

Board of Trustees Executive Committee
Friday, May 15, 2026, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Executive Director’s Conference Room 236
In-person or Remote option



AGENDA

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Welcome | Dr. Melany Clark (Chair) |
| 2. Approval of Minutes (Action) a. January 30, 2026 | Dr. Clark |
| 3. Chair’s Report a. Committee composition | Dr. Clark |
| 4. Financial Report a. Third quarter revenues and expenses b. Proposed FY 27 budget | Mr. Will Clements |
| 5. Executive Director’s Report a. Joint Board of Trustees and Foundation retreat May 2027 b. VMNH – Waynesboro – Mobile Science Center Open c. Strategic Plan Progress d. Executive Director Evaluation – August 2026 e. Upcoming Events i. Dino Festival, July 24-25, 2026 ii. Water/Ways Exhibit Members Opening Reception, August 27, 2026 iii. Artist Susanne Stryk Members Event, September 17, 2026 iv. Bonez & Booz, Saturday, October 24, 2026 | Dr. Joe Keiper |
| 6. Open Discussion a. Setting calendar for 2027 BOT meetings | Dr. Clark |
| 7. Adjourn | Dr. Clark |

**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



**Board of Trustees
Committee Roster 2026-2027**

DRAFT Effective 7.1.26

Executive Committee (VI. §6.2)

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

Research & Collections Committee (VI. §6.7)

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Carole Nash | Chair |
| Tom Benzing | |
| 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 | |
| VACANT | |
| Tyler Carter | Foundation |
| Ryan Barber | Ex Officio |
| Jonathan Martin | Ex Officio |

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

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

Nominating Committee (VI. §6.4)

Melany Clark
Emma Ito
Lauren Hall
Cathy Manion

Facilities Committee (VI. §6.6)

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| Tom Benzing | Chair |
| David Furth | |
| Lauren Hall | |
| Dick Bratcher | |

Strategic Planning (VI. §6.5)

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Melany Clark | Chair |
| Carole Nash | |
| Nathan Sanford | |
| Tom Benzing | |
| Will Clements | |
| Steve Powers | Foundation |

Waynesboro Advocacy Committee (ad hoc)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Tom Benzing | Chair |
| Carole Nash | |
| Dick Bratcher | |
| Steve Powers | Foundation |
| Len Poulin | |
| Greg Hitchin (City of Waynesboro) | |
| Faye Cooper | |
| Maggie Van Huss | |
| Stephanie Duffy | duffyss@ci.waynesboro.va.us |
| Rick Kane | rmkane@ntelos.net |
| Ann Peltier | ann.peltier@gmail.com |
| Urbie Nash | urbienash@yahoo.com |
| Bill Alexander | alexba@ntelos.net |

Third Quarter FY26 Financials

| | |
|---|------------|
| Brief Budget Summary | 1 |
| Balance Sheet Q3 FY26 | 2 |
| FY26 Third Quarter Budget Notes..... | 3-4 |
| Capital Projects FY26..... | 5-7 |
| Budget Amendment Request FY26..... | 8 |
| Draft Budget FY27 | 9 |
| Draft Budget Notes | 10 |
| VMNH Staff FY27 | 11 |

Third Quarter FY26 Summary

The third quarter of FY26 saw steady and consistent growth. A new administration took office, and as is typical, the primary focus has been on the legislative session. Key issues included the data center tax, school benchmarking, and the sunset of federal programs. While the legislative session was successful in advancing several initiatives, it unfortunately concluded without a finalized budget. Budget conferees are scheduled to return to Richmond on April 23 to begin finalizing the budget. Fiscal staff will continue to monitor the situation closely and report any developments.

Following the holiday season, the museum’s operations quickly returned to normal. Attendance and revenues experienced their expected seasonal rebound. Notably, even with our increase in admission rates, revenues have continued to remain steady. Admissions revenue experienced an additional boost due to a successful Bug Day themed Science Saturday.

Third-quarter expenses are in line with forecasts. However, costs remain elevated and are expected to continue rising due to ongoing inflationary pressures. The fiscal office is beginning to see higher pricing reflected in annual contracts. Typically, contracts start their renewal phase in the middle to late fourth quarter for the upcoming fiscal year, but vendors have already begun signaling increases due to sustained high gas prices.

As we move into the fourth quarter, we expect revenues to continue outpacing expectations. We also anticipate the approval of a new budget. If a budget is not approved, operations will continue under the FY26 base budget until one is finalized.

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 MARCH 31, 2025

| NOTE | BUDGET | YTD | YTD% |
|---|---|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ===== | | | |
| SUPPORT & REVENUES | | | |
| Support: | | | |
| | Commonwealth | \$3,578,220 | 3,578,220 100% |
| | Add: Appropriation | \$204,414 | 204,414 100% |
| | Central Accounts Distribution | \$0 | 0 0% |
| ----- | | | |
| | Total Support | \$3,782,634 | \$3,782,634 100% |
| ===== | | | |
| Revenues: | | | |
| 1 | Admission to Museum | \$92,075 | 77,661 84% |
| | VMNH Publications | \$2,000 | 468 23% |
| 2 | Receipts from City & County | \$37,890 | 37,890 100% |
| | Honorariums/Misc. Inc. | \$1,000 | 129 13% |
| | Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants:Research&Education/Memberships | \$270,000 | 210,334 78% |
| | Rental of Museum Rooms | \$6,000 | 4,267 71% |
| | Exhibit Rentals | \$500 | 0 0% |
| 3 | Souvenirs- Misc. Sales | \$72,800 | 46,068 63% |
| 4 | Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects | \$50,000 | 33,023 66% |
| | Federal Funds Budgeted/Rec'd | \$0 | 0 0% |
| | Total FY2026 Budgeted Revenues | \$532,265 | 409,840 77% |
| ----- | | | |
| | Special Funds Carryover FY25* | \$354,599 | 354,599 100% |
| | Federal Funds Carryover FY25* | \$6,561 | 6,561 100% |
| ----- | | | |
| | Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2025 | \$893,425 | 771,000 86% |
| ===== | | | |
| | TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP | \$4,676,059 | 4,553,634 97% |
| ===== | | | |
| EXPENSES: | | | |
| | Salaries | \$2,214,186 | 1,673,893 76% |
| | Payroll Benefits | \$961,261 | 749,630 78% |
| 5 | Contractual Services | \$336,943 | 360,859 107% |
| | Supplies | \$80,000 | 53,212 67% |
| | Equipment | \$50,000 | 12,347 25% |
| 6 | Equipment Maintenance | \$37,705 | 15,317 41% |
| | Travel | \$60,000 | 22,563 38% |
| | Staff Training | \$14,000 | 3,276 23% |
| | Repairs/Construction | \$105,000 | 48,120 46% |
| 7 | Subscriptions | \$1,000 | 2,733 273% |
| | Books | \$1,000 | 0 0% |
| | Utilities | \$294,944 | 247,788 84% |
| | Telephone | \$15,000 | 13,601 91% |
| | Mailing | \$5,000 | 1,870 37% |
| 8 | Insurance | \$23,000 | 0 0% |
| 9 | Vehicle Maint./Fuel | \$18,000 | 4,418 25% |
| | Organ. Memberships | \$20,000 | 14,449 72% |
| | Printing | \$5,000 | 918 18% |
| | Other: | \$5,000 | 0 0% |
| | Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost | \$1,000 | 0 0% |
| | Exhibit & Equipment Rentals | \$40,000 | 23,323 58% |
| | Building Rentals | \$1,000 | 515 52% |
| | Agency Service Charges | \$185,000 | 161,908 88% |
| ----- | | | |
| | TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | \$4,474,039 | 3,410,741 76% |
| ===== | | | |
| PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED | | | |
| ----- | | | |
| 10 | TOTAL INCOME BALANCE | \$202,020 | 1,142,893 |
| ===== | | | |

*** 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.) Admissions

The Board of Trustees made the strategic decision to increase the museum admission rate starting July 1, 2026. Based on current revenues, VMNH has not seen a falloff in attendance due to pricing pressure. The positive revenue trend continued into the third quarter, with combined general-day and festival-day revenues running approximately 38% ahead of the prior year's third-quarter results.

2.) Receipts of City and County

Christy Deatherage secured 100% of the education grant funding for FY26 from the City of Martinsville and Henry County. This highlights our constant efforts to maintain strategic working relationships in our immediate community.

