

Meeting of the South Carolina State Commission

March 27th 2024, 11:30am

Chairman John F. McCabe Presiding

Commissioners Present:

Chairman John F. McCabe, Robin McNair, Sharon Bryant, Dr. Alexander Patrick, Jed Suddeth

Absent:

Lori Arledge, Gray Culbreath, Bill Quattlebaum

Additional Persons Present:

Rita Caughman, Annie Wilson

Staff Present:

Amy Bartow-Melia, Doug Beerman, Sonja Bradford, Tom Falvey, Emily Gallo, Dorothy Hall, Karen Hall, Paul Matheny, Jennifer Thrailkill, Andrew Savrinsky

- I. **Call to Order at 11:31am** by Chairman McCabe.
- II. **Welcome Remarks** from Executive Director Amy Bartow-Melia
- III. **Values Exercise** led by Emily Gallo. Commissioners submitted forms via Cognito. Emily to send link to form to Dr. Patrick and Robin who were not present for this exercise.
- IV. **Introduction of new staff/promotions:** Dorothy Hall (Dir. of Visitor Services) and Andrew Sevrinsky (Astronomy Educator)
- V. **Finance and Attendance Updates**
 - a. Presented by Chief Operating Officer, Doug Beerman. Revenue performance as projected. Ending FY cash projected \$606,063. Ending FY supplemental fund cash: \$10,013,415. Attendance is on target with historic averages and greater than last year's attendance. Over 2,300 school group visitors are scheduled this week for field trips at the Museum.
 - b. Admission and membership pricing successfully rolled out by SCSM and Foundation teams. Updated prices: Adult: \$13.00, Children (3-12): \$10.00, Senior (62+) & Military: \$11.00. Planetarium and 4D pricing to remain the same for now. No negative feedback regarding changes from guests.
- VI. **Legislative Updates**
 - a. Presented by Annie Wilson. Of the \$2,255,371 recurring funds and \$50,000,000 capital funds budget requests SCSM requested, we were allocated \$292,520 for Retention & Pay Equity in the Governor's budget. House lean budget allocated \$285,951. Senate in full finance committee week of April 8th on entire budget. Board of economic advisors cancelled meeting this week which could indicate additional projected revenue in Senate budget. House budget did not include any earmarks.
 - b. Amy, Karen, Emily, and Annie met with Senator Bennett last week as he was absent from our schedule hearing in February. It was a favorable meeting and he was interested in our plans for the museum. Discussed capital request and possibly being allocated funds in phases. Amy was able to reference example of Andrew Sevrinsky hire thanks to staffing funds.
- VII. **Staffing Updates**
 - a. Presented by Director of Human Resources and Inclusion, Sonja Bradford. Current headcount is 90 full and part time staff (39 FTEs and 51 part-time staff). Hiring for core positions to replace departures (special events manager, major gift officer, public relations manager, and others to be identified as we re-evaluate our needs during the capital campaign.)
 - b. Second interview with a history curator on Monday this week that went well. Continuing to recruit for a second history curator.

- c. 5 interns from Duke coming to the museum in May to work in various departments.

VIII. Events

- a. Recap:
 - i. Arora planetarium show: best performing planetarium show that we've had with an average of 83.4 attendees per showing. 54% of planetarium tickets sold since November 11th were from Arora showings.
 - ii. Douglass Day on Feb 14th: transcribeathon hosting high school and college students around the state and several local partners.
 - iii. Amore: net profit \$9,539
 - iv. Disability Celebration Day: brought in 30 community partners for a day that celebrated those with disabilities with fun, inclusive activities such as a hands-on art project, special tours and shows with ASL interpretation and an Astronomy Touch Zone.
<https://scmuseum.org/events/disability-celebration-day>
- b. Summary of Upcoming Events
 - i. Legislative night: Wednesday, April 10th
 - ii. Harvesting Heritage foodways program kickoff with Amethyst Ganaway and Natalie Daise: May 18th
 - iii. D-Day Salute: June 8th

IX. Marketing and Communications

- a. Scmuseum.org won an award from the South Carolina State Library.
- b. Flock and Rally contracted to assist with an outreach plan, media training, and a crisis communication plan for the *Reimagine the Experience* project. Most recently, select directors participated in a current target audience identification meeting. Final deliverables will be presented to the museum in September.

