

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
THE WILD CENTER
January 7, 2013 – McKinsey & Co., New York City
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Board Present:

Paul Alioto, Tom Aydelotte, Joe Beck, Michael Bettmann, Lynn Birdsong, Obie Clifford, John Colston, Nancy Howard, John Huwiler, Thomas Jorling, Peter Kindler, Betsy Lowe, Steve Potter, James Schoff, Nancy Simpkins, Charles Svenson, and Karen Thomas.

Board/Advisory Board Present via Web Ex: Tim Barnett, Jim Carr, Charlie Frenette, Rick Godin, Sally Hart, and Mike Hunsinger.

Board Absent:

Amy Elrod, Connie Ferguson, Lynn Fox, Robert Friedman, Bill Hutchens, Dave Johnson, Kevin Keane, Claire Leonardi, Paul Maroun, Chris McFadden, Sandra Strader, and Dan Sullivan.

Advisory Board Present:

Jack Ryder

Others:

David Ohana, Stacy Sadove (Wings Designee), and Noah Simon.

Staff/Consultants Present: Marci Bencze, Hillarie Logan-Dechene, Robin Ellis, Jamie Ford, Howard Fish, Bob Kronenberger, Christine Owens, and Stephanie Ratcliffe.

Welcome

Discussion: Lynn Birdsong called the meeting to order at 9:15 am. He welcomed all in attendance and thanked Board members who were in the room as well as on Web Ex for their commitment to The Wild Center. He then stated that he would give the governance report first. He said that there was one candidate being considered for election to the Board. He then gave Board members a brief biography of the candidate:

- **John Huwiler** – He stated that Mr. Huwiler is very involved in Lake Placid and that his family has been coming to the area for many, many years. His father has been a member of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta for the last 50 years. He and his wife Lila are building a home off Old Military Road in Lake Placid. John is currently the Global Head of Mergers & Acquisitions at Jefferies & Co., Inc.

Action: A motion to elect John Huwiler to the Board of Trustees was unanimously approved.

Charles Svenson motion, Michael Bettmann second.

He then stated that there were some Board members whose terms were expiring who would need to be re-elected as well as officers who would need to be re-elected.

Action: A motion to re-elect Claire Leonardi, Betsy Lowe, Paul Maroun, Nancy Simpkins, Sandie Strader, Dan Sullivan, Charles Svenson and Karen Thomas to the Board of Trustees was unanimously approved.

Nancy Howard motion, Paul Alioto second.

Action: A motion to re-elect the following officers to the Board of Trustees was unanimously approved:

- Obie Clifford, Chairman
- Lynn Birdsong, President
- Bill Hutchens, Vice President
- Nancy Howard, Secretary
- Claire Leonardi, Treasurer

Jim Schoff motion, Michael Bettmann second.

Lynn also mentioned that two members of the Board, Steve Potter and Kevin Keane, would be moving to the Advisory Board effective immediately and that Advisory Board members Debby Campbell and James Elrod would be stepping off the Advisory Board.

There was then discussion regarding the proposed meeting dates for 2013 and 2014. Lynn went over the dates and stated that the only date that needed to change would be the January meeting and that the date should be changed to January 13, 2014. He also mentioned that all of the meetings would start at 1:00 pm. He stated that there would be a smaller, more intimate reception following the April meeting and asked Board members to consider hosting it.

Lynn reported that a discussion regarding clarification of Advisory Board duties would be deferred until the April Board meeting.

I. Approval of Minutes

Discussion: Minutes of the October 4, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

Tom Aydelotte motion, James Schoff second.

Action: N/A

II. Report from the President

Discussion: Lynn Birdsong began his report by expressing his gratitude to Board and Staff members for an extraordinary year at The Wild Center. He stated that Staff workers were working on diminished salaries but that there was no lack of enthusiasm. He reported that Bob Kronenberger was close to finalizing numbers as well as finalizing the budget and that all had been doing an excellent job at

controlling costs. He took a moment to thank Board members for their incredible support of the museums efforts to acquire the Klueck property. He stated that to have a group willing to come forward to help is a wonderful statement of their commitment. He also thanked all for their commitment to the Ad Hoc committees and stated that it gave him a wonderful sense of teamwork and cooperation.

He then mentioned that there had been questions about the sustainability of The Wild Center and shared some goals to help answer those questions:

- Keep The Wild Center fresh
- Invest in Development
- Strengthen the “center for” concept
- Broadband, CFA project
- Work hard to get TWC on solid financial footing and grow endowment which is currently valued at \$4.3m

He stated that the two most important things that would be covered during the board meeting were the new Wild Walk and the 2013 budget. He then turned things over to Stephanie Ratcliffe who gave the Executive Director’s report.

III. Report from the Executive Director

Discussion: Stephanie Ratcliffe began her report by talking about the highlights of 2012:

- Maple Project – she stated that we were knee deep in maple and that TWC had received a grant that would allow for expanded programming in that area as well as the construction of a mobile sugar shack and the addition of two maple interns
- Planet Adirondack installed – the luxury of the Linda Vaughan bequest helped make it happen
- Canoe programming begins – began last year, will continue this summer
- Finnish Youth Summit
- 4th Youth Climate Summit
- Convening municipal, leaders – 30 people participated, a new way of connecting with year round residents
- Presentation to the APA – helped demonstrate our leadership
- Broadband hub installed – computers are in basement waiting for final connection
- \$1m in state funding for Wild Walk

She then mentioned that there were currently five interns at The Wild Center consisting of two maple interns, a web intern and two program interns who were all very helpful with the backfill of work.

She then went over the 2013 Program Plan with Board members:

January – March

- AYCS-ACE Blitz Week – Jen Kretser is participating, they will reach over 5,000 students in one week
- VTS Grant project begins – Nancy Simpkins asked for a presentation to the Board. Stephanie stated that she would schedule a demonstration during the July Board meeting.
- Flip the Switch Event – Broadband Celebration
- Whiteface Mountain WEBCAST
- Maple Programming and new Sugar Shack
- BAGA Lite – one day building conference

April – November

- Whiteface Opening – June
- Whiteface at The Wild Center
- Canoe Program continues and expands
- Free Flight program prototyped
- Buzzz Fest 2013 w/Monarch theme
- Flavor Fest
- Summer Maple
- Distance Learning Conference – October 25
- 5th Adirondack Youth Climate Summit

Stephanie then briefly discussed the Health, Safety and Crisis Management Plan and mentioned that one of our Advisory Board members had asked if it should be revisited and possibly updated in light of some recent national tragedies. She stated the following in regard to the plan:

- Plan developed and in place since 2006
- Currently updated and revised to include expanded workplace violence section
- January 23 all staff training scheduled with scenarios
- Many staff certified in emergency medical training (2 EMT's on staff)

Stephanie then reported on the history of the Wild Walk to date:

- Project conceived & initially designed in 2005-2006
- Project temporarily shelved
- Project revived, content advanced with support from Cullman Foundation
- Consult-Econ Report – Questions/Concerns from Board
- Ad Hoc Committee formed (Tom Aydelotte, John Colston, Claire Leonardi, Chris McFadden, Karen Thomas, Howard Fish, Rick Godin and Clifford Hart)
- July 5, 2011 received Board approval to move forward
- Project re-branded Wild Walk and new elements added, model created
- \$1m in state funding won

She then reported on the next steps for Wild Walk:

- Model displayed at State of the State
- Contract with the State, revise cost estimate
- APA Permit
- Map out building timeline – two year build out
- Continue messaging development
- Public Fundraising Launch
- Continue exhibit content development

Stephanie Ratcliffe then invited Board member, Tom Aydelotte, to deliver remarks regarding Wild Walk which he stated will ignite the passion and excitement for what will follow his comments. He stated that the funds to start, complete and sustain Wild Walk would be raised but that there was much work to be done. He stated that we must and will channel all our collective resources, financial and otherwise, to accomplish the tasks before us and will do so with great enthusiasm and success as The Wild Center is a “can do” organization. He then went on to present the following key points:

1. Critical and Exciting Juncture
 - a. \$1m grant from NY State
 - b. Stephanie and Hillarie did incredible work
 - c. The Wild Center is on a roll
 - d. The Board is enthusiastic
 - e. The Staff is enthusiastic
 - f. Will launch public phase of campaign at July Board meeting
 - g. Work underway on Web Site

2. Positioning for The Wild Center
 - a. Work to be done
 - b. Must create a Positioning statement that is compelling – “who” is The Wild Center
 - c. Positioning statement must be Mission based
 - d. The Wild Walk task force and Campaign Cabinet will meet together in two weeks to work on positioning and its integration with fund raising and all communication
 - e. Will present to Board at April Board Meeting

There was then much discussion about next steps to be taken. Lynn Birdsong stated that this was a wonderful example of the effectiveness of the Board and how everyone works together. He also stated that the Wild Walk will be an important part of who the museum is and who it will be. Hillarie Logan-Dechene and Obie Clifford gave a brief explanation of the history of the Cullman and Treisman family’s support for Wild Walk. Stephanie Ratcliffe then spoke briefly

about the status of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) Permit. She stated that the original project had been approved, then time ran out and it was not able to be extended but she said that she was confident that everything would be in order by groundbreaking. Tom Jorling asked how much work needed to be done before the project was “shovel ready”. Stephanie replied that once we have the APA permit in hand, the drawing package for construction will be ready. Someone suggested inviting Governor Cuomo to the groundbreaking. Lynn Birdsong stated that there is still work to be done in terms of fundraising and that we still needed to raise \$4m. There was then discussion regarding the possibility of displaying the model some place in New York City, Stephanie mentioned that it could strategically be on display at Board receptions. Obie Clifford said that he may meet with former Governor Pataki in late winter or early spring and asked about the possibility of having the model available for that.

IV. **Financial Report**

Discussion: Bob Kronenberger went over the highlights of the dashboard that was included in the board packet. He reported that for 2012:

- Attendance revenue was 6% below last year, although we thought the new Planet Adirondack exhibit would have given attendance a boost.
- Revenue contributions are projected to be at \$1,538,000.
- Membership revenue was up slightly (1%) from last year.
- Store revenue per visitor was at \$5.47 which is up from \$4.90 last year.
- Cafe revenue was flat for the year. He reported that some changes had been made in terms of catering and that it was currently being contracted out. He reported that would continue through 2013.
- Campaign support was below budget by \$45,000. Expenses were at \$389,000 and \$364,000 was raised to cover those expenses.
- Salary and benefits were 1% under budget at \$20,000.
- Maintenance and Supplies were \$59,000 under budget.
- Utilities were \$30,000 under budget because of a mild winter.
- Endowment was at \$4.1 million at the end of 2012.

Lynn Birdsong stated that in terms of the fundraising budget this year a much more analytical approach was used.

A brief discussion then ensued regarding current trends in attracting new/more people especially in today’s economy.

Action: N/A

V. **2013 Budget Development Process**

Discussion: Bob Kronenberger gave a brief overview of the 2013 budget development highlights:

- Overall revenue needs to increase by \$377,000

- Admissions revenues are projected to remain flat
- Annual Fund goal for 2013 will reflect an increase of – \$185,000 over 2012
- Store revenue – slight increase per visitor
- Café and event revenue – slight increase
- Campaign support - projected to go up by \$116,000
- Operating expenses - \$338,000 over last year
- Salary and benefits – select adjustments based on increased responsibilities. One consultant was converted to a staff position
- Health Insurance – 18% premium increase was offset with modified plan options. Offered buyout, one additional staff member took it
- Consulting expenses - up by \$28,000 (web development consultant)
- Maintenance & Supplies - \$97,000 increase – safety issues on Rainbow Bridge (\$41,000 repair)
- Parking lot will be sealed in the spring
- Some computer upgrades
- Projectors for two conference rooms
- Utilities – rate increase and higher usage
- Campaign expenses – development of presentation materials and cultivation events
- Overall – projecting a break even budget

Action: A motion to accept the 2013 budget was unanimously approved.
Charles Svenson motion, Peter Kindler second

There was then discussion regarding ways to attract more high level donors from other areas such as the Adirondack League Club and the Ausable Club.

VI. Development/Campaign Report

Discussion: Hillarie Logan-Dechene then gave her Development report. She began by reporting on Annual Fund objectives:

- Set an achievable goal based on analysis of our donor base
- Utilize development staff with active board involvement to personally solicit major gifts
- Actively solicit LYBUNTS and top SYBUNTS
- End the year without frantic phone calls to trustees for additional gifts

Hillarie stated that they were extremely close to meeting number to break even and that a Trustee had come in with a last minute gift which helped bring us closer. She thanked the entire board, and the development staff for their generosity and for their willingness to help raise the funds needed to allow TWC to fulfill its mission.

She also reported on 2012 Government and Foundation Grants:

- Number of grants actively pursued – 58
- Total value of proposals submitted in 2012 - \$2,320,843
- Number of awards granted – 30
- Total dollars awarded - \$1,429,367
- Pipeline - \$299,850 pending application (submitted but not yet notified)

She then shared some Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) standards regarding metrics for measuring fundraising costs and associated AFP advice. She said that TWC falls into the acceptable levels of expense for all of its development and membership operations :

- Measure fundraising expenses, number of gifts and amount of gifts by fundraising activity and calculate the return on investment for each activity each year.
- Consider increasing organizations overall investment in fundraising. If spending more for development costs allowed your organization to develop its capacity to generate more net revenue, it could be a wise decision in the long run even if the cost per dollar raised increases.

Hillarie also reported on the campaign. She showed Board members the campaign gift summary report and stated that with Lynn Birdsong and Karen Thomas' help that a successful campaign had been launched to date. She said that it had started with a working goal of \$20m but that the goal may increase to account for the campaign period being longer than first expected. She stated that the Cabinet was preparing to set a goal and launch in July.

VII. Web Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: Howard Fish gave a brief presentation on the recent findings of the Web Ad Hoc Committee:

- Much has been done since the original “book” of The Wild Center was written. The good news is that technology has never been better equipped to help us.
- We are bursting at the seams with stories to tell with more being written every day and we have lots of readers.
- We are doing extremely well in terms of Natural History websites, we rank number 4 out of 81 in terms of web visits.
- The Wild Center ranks number 15 for web traffic among global science centers.
- Web traffic has increased substantially from 2008-2012.
- We need to use the power of the internet so that more people can be more involved and our work makes a difference to more people.
- We need to inventory our assets so that we know what we already show online and a web intern has been hired to help with that work.
- We have a chance to reimagine our website using 2013 technology so that all of our stories can be accessed and shared easily.

- The website needs to be made more attractive and easy to maneuver.
- “Center for” concept comes into play here.

Rick Godin took a moment to introduce David Ohana and Noah Simon who would be working with Howard to help redesign The Wild Center’s website.

Action: N/A

VIII. Distance Learning Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: Paul Alioto gave a brief presentation on the findings of the Distance Learning Ad Hoc Committee. He stated that similar to how the web committee organized their progress to date, the DL committee has identified an overarching goal which supports the museum’s mission statement, as well as sub goals which support the overarching goal. He then said that there are two products intended by this goal: the online (asynchronous) content which is what the web committee is focusing on, and the live interactive programs (synchronous) which is what this committee is starting with. He then shared the committees “sub-goals”

- Engage site visitors in place-based science and natural history learning
- Integrate distance learning as a deliberate, proactive and essential element of our planning culture
- Position TWC as a leading center for innovative approaches to place-based science learning
- Support revenue generating and fundraising activities
- Position TWC as globally important
- Create quality, relevant programming that meets the need of target audiences while matching the high standards and interactivity of our on-site interpretive programming
- Work with web committee to align relevant online content with New York State and National Education standards

IX. Building and Grounds Ad Hoc Committee

Discussion: Mike Hunsinger spoke briefly on the recent work of the Building and Grounds Ad Hoc Committee. He stated that the purpose of the committee was to do the following:

- Assess current facility and campus and create a comprehensive 10-year plan for expected maintenance with cost estimates – these items, projects or purchases, which are not part of yearly maintenance.
- Discuss implications and impact of the planned Wild Walk and possible campus expansion on facility staff and resources – the Wild Walk grant was announced after the last meeting of the committee.
- Create recommendations and priorities for the next three years for inclusion into the Strategic Plan.

He stated that the first observation of the committee was that we are not budgeting well for capital replacement needs. There is a plan to prepare a report

that will itemize the tentative needs for the next 10 years. The last two meetings of the committee have focused on identifying what the needs are. The needs range from roof replacement to work on rainbow-bridge. It was also determined that there would be some technology needs in the near future. He stated that they had a great committee who had a great deal of experience in facilities, forestry and technology.

X. Executive Session

XI. Upcoming 2013 Meeting Dates

- Monday, April 15, 2013 (AMNH, NYC)
- Monday, July 8, 2013 (TWC)
- Friday, October 11, 2013 (TWC)