3.) Store Sales

Amid higher admission pricing there was a chance reduced discretionary spending may impact on store sales, Visitor Services & Events Manager Robbie Hendrix-Wirt worked to reinvent the store through the second and third quarters of FY26, aligning product offerings with demand. These actions have had a measurable effect, with store performance now exceeding prior-year third quarter results by 2%

4.) Educational Programs

Educational programming provides an opportunity to highlight the seasonality of museum revenues. We expect increased activity to support achieving our forecasted annual revenue targets with spring and summer programming underway.

Expenses:

5.) Contractual Services

The fiscal office expects continued increases in contractual services, driven by current inflationary pressures. To help stabilize costs, staff are actively pursuing professional development and training opportunities to bring select services in-house where feasible.

6.) Equipment Maintenance

Equipment maintenance is typically deferred until the end of the fiscal year. In periods where we may have a small budget surplus in operations, we prioritize addressing deferred maintenance on equipment at that time.

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.) Insurance premiums

Insurance premiums are strategically paid at the end of the fiscal year. When funds are available, payments are made in the current fiscal year; if year-end balances are tight, payments are deferred to the following fiscal year.

9.) Vehicle Maintenance and Fuel

As is typical, increased educational programming, class visits and festival outreach activities in the spring and early summer are expected to drive higher fuel usage and vehicle maintenance costs. Although fuel prices are negotiated at the state level for all fleet vehicles, VMNH as well as all state agencies, has experienced a significant increase in the price per gallon.

10.) Total Income Balance

This total may appear as a larger budget surplus; however, once salaries, benefits, wages, and carryover obligations are factored in, VMNH is left with a very tight budget position heading into the close of FY26.

Third Quarter FY26 Capital Projects Summary

Capital Projects – Maintenance Reserve Funded

Douglas Renovation Project

Update:

Asbestos abatement work will go out for bid once working drawings are approved. Next steps for the project include boiler inspection, flush and diagnostic evaluation. If the boilers are in good working order the HVAC phase of the project will be bid out. VMNH's goal is to lift environmental standards to VMNH collections quality as quickly as possible.

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:

The VMNH-Waynesboro trailer was delivered ahead of schedule. Fiscal, Outreach, Exhibits, and Advancement staff mobilized quickly to prepare the trailer for Waynesboro's annual Riverfest.

General:

The VMNH Waynesboro Exhibit Trailer, located in the City of Waynesboro adjacent to the municipal lot, completed scheduled renovations. 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

The Senate and House Conferees have been called back to Richmond April 23 to discuss amendments to the current budget. Fiscal Staff will report more once the full budget has been approved.

Background:

Governor Youngkin did not move the VMNH-Waynesboro Branch Campus project into the Capital Construction Pool. VMNH staff and stakeholders followed the next steps outlined by the City's consultant, McGuire Woods. Staff worked 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 once funding becomes available.

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 FY27-FY28 capital budget.

Additional Projects FY26 (as of 4.17.2026)

- **Window Decal Installation: Quoted**
- **Next Exhibit Banner: Quoted**
- **Library Compactors: Removed and Stored**
- **Track lighting for future Special Exhibit Hall: Contracted**
- **Flooring for future Special Exhibit: Contracted**
- **Library Hallway Renovation: Contracted**
- **Young Explorer Center: Development**
- **Petra Lair: Development**

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**

| NOTE | | BUDGET |
|-------------|--|--------------------|
| | SUPPORT & REVENUES | |
| | Support: | |
| 1 | Commonwealth | \$3,782,634 |
| | Add: Appropriation | \$89,772 |
| | Total General Fund Support | \$3,872,406 |
| | Revenues: | |
| 2 | Admission to Museum | \$103,500 |
| | VMNH Publications | \$1,000 |
| | Receipts from City & County | \$37,890 |
| | Honorariums/Misc. Inc. | \$1,000 |
| 3 | Restricted Gifts Foundation/Grants: Research & Education/Memberships | \$280,000 |
| | Rental of Museum Rooms | \$6,000 |
| | Exhibit Rentals | \$500 |
| 4 | Souvenirs- Misc. Sales | \$78,800 |
| | Classes, Workshops, Kit Rentals, Education Projects | \$55,000 |
| | Federal Funds Budgeted/Recv'd | \$0 |
| | Total FY2027 Budgeted Revenues | \$563,690 |
| | Special Funds Carryover FY26* | \$350,000 |
| | Federal Funds Carryover FY26* | \$6,561 |
| | Total Revenues and Carryover from FY2026 | \$920,251 |
| | TOTAL OPERATING FUNDS/APPROP | \$4,792,657 |
| | EXPENSES: | |
| 5 | Salaries | \$2,331,799 |
| | Payroll Benefits | \$976,907 |
| 6 | Contractual Services | \$400,000 |
| | Supplies | \$80,000 |
| | Equipment | \$50,000 |
| | Equipment Maintenance | \$38,000 |
| | Travel | \$40,000 |
| 7 | Staff Training | \$14,000 |
| | Repairs/Construction | \$105,000 |
| | Subscriptions | \$1,000 |
| 8 | Utilities | \$284,000 |
| | Telephone | \$17,000 |
| | Mailing | \$5,000 |
| | Insurance | \$23,500 |
| | Vehicle Maint./Fuel | \$18,000 |
| | Organ. Memberships | \$20,000 |
| | Printing | \$5,000 |
| | Other: | \$5,000 |
| | Awards/Unem.Comp./Ind Cost | \$1,000 |
| | Exhibit & Equipment Rentals | \$40,000 |
| | Building Rentals | \$1,000 |
| | Agency Service Charges | \$185,000 |
| | TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | \$4,641,206 |
| | PERCENT SPENT OF YTD INCOME RECEIVED | |
| | TOTAL INCOME BALANCE | \$151,451 |

*** 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

As anticipated, VMNH received level funding in Governor Youngkin's budget this fall. The legislature will now produce an amended budget, with Senate and House conferees scheduled to reconvene in Richmond on April 23 to discuss proposed revisions. Fiscal staff will provide an update once the final budget is approved.

2.) Admission Revenue

Revenue is running well above prior year's third-quarter results; therefore, staff believe that a 12% increase to the forecast is warranted going into FY27.

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 have exceeded last year's figures so far this fiscal year. Looking ahead to FY27, staff expect continued growth, with sales forecasted to increase by 8% over FY26.

Expenses

5.) Salaries and Benefits

General compensation is expected to increase in both FY27 and FY28. Governor Youngkin's budget includes a 2% wage increase for agency staff, along with a bonus. The House has proposed a 2% increase, while the Senate has proposed a 3% increase. These figures remain subject to change as the legislature develops an amended budget. Staff will continue to monitor the process and provide updates.

6.) Contractual Services

As new projects come online and economic headwinds persist, contracted expenses are expected to increase. Fiscal staff have projected an approximate 20% rise, primarily driven by ongoing inflationary pressures. Fuel costs have been a significant factor in contract negotiations throughout FY26, and this trend is expected to continue into FY27.

7.) Staff Training

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

8.) Utilities

Building and Grounds staff continue targeted initiatives that are expected to improve utility efficiency and reduce operating costs over time.

Staffing FY27

| Metric | FY27 |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Total Employees | 54 |
| Full-Time | 34 |
| Part-Time | 20 |

| Funding | FY27 |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| General Fund Positions | 36 |
| Special Revenue Positions | 18 |

| <u>Department Break Down</u> | FY27 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| | |
| Executive Office | 2 |
| Advancement | 4 |
| Fiscal | 5 |
| Education | 3 |
| Education Outreach | 3 |
| Box Office | 8 |
| Collections | 4 |
| Archaeology | 8 |
| Entomology | 3 |
| Paleontology | 3 |
| Mammalogy | 1 |
| B&G | 9 |
| Herpetology | 1 |

VMNH Executive Director's Board Report
2025–2030 Strategic Plan
May 2026, through 3rd Quarter FY26
J. B. Keiper

Executive Summary

- The Board of Trustees is scheduled to have an off-site retreat in May 2027. VMNH-Foundation will be invited. A location should be discussed.
- The VMNH budget for the next biennium is anticipated to be level, with slight increases for salaries and fees.
- The VMNH-F endowment continues to grow with two new ongoing gifts (one will be completed shortly, the second via a 15-year Charitable Lead Trust).
- More than \$80,000 was secured by the museum's Annual Fund for FY 2025-2026.
- Attendance is up quarter-to-quarter (Q3 2024 vs Q3 2025) by 8% and revenues 12%.
- Staffing is approaching 100%, with the Exhibits Project Manager in place, and the hiring of a new Assistant Curator of Herpetology (June 2026).
- Planning for the *Mariels Young Explorers Center* has been time intensive. This work is meshed with setting up the new Temporary Exhibits Gallery and planning for *Petra's Lair*.
- The VA250 celebration by VMNH *Clash of Giants* was 21 February 2026, and attended by over 100 members, and the social event *Starlington* saw nearly 150 tickets sold.
- Reptile Festival was a success with over 2500 in attendance. Attendance was up nearly 10% over the previous year, and revenues up by nearly one-third.
- Plans for the renovation of the Douglas Avenue facility continued, with special consideration on HVAC needs.
- Education activities are generally full, with the first year of 2 concurrent sessions for the Homeschool Science and Engineering Academy meeting with success.
- Staff met with Secretary Jeffery Smith & his Deputies on 4 May 2026.



| Category | Meaning |
|------------------|---|
| On Track | Progress is proceeding as planned. |
| Slightly Delayed | Minor issues; schedule impact manageable. |
| Major Obstacle | Significant issues; needs intervention. |
| Not Started | Planned but not yet begun. |

Strategic Priorities Overview

Strategic Priority 1: Achieving Mission

| Objective | Description | Status | Completion Target | Board Support Needed |
|-------------------|--|----------|-------------------|--|
| 1.1 Douglas Ave. | HVAC & Asbestos | | Q2 FY27 | |
| 1.2 Space | Tasks assigned to staff | | Q1 FY27 | |
| 1.3 R&C to Needs | New exhibits manager hired, introduced to curators | | ongoing | |
| 1.4 Strategic use | Pavilion programming and rental opportunities; Homeschool support. | | ongoing | |
| 1.5 VA250 Exhibit | Exhibits installed, VA250 event Feb. 2026 | Complete | Q3 FY26 | Board attendance |
| 1.6 Traveling Ex. | Trilobite and <i>Tanytrachelos</i> exhibits being researched and prepped | | Q2 FY27 | |
| 1.7 Science story | Planning in queue, <i>Petra's Lair</i> , <i>Tany's</i> story | | ongoing | |
| 1.8 VMNH-W | Advocacy in General Assembly, Lobbying | | | GA Advocacy, visits to home districts |
| 1.9 New Wing | Begin in-house master plan | | Q2 FY27 | Engage Facilities Comm, begin formulation of B&G strategy going forward. |
| 1.10 Wilson Park | Staff outline possibilities | | Q2 FY27 | |

Strategic Priority 2: Great Sustainable Impact

| Objective | Description | Status | Completion Target | Board Support Needed |
|------------------|--|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 2.1 Grow Support | Engagement via events, press, social media | | ongoing | Prospect identification |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|---------|---|
| 2.2 Boards | Boards determine collaborative avenues; endowment requests | | Q1 FY28 | Begin requests of VMNH-F Q1 FY28 |
| 2.3 Festivals | Reaching full complement of staff; VMNH Exhibits Trailer returns to Waynesboro April 2026 – <i>Riverfest, Museum Rodeo</i> | | Q2 FY25 | Board volunteer work at Festivals, VMNH-W Trailer |
| 2.4 Young Expl. | Designing layout, selecting interactives | | Q4 FY27 | Exhibit Subcommittee engagement |
| 2.5 Staff | Staff recruited; Professional development funds | | ongoing | |
| 2.6 2030-2035 | Start ~August 2029 | | Q4 FY30 | Strategic Planning Retreat May 2027 |

Director’s Narrative (Explain delayed or protracted objectives; outline next steps and risks.)

- No projects delayed at this point.
- Points of main focus:
 - Preparations and design for Young Explorers Center.
 - Advocation for movement of VMNH-Waynesboro to construction phase.
 - This includes general advocacy (Board participation welcome)
 - Working with architect for next steps in Douglas Avenue rehab project – currently engaging with asbestos mitigation.
 - Thanking donors for annual fund and other donations.
 - Planning for July April *Dinosaur Festival*.

Board Actions or Support Requested

- Movement of **VMNH-Waynesboro** to the Capital Construction Pool will be a challenge. Advocating for this with the new Governor and General Assembly will be required. Board members may:
 - Reach out to their local delegate and senator to give support.
 - Contact the Governor’s Office
 - Join staff in museum advocacy ~February 2026
- The Facilities Committee should have an initial meeting with staff to develop a roadmap forward for the development of a **new wing** at our Martinsville facility in Q2 FY27, including generating specific goals for conducting an in-house *master plan*.
- Board members can identify **potential prospects** for new memberships, new donations, new corporate partners, and future endowment gifts.

- Host a cocktail hour at location of choice, to be accompanied by Director and other staff.
- Set a meeting with a company's Community Liaison.
- Invite associates to attend a museum event with you.
- Organize with a curator's input a field trip for natural history enthusiasts.
- Schedule a facilities tour with the Director.
- Schedule a hard hat tour of a new facility (e.g., Young Explorers Center) in late 2026.
- The Board of Trustees should be prepared for the first annual disbursement of funds from the VMNH-Foundation endowment in October 2027. The Board will work with staff to **determine funding priorities**.
- The Exhibits Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees should be prepared to engage in strategic discussion of goals, outcomes, and needs as related to the **Young Explorers Center**.
- The Board of Trustees should hold a strategic planning retreat in May 2027 to review progress of the 2025-2030 plan, and to start to outline future goals of the museum that may be included in the 2030-2035 plan.

Appendix A – Explicit Calls to Action

- **Advocacy Tasks**
- **Fundraising Tasks**
- **Engagement & Visibility Tasks**

Board Opportunities

Advocacy & Government Relations

- Reach out to your local delegate and senator to express support for VMNH-Waynesboro.
- Contact the Governor's Office to reinforce funding priorities.
- Join staff during February museum advocacy events in Richmond.

Fundraising & Partnerships

- Identify prospects for memberships, donations, corporate partners, and future endowment gifts.
- Host a small gathering or cocktail hour with the Director to introduce new potential supporters.
- Set a meeting with a company's Community Liaison to explore partnership opportunities.

Community Engagement & Visibility

- Invite colleagues or friends to a museum event.
- Use your own social network to promote VMNH events.

Appendix B – Continuity of current 5-year plan with the VMNH 2020–2025 plan

- 1.1: Work on **Douglas Avenue** was initiated in 2022, resulting in a new roof, drainage, and an interior reorganization.
- 1.2: **Collections space** was recognized as limited, and curators determined size of their collections, rate of growth, and future expansion. This drives current space assessments at all facilities.
- 1.3: Connecting **R&C work to contemporary needs and issues in society** – VMNH recognizes the need to inform audiences how our work is relevant.
- 1.4: With the completion of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, **creative use of that space and others** is an opportunistic way to better engage the community.
- 1.5: The **VA250 exhibit** will be opened in January 2026, and will be the result of work done with the Secretary of Education in 2025.
- 1.6: VMNH has historically created **exhibit rental** opportunities to generate revenue.
- 1.7: Employing **story telling** in the galleries is a new initiative.
- 1.8: **VMNH-Waynesboro** is a long-standing project, with detailed design being completed in 2025.
- 1.9: **New wing** discussions were started with identification of collections storage needs and surging audiences at Family Science Festivals.
- 1.10: With the completion of the Jean S. Adams Education Pavilion, new connections to **Wilson Park** will be strategic.

- 2.1: The **growth of philanthropic support** has always been a VMNH objective.
- 2.2: Enhanced **communication between Boards** has been recognized as a strategic need.
- 2.3: Due to their success, the continued **investment in Family Science Festivals** is needed to keep them fresh for audiences and a strong revenue source.
- 2.4: The **Young Explorers Center** was a project from 2023 onward has been mapped out.
- 2.5: The enhancement of **staff recruitment and retention** has been recognized as a value to the agency, and efforts in 2024 and 2025 has positioned VMNH well for developing new staff benefits.
- 2.6: The eventual development of the **2030-2035 Strategic Plan** was follow four sequential efforts that visualized future successful strategic outcomes for VMNH that have led to museum growth (staff, gallery space, collections), expanded service area (outreach, VMNH-Waynesboro), and reputation (Family Science Festivals, endowment growth).