

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

### **THE WILD CENTER**

**January 23, 2017 – McKinsey & Co., New York City**

**1:30 PM – 3:30 PM**

#### **Board Present:**

George Cigale, Obie Clifford, Lynn Fox, Sally Hart, Thomas Jorling, Betsy Lowe, Rich Malloch, Chris McFadden, Linda Rosenstock, Jack Ryder, Nancy Simpkins, Charles Svenson, Karen Thomas, and Joel Treisman.

#### **Board/Advisory Board/Staff Present via Web Ex:**

Paul Alioto, Joe Beck, Rick Godin, Nancy Howard, Peter Kindler, James Schoff, Sandra Strader, and Gene Zeltmann.

#### **Advisory Board Present:**

Lee Bailey

#### **Board Absent:**

Tom Aydelotte, Michael Bettmann, Charles Frenette, Robert Friedman, Michael Hunsinger, and Paul Maroun.

#### **Staff/Consultants Present:**

Marci Bencze, Hillarie Logan-Dechene, Robin Ellis, Bob Kronenberger, Stephanie Ratcliffe, and Will Maitland Weiss.

#### **Welcome**

#### **Discussion:**

Nancy Simpkins called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and welcomed all in attendance in the room and on the phone. She then stated that Board members had participated in a wonderful dinner the night before and thanked those in attendance for joining.

### **I. Board Elections**

#### **Discussion:**

Nancy then called on Lynn Fox in her role as Chair of the Committee on Trustees to present Board Members and Officers who were up for re-election.

She said that there were some members whose terms were expiring who would need to be re-elected as well as officers who would need to be elected.

**Action:** A motion to re-elect Paul Alioto, Tom Aydelotte, Joe Beck, Michael Bettmann, Donald K. Clifford, Jr., Charles Frenette, Sally Hart, Rich Malloch, Chris McFadden, Jack Ryder and Joel Treisman was unanimously approved.

*Charles Svenson motion, Karen Thomas second*

**Action:** A motion to elect the following officers to the Board of Trustees was also unanimously approved:

- Donald K. Clifford, Jr. – Chairman
- Nancy Simpkins – President
- Chris McFadden – Vice President
- Nancy Howard – Secretary
- Chris McFadden – Treasurer

*Charles Svenson motion, Karen Thomas second.*

## II. **Approval of Minutes**

**Discussion:** Minutes of the October 7, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

*George Cigale motion, Rich Malloch second.*

**Action:** N/A

## III. **Executive Director Report**

**Discussion:** Stephanie Ratcliffe began her report by sharing the following 2016 highlights:

- The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala
- Completing the Comprehensive Campaign and exceeding our goal
- The top ten accomplishments document which was created with input from the following sources:
  - Board
  - Staff
  - Tupper Lake Community members
  - Social Media
- Millennial Research
  - Starting to make research a part of our daily program.
  - Positive feedback from others in the Adirondacks and State for the work that we have done – Guidebook.
- Ongoing Projects:
  - IMLS Visual Thinking Strategies – We have been working on this program for about 6 years. A large IMLS funded project is entering the last year of a three year grant to not only continue this work at The Wild Center but train other science based museums across the country in this teaching strategy. It is unclear what level this work will

continue at after the grant ends. In the coming year we will reflect on what we have learned and develop a future vision.

- SENCER – Completed this three year grant. This has afforded us the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Curt Stager on very specific climate change interpretation for selected audiences.

Stephanie then shared 2016 Youth Climate Summit Accomplishments:

- Worked with Sri Lanka Community Resilience Center, Climate Secretariat, and US Embassy in Colombo to organize their first Youth Climate Summit.
- Hired coordinator, Katie Morgan, to support the Adirondack Youth Climate Program plus scale-up activities.
- Partnered with the Climate Reality Project (Al Gore) I AM PRO SNOW campaign.
- Hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Adirondack Youth Climate Summit in November 2017.
- Continued to mentor and support Youth Climate Summits in Seattle, Detroit, Boston and Burlington, VT in 2016.
- Jen Kretser was selected to participate in a national leadership board organized through the Climate Literacy Energy Awareness Network to develop shared goals and activities. This small group includes NOAA, Climate Generations, Alliance for Climate Education, Connect4Climate – World Bank initiative, the Federation of Earth Science Information Partners. Jen is considered an expert at the national level.

Stephanie also shared the following TWC funding and awards, stating that funding remains strong in 2016:

- UL Innovative Education Awards for “inspiring the next generation of business leaders, engineers, inventors, researchers and scientists - \$50,000
- EPA Region 2 Environmental Education Grant - \$91,000
- NYS Pollution Prevention Grant - \$20,000
- Other Recognition – APA Certificate of Appreciation, Community Service Award from the Boston YouthCAN Summit, National Green Schools Excellence Award.

Stephanie then showed a power point slide with \$499,621 on it and asked Board members in attendance what their reaction was to that number. She stated that it was the amount of money in the queue at NOAA which could potentially fully fund our climate work. We should find out whether or not that will happen by sometime in April. She stated that we had to make a strategic choice whether to expand our work

nationally or focus on New York State and she said that the decision was made to stay in New York State. Stephanie said that if we don't get the money we will continue the work using the "pay-as-you-go" system.

Stephanie then took some time to present the following 2016 Marketing Highlights:

- Over one million visits to website
  - Website visits up from 976,460 in 2015 to 1,019,639 in 2016 – a 4.42% increase. Of these, 75% were from new users who had never visited site before.
- 43% Social Media Growth
  - Collectively our social audiences grew by 43% in 2016 (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). Instagram surpassed Twitter as our second largest social network.
- Expanding our Reach
  - 2013-2016 Zip code sprawl – we are just scratching the surface of mining our own data.
- New Tactics Pay Off
  - A TV commercial was run in the Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany markets from 7/27 – 8/14, contributing to 12.5%, 12.3% and 35.3% increases in admissions attendance in the Albany, Syracuse, and Rochester markets respectively.
    - Admissions revenues were about 25% over ad costs.
- Forward Thinking Planning for 2017
  - A 2017 marketing plan was developed in Fall 2016, now in place.
  - Creative assets were gathered in 2016 to better represent a more diverse/varied audience, and will be utilized in 2017.
  - 2016 experiments were successful and will be integrated into 2017 efforts supported by our Market NY Grant.
  - In a digital world, being able to track our efforts is more important than ever – expanding our attribution methods will be a priority moving forward.

#### **IV. Committee on Trustees**

Discussion: Lynn Fox reported that there had been a number of committee calls since the last Board meeting and that there were currently the following projects and developments underway:

- Past Board member list was being updated.
- A dedicated webpage is being explored which would contain Board information.
- Karen Thomas and Jack Ryder will be looking at Advisory Committee structure to see how it can be improved, they will report on it at the next meeting.

- Amy Elrod and John Colston’s Board terms have expired and they will not seek re-election. She thanked them for their service.
- Lynn Birdsong moved from Board to Advisory Board.
- Currently 27 members on the Board.
- Working on updating the Board skills matrix.
- Working on improving Board recruitment.
  - Will be refining the process.
  - Looking for specific skill sets.
  - Will set up meetings with potential candidates.
  - She emphasized that Trustees should not invite people to join the board casually, rather they should provide names to Lynn Fox, Nancy Simpkins, Stephanie Ratcliffe, etc. so candidates can be considered with the rest of the pool of prospects.
- Lynn handed out homework – a Board Member Skill Inventory so that Board can list their education, skills, etc. so that the matrix can be updated. Trustees were asked to return to Hillarie.

Nancy Simpkins then introduced Board member George Cigale, who may be facilitating an organizational life cycles training at the Spring Board meeting. George then gave a brief presentation regarding organizational life cycles and the work that he has planned for The Wild Center:

- In terms of the life cycle of an organization – Baby, Teen, Prime.
  - TWC is not yet at its prime.
  - As an organization, how do we get to Prime?
  - Goal – Try to identify issues, need to figure out which issues are “normal”. Then make adjustments, change is the only constant.
- Problems now help to figure out where an organization is in its life cycle so they know where they are and how to handle/solve next problems.
- There is some planning that needs to happen.
- In humans, aging is not preventable but it is in an organization.
- Need to think about what would happen if we become too stagnant or bureaucratic – will we still attract fresh staff, etc.?
- Compared the life cycle theory to Mt. Marcy – Go up, Prime, Come down.
- This training could potentially change the direction /nature of the organization. We need to be willing to take risks.
- For the health of the organization, this should be done in a very careful way.
- George will send out a summary that describes the life cycle of organizations.

