Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 18 November 2015, 10:00 am

Claiborne Robertson Room

There were present:

William A. Royall, Jr., President

Michael J. Schewel, Executive Vice President

Dr. Monroe E. Harris, Jr.. Vice President

Martin J. Barrington

Tyler W. Bishop

Ivan Jecklin

John A. Luke, Jr.

Kelly B. Armstrong, Ex-officio

By invitation:

Alex Nyerges

Stephen Bonadies

Lee Anne Chesterfield

Laura Keller

Claudia Keenan

Cameron O’Brion

Hossein Sadid

Michael Taylor

Absent:

W. Birch Douglass III

Thomas F. Farrell II

Susan S. Goode

James W. McGlothlin

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 10:06, Trustee President Bill Royall called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee.  
  
**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Jecklin and seconded by Mr. Luke that the minutes of the August 17, 2015 meeting be approved with one revision. Motion approved.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Luke and seconded by Mr. Barrington that the revised minutes of the March 2, 2015 meeting be approved as distributed. Motion approved.

1. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Royall encouraged the committee members to attend the opening events for *Rodin: Evolution of a Genius* and the McGlothlin Collection.  He described the McGlothlins as extraordinary collectors and thanked them for their generosity. Lastly, he announced that the governor appointed Dr. Betty Crutcher to the Board of Trustees.

1. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

Director Alex Nyerges updated the committee on progress made toward the 2020 Strategic Plan. He said that the division heads have been working to operationalize the plan. They are currently developing budgets for the initiatives and prioritizing projects. There will be a more formal update in February. Mr. Nyerges reported that the Employee Engagement Task Force has met with the top candidates for the Deputy Director for Human Resources position. The candidates will return to meet with the presidents of both boards. Creating this position is a key step the strategic plan and one of the recommendations made by the Employee Engagement Task Force.  
  
Next, the director announced that the museum has hired Dr. Leo Mazow as the Louise B. and J. Harwood Cochrane Curator of America Art. He said that there will be a birthday celebration for Mrs. Cochrane's 100th birthday on January 30th. The museum has also hired Paula Saylor-Robinson to fill the position of Director of Audience Development and Community Outreach and is beginning the search for the new curator of modern and contemporary art.

Then, Mr. Nyerges announced that the museum will be working with the American Association of Museum Directors and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) to place a fellow from Virginia Union University in a position at the museum. The paid fellowship is funded by UNCF, and the program's goal is to expose students at historically black colleges and universities to careers in museum. Mr. Nyerges provided a report on InLight Richmond 2016. The event, coordinated by 1708 Gallery and hosted by VMFA, attracted an estimated 21,000 visitors over two nights.

There was a brief discussion of the strategic plan as it relates to Northern Virginia.

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Royall and seconded by Mr. Luke that the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has carefully reviewed CityInterests’ recent proposal (dated September 11, 2015) for a museum space within the Alexandria Riverfront Development. While reaching the citizens of Northern Virginia continues to be an important goal, the museum, as part of its 2020 Strategic Plan, is developing alternate means of addressing this goal that do not rely upon a fixed physical presence. As a result, the Board formally resolves not to establish any satellite gallery location in the foreseeable future. Motion approved.

Lastly, the director invited the committee members to the opening events for *Fabergé* at the Palace Museum in Beijing and for *Johns | Munch* in Oslo. In October 2016, the museum will host a Fabergé and Fine Arts and Flowers gala to celebrate the reinstallation of the Fabergé collection at VMFA.

1. REPORT OF THE FOUNDATION

Foundation President Kelly Armstrong reported that the Foundation is currently managing $234 million in its endowment. The individual managers within the portfolio are performing well despite the economic environment, but the overall portfolio is down 3.8%. She announced that the Foundation is considering a line of credit for $15 million for increased flexibility with private equity investments. She said that Freddie Gray, Fred Tattersall, Mona Albertine, and Andy Lewis will rotate off of the board at the end of June, so the board is discussing potential candidates now.

1. RESOURCES & VISITOR EXPERIENCE DIVISION REPORT

Deputy Director for Resources and Visitor Experience Claudia Keenan announced that the development staff has raised $5 million against its overall fundraising goal of $6 million, and the team has already exceeded the restricted fundraising goal. Part of the success has been the change capital campaign, for which the boards have contributed $2.4 million, with another $ 700,000 pledged. She anticipates an increase in unrestricted giving at the end of the calendar year. Although there are currently 36,000 members, she expects an increase during *Rodin: Evolution of a Genius*. She described a new initiative targeting non-members for donations to the annual fund. She said that the museum has also requested additional funding from the Commonwealth for six key initiatives within the strategic plan. She encouraged the committee members to take advantage of two cultivation events in February for *Rodin: Evolution of a Genius*.

1. FINANCE REPORT

Chief Financial Officer Hossein Sadid reviewed the museum’s financial performance compared to budget through September 30, 2015. He said that the museum’s revenues are 2.6% higher than anticipated, with expenses 2.2% higher than projected. He attributed part of the increase to the installation of the McGlothlin Collection and the opening celebrations, but he is confident that the museum will end the fiscal year at budget. He reported that the 2% salary increase for museum employees will be covered by an appropriation from the state.

He provided an overview of budget commitments for the strategic plan. Change capital funds will be used for the Deputy Director for Human Resources and Director of Audience Development and Community outreach positions. While reviewing the balance sheet with the committee, Mr. Sadid explained that the assets increased from last fiscal year due to the Robinson House appropriation.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:21pm.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation