

Board of Trustees

Executive Committee

Friday, May 15, 2026, 3:30 PM

Virginia Museum of Natural History

In-person with remote option



MINUTES

The Executive Committee of the Virginia Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees held their quarterly meeting at 3:30 PM in-person with a remote participation option.

Present in-person: Mr. Will Clements
Ms. Ambria Wood (OAG)
Ms. Jennifer Whitlow (Minutes)

Dr. Joe Keiper (Executive Director)
Mr. Jonathan Martin

Present Remote: Dr. Melany Clark (Chair)
Ms. Lauren Hall

Ms. Lisa Carter
Mr. Zach Ryder

WELCOME

Dr. Melany Clark opened the meeting at 3:30 PM with a welcome to those board members participating in-person and online. An in-person quorum was not present therefore no business could be conducted.

MINUTES

With no live quorum, the minutes from previous meetings could not be approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Clark confirmed three members of the full board will be either finishing their second term or not seeking reappointment effective June 30, 2026. Over the past several weeks Dr. Clark has worked to adjust committee membership with new and existing board members.

The full Board of Trustees will vote on the 2026-2027 slate of officers tomorrow. Nominations include:

Dr. Melany Clark – Chair
Ms. Lauren Hall – Vice-Chair
Ms. Sarah Bowman – Secretary
Mr. Will Clements - Treasurer

New trustee Katherine McGuire will be placed on the Education Committee. This leaves a vacancy on both the Finance/Advancement Committee and the Nominating Committee.

Dr. Keiper reported that Foundation Committee liaison, Elizabeth Bailey Carter, agreed to serve in the liaison capacity for the coming year and would also like to serve as an additional foundation member on the Finance/Advancement Committee.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Clements reported a very strong third quarter. All indicators are positive to end the year in financially stable condition.

Mr. Clements also noted rising costs for the museum include required contracts. Staff anticipated requested appropriate appropriations from the General Assembly budget to keep pace with these increases for the next year.

It was noted that with rising transportation costs the museum store has shifted some merchandise to a lower price point to better reflect available disposable income of visitors.

The VMN Foundation made decisions at their last meeting to make some additional funds available to VMNH staff for discretionary purposes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Keiper reminded the committee of the annual retreat which will be held in May 2027. Planning should begin now to secure a location.

The museum continues to support events in Waynesboro. The mobile science center is parked in Waynesboro and was used at Riverfest at the beginning of May and will be staffed with volunteers this weekend at Waynesboro's Street Arts Festival/Museum Rodeo. Solar panels were installed on the trailer roof to reduce reliance on electric power while the mobile unit is in use.

Dr. Keiper reported that myriapodologist, Dr. Jackson Means, is doing groundbreaking research with the genes of a cave dwelling cryptic milliped species.

Senior Fellow, Dr. Noel Boaz and paleontologist Dr. Adam Pritchard, are working to determine if the mastodon teeth in our collection are the missing teeth of Jefferson's mastodon on display at Monticello.

Contractor work at Douglas Ave. could begin at any time.

The Pete Hennika fund will be used this summer to fund an internship position and a part-time position to produce the only known 3-D model of the ancient Tanytrachelos,

Dr. Keiper, Mr. Ryan Barber, Mr. Jonathan Martin, and Ms. Christy Deatherage met with the new Secretary of Education, Jeffery Smith, last week at a gathering in Richmond. Secretary Smith's Senior Advisor, Dr. Kate Maxlow will visit VMNH on June 2nd. Any board member is welcome to join her during the tour.

During the meeting with the secretary, Dr. Keiper mentioned a former program, *Virginia Science Standards Institute* which was a professional development program for teachers that lost funding over ten years ago. The secretary and his staff were very interested in learning more about this program.

Upcoming Events include:

- Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event June 28
 - Reptile Festival Revisited - sharing the festival model and lessons learned
- Dino festival July 24-25
- Waterways opening and member reception August 27
- Suzanne Stryk, author and artist talk September 17

Mr. Martin reported that total festival revenue topped \$117,000 this year with strong momentum going forward.

Dr. Keiper is streamlining his annual review and will share prior to August review.

OPEN DISCUSSION

The committee engaged in a short discussion about the cadence of the Executive Committee meetings.

2027 Board meeting dates will be established and shared with the full Board of Trustees.

Dr. Keiper will provide an outline to ask for a budget increase with emphasis on the increased cost of doing business. Mr. Martin will provide a document that outlines the percentages the museum's contractual costs have increased for the committee. Mr. Clements suggested using quantitative as evidence for the capital project submission in August.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Dr. Clark adjourned the meeting at 4:26.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will held:

Virginia Museum of Natural History
Friday, August 14, 2026, 3:30 PM
Executive Director's Conference Room

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