George then gave Board members a chance to comment/ask questions:

- Linda Rosenstock – The most important question is when should an organization do this? Is now the right time?
- George Cigale – It is probably a good time to be having this discussion, we had trouble doing the Future’s Committee work. Still need to decide who we want to be when we grow up. It is a foundational need to help us figure it out.
- Nancy Simpkins – The Board is not all on the same page as to what we are as an organization, there are many ideas about what we should be. Wellspring findings were not helpful.
- Lynn Fox – There may be a timing issue – may have Administrative issues as the Board only meets four times a year. A shorter training might be better.
- George Cigale – The ideal implementation would be to meet once (during the Spring Board meeting) and build on it. Needs to be clearly defined.
- Stephanie Ratcliffe – There should be a Board version and a staff version.
- Obie Clifford – First with management and staff and then with Board possibly.
- George Cigale – Stephanie, Hillarie and one other staff member should attend to bring in the staff perspective.
  - 1.5 days – share perspective on issues that need attention.
  - Reach mutual agreement on where we are in the life cycle.
- Chris McFadden – Future’s takeaway – There was a lack of uniformity on the how you define success question. The board should set the strategic direction.
- Rich Malloch – In most organizations, the CEO sets strategic direction, the Board usually does not. In some places, the Chairman of the Board does.
  - Cautioned to be careful bringing problems into the Board room, don’t let it become a free for all.
- George Cigale – The primary goal is to figure out how to work more effectively as a Board and move the organization forward.
- Stephanie Ratcliffe – Wellspring process did not come at the right time, we were not ready.
  - A list of what is normal and abnormal would be very helpful.
  - Prep work – what are we really doing here?
  - A facilitator needs to interpret it correctly or it won’t work.
- Lynn Fox – George has materials for us to read, Board members should read information and then have a discussion about it. The main concepts are in the reading.

- Nancy Simpkins – We would like to do this in April (May?) but be allowed to define the parameters (1.5 days?).
- Stephanie Ratcliffe – Is there a way to be diagnostic first?
- Paul Alioto – It seems like to-date the Board has only allowed the most productive outcomes, etc.
  - The role of the Board is not complicated, visioning and needs assessment completed and then the Director leads it.
- Nancy Simpkins – The Board is not in agreement on strategy and direction and this is a process that will help.
- Jack Ryder – Could the work be pieced out and then revisit it at the May Board meeting?
  - Recommends using George to help us identify issues and move forward.
- George Cigale – He doesn't yet have a proposal, wanted reaction of the Board before changes are made.
- Joel Treisman – Not sure if this is the right process. Nancy Simpkins has defined the challenge, do we need to tailor the process to the issue?
- Karen Thomas – This could be very productive as long as it is focused.
- Nancy Howard – This is a great idea even if it is briefer than presented.

## V. **Financial Report**

Discussion: Chris McFadden began by making a few introductory comments. He stated that he was pleased to provide current financials and that the Finance committee would continue to present info in this new format so all will have literacy regarding financial information for the organization. He then thanked the following Finance Committee members for their contributions:

- Obie Clifford
- Rich Malloch
- Jim Schoff
- Charlie Svenson
- Joe Beck, ex officio
- Lynn Birdsong, ex officio
- Bob Kronenberger, Director of Finance

Chris McFadden then invited Bob Kronenberger who shared the following observations with the committee with regard to 2016 financial results and 2017 budget proposal:

### **Attendance**

- 2016 total attendance was down 9.2% from 2015 but up 149% vs. 2014.
- 2016 paid attendance was down 4% from 2015.
- 2016 total attendance 144,000 vs. 158,600 in 2015 (vs. 59,300 in 2014)

### **Admission Revenue**

- 2016 admission revenues down 6% from 2015.
- 2016 admissions revenue \$1.5mm (\$200,000 over budget) vs. \$1.6 mm in 2015.

### **Earned Revenues**

- 2016 membership revenues are down 18% vs. 2015 but very close to budget.
- Renewal rates for members joining last summer @ 30%.
- Store revenues are up 2% vs. 2015 despite lower attendance.
- Sales per visitor up 12%.

### **Support Revenues**

- 2016 operating support revenues 9% under budget.
- Annual Fund \$100,000 under budget.
- Gala proceeds of \$545,000 used to repay Wild Walk loan.