X. *Reimagine the Experience* Updates

- a. Presented by Amy Bartow-Melia. Third and fourth floor staff office construction is complete. Windows replaced and staff are moved back into offices with new carpeting and cubicles. Library installation is underway on the 4th floor. Tour of office annex open to Commissioners at the end of this meeting. Roof leaks still occurring.
- 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 July 2025. G&A engaged to re-draft floor plans to include DHEC space. Updated floorplans will be presented to commissioners at our May meeting.
 - i. Amy and Emily met with the Department of Administration on February 21st to review numbers for expanding into DHEC.
 - 1. Two options: 1. Pay rent and continue to use Admin for building services. (total rent cost for entire building to include DHEC: \$3,837,595) 2. Pay rent and take over our own management of building (approx. \$3 million in maintenance costs annually). We are evaluating what this will look like long term and will keep the Commission informed of new information. Regardless of our decision, we will need to request significant additional recurring funds.

XI. Benchmarking

- a. Reviewed spring benchmarking and conference trips which included: Museums Advocacy Day in Washington, DC; NASA Social event and SpaceX launch; MAAM Building Museums conference in Philadelphia, PA; VA Museum of History and Culture in Richmond, VA; Lemelson Center for the study of Invention and Innovation and Spark!Lab tour in Washington, DC; and a Common Cause to All: Symposium for 250th commemoration planners in Williamsburg.
- b. Upcoming benchmarking trip to Nashville, TN to visit the TN State Museum, who recently received \$120 million from their legislature for a complete renovation/rebuild. Please let Emily know if you would like to attend our meeting at the TN State Museum on May 9th.

XII. Discussion: Strategic Plan and SWOT Analysis

- a. SWOT data from the Commission, Foundation Board, and Museum staff compiled to inform our strategic plan. The highlights from our SWOT analyses are below:

Strengths: Creativity, teamwork, staff, collection, location, updates to building

Weaknesses: Inconsistent communication and understanding, cross-departmental communication; employee retention: understaffing, salaries/wages; Ongoing construction and status as a historic building

Opportunities: Grants, expanding staff, diversifying revenue, collaboration with community partners (outreach and partnerships); increasing space by acquiring DHEC

Threats: Political climate, competition, funding (state and grants), staffing crisis

- b. Mission and Vision exercises conducted by Emily Gallo. Commissioners provided feedback and points of consideration for revising our Mission and Vision statements. Emily to report data in the next commission meeting.
- c. Top values collected by commissioners at the top of this meeting include: accessibility, guest experience, impact, and passion.

XIII. Foundation Report

- a. Presented by Foundation Executive Director, Karen Hall. The current Foundation operating balance is \$157,718. The current Capital Campaign balance is \$1,846,930. The total across all accounts is \$4,913,183. The total Capital Campaign contributions and commitments total \$3,341,000. An overview of commitments and capital funds received was provided.

XIV. Approval of 11/08/23 minutes

- a. Chairman John F. McCabe asked the Commission to approve the minutes from the last commission meeting on January 24th. John McCabe made a motion for approval. Dr. Alexander Patrick seconded. Without objections, the motion carried at 12:50pm.

XV. New Business Presented by Chairman John F. McCabe.

- a. Chairman McCabe encouraged Commissioners to consider attending a benchmarking trip or conference. Museum staff will re-circulate the list of upcoming trips.
- b. Next meeting will include an overview of Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities presented by Chairman McCabe and Jed Suddeth.

XVI. Old Business

- a. *None Reported*

XVII. Meeting adjourned at 12:51pm by Chairman McCabe.