengthen sustainability through new philanthropic support, enhanced endowment strategies, and stronger collaboration between our Boards.
- Recruit, retain, and support expert staff who bring science to life for Virginia’s citizens.

VMNH is uniquely positioned to blend rigorous scientific investigations with engaging storytelling, ensuring that natural history collections are not just preserved but actively shared. With the partnership of the Board of Trustees, the VMNH-Foundation Board of Directors, staff, the Secretary of Education, and myriad community partners, VMNH will continue to serve as a cornerstone of science, culture, and community in Virginia.

Together, we will ensure that the Virginia Museum of Natural History achieves great and sustainable impact while maintaining its leadership in scientific discovery and science literacy for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Virginia Museum of Natural History Strategic Plan: 2025–2030

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### Mission Alignment

The Virginia Museum of Natural History advances scientific discovery, education, and community engagement through research, collections, and exhibitions. This Strategic Plan establishes clear goals and measurable outcomes to ensure the museum fulfills its mission with sustainable impact.

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### Vision

Virginia Museum of Natural History serves as a leader in scientific discovery, education, and community engagement. Its research, collections, exhibits, and educational programs create opportunities where all Virginians have the opportunity to explore, understand, and celebrate the natural world.

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### Core Values

- **Scientific Integrity** – Uphold the highest standards of research, collections stewardship, and scholarship.
  - **Education & Curiosity** – Foster lifelong learning through exhibits, programs, and outreach that spark wonder.
  - **Community Engagement** – Connect people with nature and science through inclusive, accessible experiences.
  - **Stewardship** – Protect and preserve Virginia’s and the world’s natural and cultural heritage for future generations.
  - **Innovation** – Embrace creativity, and new approaches and technology applicable to our exhibits, research, and outreach.
  - **Collaboration** – Partner with communities, schools, and institutions.
  - **Sustainability** – Ensure responsible use of resources.
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### Strategic Priority 1: Achieving the Mission

#### Objective 1.1: Advance Douglas Avenue Rehabilitation

- Position newly renovated facility to both enhance museum collections storage and a new space for needs identified by staff and the community.
- **May 2026:** Receive approvals; contractors begin Phase I (upper level).
- **Late 2026:** Complete Phase I.
- **May 2027:** Submit preliminary documents for Phase II (lower level).
- **May 2028:** Receive approvals; begin Phase II.
- **October 2028:** Complete Phase II.
- **April 2030:** Address AAM reaccreditation report concerns regarding Douglas Avenue by submitting a progress report.

#### Objective 1.2: Plan for Future Space Needs

- Ongoing evaluation of collections growth (Science Administrator tracking).
- Continuous assessment of storage/expansion needs at Douglas Avenue vs. future Starling Avenue wing. Report as appropriate to R&C Committee.

### **Objective 1.3: Connect Research & Collections (R&C) to Contemporary Needs**

- **Spring 2026:** Exhibits & Publications Manager interviews R&C staff.
- Leadership and curators conduct ongoing reviews of publications, exhibits, and public engagement outlets, identifying relevant connections.
- Ongoing use of the Pete Henika Memorial Fund to support student work benefitting the museum's collections while furthering our understanding of contemporary questions related to the Natural History of Virginia.
- Connect the Molecular Lab, STEM Lab, Microscopy Lab, and Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab to contemporary challenges such as climate change, land use patterns, endangered and invasive species, and other significant challenges.

### **Objective 1.4: Leverage Facilities for Strategic Uses**

- Ongoing assessment of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, Douglas Avenue, and facility tours. This facility will be positioned as a strategic tool to enhance education, community vitality, and organizational stability.
- Annual staff meeting dedicated to generating strategic use proposals, reported annually to the Boards.

### **Objective 1.5: Celebrate Virginia's 250th Anniversary (VA250)**

- **Jan 2026:** Launch Thomas Jefferson exhibit featuring *Notes on the State of Virginia*.
- **Feb 2026:** Host members' VA250 celebration.
- **March 2026:** VMNH participates in Virginia Association of Museums annual conference.
- **2026:** Host author/artist event tied to Jefferson's travels.

### **Objective 1.6: Develop Traveling Exhibits**

- **2027-2030:** Create a traveling exhibit, debut at VMNH for one year, then circulate to other museums.

### **Objective 1.7: Integrate R&C, Education, and Exhibits in Science Storytelling**

- **Summer 2026:** Evaluate education programs to determine best practices for integrating VMNH stories into outreach.
- **2026-2030:** Apply "5 C's of Storytelling" framework in new exhibit development; integrate with Objective 1.3.
- **2027:** Use Discovery Reef space for Petra the Cave Cat story; work with Virginia Cave Conservancy to enhance the public experience.

### **Objective 1.8: Advance VMNH-Waynesboro Expansion**

- **2026:** Rehabilitate Mobile Science Outreach trailer for use in the Shenandoah Valley.
- **2026-2028:** Use the Outreach trailer to support regional programming, and to complement educational programs and Wayne Theatre Lecture Series.
- **2026 & 2028:** Pursue Capital Construction Pool inclusion.

### **Objective 1.9: Explore New Wing Development**

- **2027:** Begin preliminary work with architect.

- **2028:** Determine space needs with staff, Boards, stakeholders.
- **2029:** Receive report on location, capacity, and capabilities.

### **Objective 1.10: Strengthen Wilson Park Connections**

- Evaluate feasibility of canopy walk in coordination with wing planning.
- **2026-2027:** Explore new ways of connecting to Wilson Park, including but not limited to a) crosswalk installation, b) establishment of dinosaur playground elements, and c) interpretive trail signs.

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## **Strategic Priority 2: Great Sustainable Impact**

### **Objective 2.1: Grow Philanthropic Support**

- **2025-2030:** Review endowment investments with VMNH-Foundation quarterly.
- **2026:** Host cocktail event on planned giving for young professionals. Evaluate, modify as needed, and repeat as appropriate for the community.
- **2026-2027:** Use endowment revenues aggressively for transformational work (see Objectives 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, and 2.4).
- **2027-2030:** Execute plan to spend the first 4% of endowment revenues on mission-based projects in Research, Collections, Education, and Exhibits. Reinvest any additional revenues into the General Endowment to support long-term growth.

### **Objective 2.2: Strengthen Board Collaboration**

- Use strategic plan and endowment to guide BOT requests of VMNH-F.
- Establish mechanisms for BOT to request Foundation support for new opportunities.

### **Objective 2.3: Expand Public Festivals**

- Offer 3–4 themed festivals per year (10,000 visitors annually).
- Explore offsite festival opportunities.

### **Objective 2.4: Develop Young Explorer’s Center**

- **Fall 2026:** Relocate Library Compactors at Douglas Avenue.
- **2026:** Education staff develop content; acquisition of interactive elements
- Purchase interactive stations and open Center in late 2026 or early 2027.

### **Objective 2.5: Recruit and Retain High-Quality Staff**

- Work with Secretary of Education for competitive compensation.
- Maintain VMNH-F staff enhancement fund.
- Provide professional development opportunities.
- Share staff experiences with both Boards.
- Annually request new FTEs as justified.

### **Objective 2.6: Develop Next 5-year Plan**

- **2029-2030:** Begin process of gathering input from staff, Boards, and community regarding the 2030-2035 Strategic Plan.
- **December 2030:** Release next 5-year plan.

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**Accountability & Review**

- Progress will be reviewed quarterly by leadership and reported regularly to the Boards of Trustees and VMNH-Foundation.
- Milestones with dates will serve as primary measures of success.
- Adjustments will be made as necessary in response to novel opportunities and challenges.

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