

Meeting of the South Carolina State Commission

January 24th 2024, 11:30am

Chairman John F. McCabe Presiding

Commissioners Present:

Chairman John F. McCabe, Lori Arledge, Sharon Bryant, Dr. Amon Martin, Dr. Alexander Patrick, Jed Suddeth

Commissioners Absent:

Gray Culbreath, Robin McNair

Additional Persons Present:

Rita Caughman, Bill Quattlebaum

Staff Present:

Amy Bartow-Melia, Doug Beerman, Sonja Bradford, Tom Falvey, Emily Gallo, Karen Hall, Paul Matheny, Jennifer Thrailkill, Kelsey Sadlier

- I. Call to Order at 11:43am** by Jed Suddeth.
- II. Welcome Remarks** from Executive Director Amy Bartow-Melia
- III. Legislative Updates**
 - a. Presented by Amy Bartow-Melia. Of the \$2,255,371 recurring funds and \$50,000,000 capital funds budget requests from the Governor, we were allocated \$292,520 for Retention & Pay Equity. Thanks to Sonja Bradford for her work with Central HR, the Department of Administration is in support of our retention and pay equity efforts. Waiting for more information regarding House budget.
- IV. Staffing Updates**
 - a. Presented by Director of Human Resources and Inclusion, Sonja Bradford. Forty-eight part time and full time equivalent positions were hired by the Museum since February 2023. Latest Full Time hires include: Chief of Staff/Sr. Project Manager, HR Coordinator, Astronomy Educator. The Museum is currently recruiting two history curators. Foundation to hire a Major Gifts Officer.
- V. Finance and Attendance Updates**
 - a. Presented by Chief Operating Officer, Doug Beerman. Holiday Recap: Performance as projected. Museum revenue currently at \$9,000 increase from 2022. Increase in visitation from 2022 by approx. 1,000. Retail revenue decreased from previous year primarily due to store repairs and construction after flooding. YTD: \$766,000 earned, on target to meet our revenue goal of \$1.6 million. Likely to have 40,000 school group attendees this year. Attendance is on target with historic averages.
- VI. Admission and Membership Pricing Updates**
 - a. Presented by Doug Beerman and Membership Manager Kelsey Sadlier. Admission pricing increase to take place on March 1st 2024. Updated prices: Adult: \$12.00, Children (3-12): \$10.00, Senior (62+) & Military: \$11.00. Planetarium and 4D pricing to remain the same.
 - b. Kelsey Sadlier presented new membership pricing levels with simplified benefit tiers. Most popular membership is the Family level. Updated membership costs:
 - i. Individual: \$50
 - ii. Dual: \$80
 - iii. Family: \$140
 - iv. Explorer: \$180
 - v. Ambassador: \$300
 - vi. Friends of Finn 1: \$500
 - vii. Friends of Finn 2: \$1,000

VII. Construction Updates:

- a. Presented by Doug Beerman. Third and fourth floor staff offices are under construction with replacement of windows and carpeting. Painting is underway as well as the building of new cubicles and office furniture (i.e. mailroom). Third floor board room to receive new electronic window shades. New carpeting was installed in the Huger St. and Gervais St. meeting rooms and in the store back offices. Meeting room walls to be painted, excluding brick. Next projects include replacement of carpet and linoleum flooring in various spaces on the 1st and 2nd floors of the Museum.

VIII. Reimagine the Experience Updates

- a. Presented by Amy Bartow-Melia. Phase 2 of *Reimagine the Experience* is underway. The Museum is currently developing the RFP for the new Innovation wing and is assessing the scope of America's 250th exhibition. Complete design for art wing. Security camera system to begin this spring and keycards following that, as well as HVAC. Please share our plans for Natural History with Parks and Recreation, SCDNR, etc. which is phase 3 of *Reimagine the Experience*, to explore partnership opportunities.
- b. Expansion into DHEC Space: The Department of Administration is supportive of the Museum expanding into current DHEC space, which is approximately 80,000 square feet and will be vacated December 2024. The Museum will meet with the Department of Administration on February 21st, 2024 to discuss this possibility. Should the Museum move forward with acquiring additional space, the 2025-2026 budget request will include increased rent. Dr. Patrick requested to be informed of DHEC's current rent payment. The Museum requested an updated concept design from Gallagher & Associates to incorporate DHEC blueprints.

IX. Summary of Upcoming Events

- a. Douglass Day Transcribe-a-thon: Wednesday, Feb 14th
- b. Amore Under the Stars: Wednesday, Feb 14th
- c. Artist Homecoming: Saturday, Feb 24th
- d. Legislative night: Wednesday, April 10th

X. Foundation Report

- a. Presented by Foundation Executive Director, Karen Hall. The current Foundation operating balance is \$70,346. The current Capital Campaign balance is \$1,806,649. The total across all accounts is \$4,622,724. The total Capital Campaign contributions and commitments total \$3,338,000. An overview of commitments and capital funds received was provided.

XI. Approval of 11/08/23 minutes

- a. Chairman John F. McCabe asked the Commission to approve the minutes from the previous meeting on 11/08/23. John McCabe made a motion for approval. Dr. Alexander Patrick seconded. Without objections, the motion carried.

XII. New Business

- a. Presented by Chairman John F. McCabe. Regarding use of DHEC space, the question of parceling the space to generate revenue was posed. The Museum seeks to use all of the space available.
- b. Benchmarking trips are being discussed by the Museum's executive team and all Commissioners are invited to attend. Chief of Staff Emily Gallo to send summary of upcoming trips for Commissioners to review.
- c. Onboarding Commissioners: Dr. Patrick suggested that the Commission develop an onboarding procedure for new Commissioners to introduce them to the Museum, coinciding with John McCabe and Jed Suddeth's "Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities" project.

XIII. Old Business

- a. *None Reported*

XIV. Discussion: Strategic Plan and SWOT Analysis

- a. Strategic Planning and SWOT analysis led by Emily Gallo. An overview of the Museum's upcoming Strategic Plan development was provided. The next stage is to review the Mission, Vision, and Values statement of the Museum, which will be presented during a future Commission meeting.
- b. Commissioners were instructed to take several minutes to review the Museum's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Commissioners provided their SWOT data aloud. Commissioners who were absent to provide their feedback digitally.
- c. SWOT data from the Commission, Foundation Board, and Museum staff to be analyzed by Emily Gallo and used to inform Strategic Plan. A Summary of meeting discussion is below:

Strengths: Dedicated and talented leadership and staff, the Museum's collection, venue and location, solid and clear message to share, parking, innovation

Weaknesses: Venue maintenance and repairs, corporate engagement, inconsistent funding, employee retention, representing all South Carolina regions, including Upstate and Midlands.

Opportunities: Reach beyond state borders ex. Dave Pot at The Met, make sure we are recognized as THE South Carolina State Museum, National partnerships, increased art collection, representation outside of Columbia, fund development, collaboration

Threats: Deferred venue maintenance, funding, diverse programming, staffing & retention crisis

XV. Meeting adjourned at 12:59pm by John McCabe.