### **Annual Revenue Distribution**

- 2016 revenue was \$4.9 mm (excluding \$545,000 from Gala)
- 2016 earned revenues estimated to be 51% total.
- Annual Fund forecasted at 31% of 2017 total revenues.
- 2017 budget includes significant (\$380,000) grants that support operating expenses.

### **Functional Operating Expenses**

- Overall 2016 operating expenses are \$100,000 over budget (\$85,000 in marketing costs).
- 2017 budget includes:
  - 3 new staff positions
  - Staff salary increases and minimum wage increases;
  - New exhibit costs;
  - Large increase in marketing expenses (as a result of grant award).

### **Income Statement Forecast**

- 2016 earned income \$256,000 above budget.
- 2016 operating expenses \$100,000 over budget, including additional marketing costs.
- 2016 operating support \$153,000 below budget.
- Overall 2016 results expected to be on budget.

### **Balance Sheet Highlights**

- Bank line of credit \$750,000. Today \$0 drawn.
- In July/August, Wild Walk term loan balance reduced by \$2mm, generating annual savings of \$80,000/year.
- Including the outstanding Wild Walk pledges and Gala commitments, unfunded term loan balance ~ \$68,000.

### **Endowment Performance**

- Current portfolio weighting is 70% stocks, 30% cash and bonds.
- Last portfolio adjustment approved by Investment Committee on November 15<sup>th</sup> – Purchased 10 year Treasury Note.
- Portfolio widely diversified via mutual fund holdings and Treasury Notes.
- S & P gained 12.25% in 2016.

### **Conclusions**

- 2017 budget proposal is supported by the Finance Committee as consistent with 2016 operating priorities, including some additional staff investments.
- Marketing grant income (\$300,000) forecasted to boost admissions slightly above trend line.
- Endowment performance is impressive and providing tangible support to operating funds.
- Overall liquidity and balance sheet remains strong.
- Continued reliance on Annual Fund support @ 31% of 2017 revenue.

### **Other Matters**

#### **Intern Housing Update**

- Engineer inspection of house completed.
- Property in zoned commercial/single family residential.
- Working with local attorney to obtain Village approval of our planned use.
- Village Planning Board meeting later in January.
- Working with Village code enforcement officer to make sure no unexpected upgrades are required to bring house up to code

(currently anticipate modifying staircase and installing smoke/carbon monoxide detectors).

- Seller is aware of plan and progress to date.
- Once receive Village approval, anticipate renting the house to give Development time to fund raise for purchase.

### **Proposed Resolution**

Bob Kronenberger then presented the following resolution to the Board for their approval:

*RESOLVED, that the Corporation merge two parcels of property that it owns, to wit: Tax map number 491.-6-31.300 and 491.-8-2.100, the main museum parcel obtained from the Tupper Lake Central School District and the parcel obtained from The Ella M. Klueck Irrevocable Trust, respectively: and it is further*

*RESOLVED, that the Corporation undertake whatever actions are necessary to amend any permit to allow the use of the merged property for museum purposes; and*

*RESOLVED, that the Corporation authorizes and directs Stephanie Ratcliffe, Executive Director, to execute the said deed and to take all such further actions, and to execute and deliver all applications, instruments and documents in the name of the Corporation to accomplish the foregoing.*

The resolution was unanimously approved.

*Nancy Simpkins motion, Tom Jorling second.*

## **VI. Development and Campaign Report**

Discussion: Charlie Svenson began by thanking all for 100% Board and Advisory Board participation for Annual Fund contributions. He then thanked the following Development Committee members for their dedicated service:

- Linda Rosenstock, Vice Chair
- Michael Bettmann, MD
- Obie Clifford
- Peter Kindler
- Karen Thomas
- Nancy Simpkins, ex officio
- Stephanie Ratcliffe, Executive Director
- Hillarie Logan-Dechene, Director of Philanthropy

Charlie Svenson reported that they have re-established a Development Committee in September after a hiatus of five years.

Overall, 2016 was a very good year in Development and Membership at The Wild Center. 2016 began with the Celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Metropolitan Club in New York City, it was a fantastic success. The funds raised for that event, most in 2015, and over \$270,000 in 2016 helps finish off the Capital Campaign and, when all pledges are fulfilled - will allow us to pay off the debt on the Wild Walk loan.

Hillarie then shared the following chart which includes all 2016 Development and Membership revenue, new pledges and commitments:

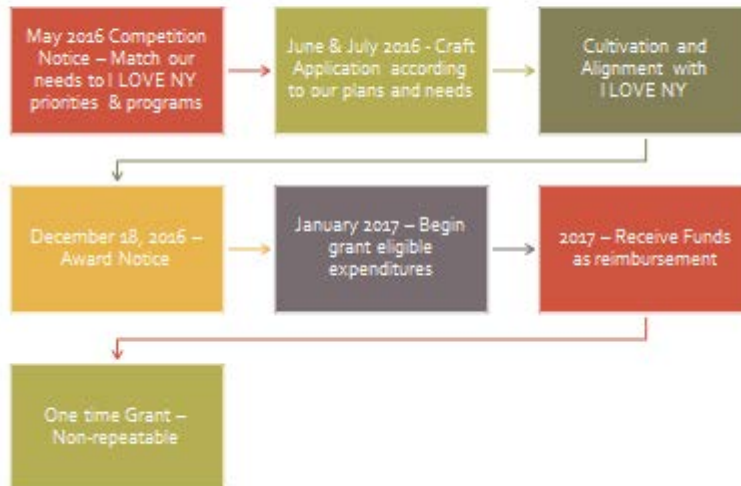


Charlie also reported on the “Thank You Tour” and overall fundraising results for 2016. We raised over \$1.4 million with Annual Fund shy of goal, but exceeded our goal for Restricted gifts and grants for special projects. We grew our Board Designated Endowment by over \$225,000 due to the generosity of some of our long-time members who included us in their wills.

He invited Hillarie to review “the Anatomy” of the State Marketing Award. She shared a chart elaborating on the process. This marketing grant titled “New Markets for The Wild Center and the North Country: Phase Three” has provided \$300,000 in marketing dollars to be used in the following ways:

- \$200,000 – for “Special Initiatives” in marketing.
- \$100,000 – for marketing expenditures in the 2017 operating budget.

ANATOMY OF A GRANT:  
 Empire State Development MARKET NY CFA Marketing #3  
 "New Markets for The Wild Center and The North Country: Phase Three"



Hillarie also reported that I Love New York had provided Pod Team training at The Wild Center where people who had been selected received training on how to man these self-contained pods which contain information on New York attractions at different events around the state.

Charlie then did a recap of the Membership Program, which did roughly as predicted this year with income of \$454K, off 2% from budget or some \$10,000. Staff have plans to do better in 2017. Our overall renewal rate for the year ended up at 45%, and ranged from 30% to 94% when broken out by month.

With the help and support of this Board, the development and membership programs generated cash revenues of \$3.17 million, which is up 9% from what we anticipated in our budgeting for capital and operating combined. With new pledges and grants committed in 2016 the amount raised this year goes up an additional \$1.2 million dollars.

Charlie also reported that the Development Committee has made progress on a number of Futures Committee recommendations. Consultants Maggie Cohn and Andrea Hopkins have been selected by the committee and hired to draft the Case Statement. This Case will be the foundational document that will give us a new “donor-centric” way of describing The Wild Center. The project will begin with in-depth qualitative research which will lead to the development of messaging themes and a communications strategy. He reported that the committee met with the principals this morning and described the process. This project is scheduled to be completed by the end of March.

Charlie also reported that we have hired a consulting firm here in New York, J. C. Geever, Inc. to perform an audit of our Development Office. This company has over 30 years of experience with many different types of not-for-profit organizations and will show us the strengths and weaknesses of our team and make specific recommendations on how to improve our program. That report is expected by April.

And finally, as per another Futures Committee recommendation, Charlie reported that we hired a New York City Based Major Gifts Officer, Will Maitland Weiss, who he introduced. Charlie noted that Will worked for many years with his partner's wife who was chair of the Big Apple Circus, and Will is known to Lynn Fox, as he has been an adjunct faculty for St. Lawrence University in their New York City program. Will has an extensive background in fundraising. Will was invited to say a few words about his background and was welcomed by the group.

Charlie closed by thanking the Board for their gifts, their advice, their contacts and their hard work. He reminded everyone that they are all "on the Development Committee."

#### **VII. Upcoming 2017 Meeting Dates**

Monday, May 1, 2017 (NYC)  
Monday, July 3, 2017 (TWC)  
Friday, October 6, 2017 (TWC)  
Monday, January 22, 2018 (NYC)