

**VMNH Board of Trustees
Executive Committee Meeting
Friday, January 30, 2026
All-virtual**



Trustees Present: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)
Mr. Will Clements (Treasurer)
Ms. Lisa Carter (Vice Chair)
Ms. Lauren Hall (Secretary)

Staff: Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Minutes)
Mr. Zach Ryder

Others Present: Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG Representative)

WELCOME

Dr. Melany Clark welcomed everyone to the all-virtual meeting at 12:00. A quorum was found to be present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Lisa Carter made a motion to approve the August 8th and November 14th minutes with no corrections. Mr. Will Clements seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Clark reported that all Board seats are full with two new appointments this month. Committee rosters are also full for the first time in a very long time. Dr. Clark praised the Board Members for their willing engagement and advocacy at the state and local level.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Clements reported the museum finances are in a very stable position. He commended the Building and Grounds Manager, Tim King for the HVAC system work completed in-house. Dr. Keiper also noted that Foundation contributions are up over this time last year as a welcomed supplement to the Mariels' gift. 2027 budget work is in process.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Dr. Keiper noted two new employees have been hired to fill empty positions. A new Exhibit's Manager has been hired and is doing a great job. Jackson Roberts will be the new herpetologist and is eager to bring his family to the Martinsville area in the late spring.

Dr. Keiper reported on various capital projects.

Trailer - It has been determined by the renovation/repair company that the mobile museum gifted to VMNH will be best suited as a stationary unit once renovations are complete and the trailer returned to Waynesboro. The repair contract has the completion of the project in time for Riverfest in Waynesboro on May 16.

Douglas Ave. - HVAC repair work for both the first and second floor is projected to start in May. After which, other structural repair work will occur to improve the floor, walls, and ceilings.

Education Pavilion - The project is now officially complete with the fire marshal walk-through in early January.

Front Plaza – The status of plaza work was described as ongoing.

Waynesboro Advocacy – Staff at VMNH are collecting letters of support for the Waynesboro Campus project. Members of the Board are encouraged to submit letters of support.

Advocacy Day – General Assembly Advocacy Day is tentatively scheduled for February 16th and 17th. Ms. Hall mentioned that General Assembly members would likely be largely unavailable but encouraged those participating to speak with Legislative Assistants.

Strategic Plan – Reminder to the committee and entire Board that we will be adopting the 2025-2030 strategic plan at the next full Board meeting.

Endowment – The Foundation is supportive of using preliminary investment interest income toward several immediate initiatives.

Upcoming Events - Dr. Keiper mentioned the following upcoming events.

Bug Day – February 7

VA250 Member/Donors Event – February 19

Starlington Gala Event – March 21 (Ticketed Event)

Riverfest (Waynesboro May 2)

Museum Rodeo (Waynesboro May 16)

Lecture Series – Held monthly at the Waynesboro Theatre

Science Social – New initiative to be explored by members of Waynesboro Advocacy

Dr. Keiper reported that staff feel positive about the next General Assembly session and the ongoing effort to move the Waynesboro project into the capital construction pool.

He further mentioned the increased cost of doing business has necessitated an increase in fees. Those increases have been met with little to no comment from museum patrons.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Dr. Clark thanked the staff for a comprehensive report on the health of the museum. All indications are a robust and promising future. Dr. Clark then opened the floor for open discussion. With no further discussion items, Mr. Clements made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on:

Friday, May 15, 2026

Virginia Museum of Natural History

Executive Director's Conference Room

3:30 PM

DRAFT