

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Transcript of the Trustees External Affairs Committee Meeting
Friday, March 26, 2021, 9:45 – 10:45am
Electronic Meeting

Meeting called to order at 9:45am.

Full attendance listed in the meeting minutes.

Kenneth Johnson: Good morning. I hope everyone is well. Let me pull up my notes, multi-tasking as always. I guess it is 7, wait 9:45. I was going to say 7:45, but 9:45 so I call the meeting to order. Everyone is ready and set? We, ah, by the Code of Virginia have to have public comments. I do not think we have any public comments. Do we, Caprice?

Caprice Bragg: No, we do not.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay. So we have also changed a few things as to how we do business. I am going to request a motion for approval of the minutes. After I request that motion, you all say, "Aye." Fortunately, you have to say your name. Correct, Caprice?

Caprice Bragg: It would be nice for the record. Well, actually we are recording so if they just all say, "Aye," that would be great. Any nays.

Kenneth Johnson: That will be fine and then you all will have it from there?

Caprice Bragg: Yes, thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay, I am going to ask you all to indulge me for one moment because I am looking for, here we go. Alright. Caprice, I was looking for your note you just sent me to come up on here. Okay. Is there motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting?

Charlie Whitaker: So moved. This is Charlie.

Pam Reynolds: Second.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay, it has been moved and properly seconded. All in favor?

Committee members: Aye.

Kenneth Johnson: All opposed? No opposed. Minutes have been approved. Let's see here. This is really small, I can't read this. It's [indecipherable] today. Alright, Government Relations update.

Katie Payne: Yes, hi. Can you hear me?

Kenneth Johnson: Hi, Katie.

Katie Payne: I apologize, I was having some computer issues.

Kenneth Johnson: Yes, same here.

Katie Payne: Hi everybody. I have a few updates for you today. First, I just wanted to let you know, in case you had not seen on social media, that when the Governor and the First Lady were vaccinated last week with for COVID, the First Lady was very intentional about wearing her VVMFA mask, which we were thrilled to see. She reached out to us right after the vaccination to make sure that we had gotten some good photos of it, so that was very nice of her. She is always such a good supporter of the museum. The second thing I wanted to brief everyone on is we, primarily Michael Taylor and his team, have been working on a land acknowledgement for the museum, on a draft that is attached to the minutes today. Probably most of you know, but a land acknowledgement is a formal statement recognizing the indigenous people who preceded, in this case the museum, on the land on which we now sit. So our land acknowledgement draft, which you have in your packet, recognizes the presence of the Powhatan Confederacy and the Monacan Nation on the museum's campus today. Michael Taylor's team, including a whole host of people from his office, in conjunction with Lynette Allston, the Division Heads, Cindy Norwood, and of course Alex, worked up a draft that we ran by our various government partners. We worked primarily with Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Thomasson, because the Native American tribes fall within her purview in the Governor's office, and Courtney Wynn, who is the Director of Indigenous and Native American Outreach for the Governor. They helped us make some improvements to the draft and they approved it. Secretary Qarni approved it last week. So the draft again is in your packet. I think the intention is that if the Board approves it, we would like Secretary Thomasson to help us distribute it to all 11 of the tribes that are in Virginia to solicit their input with the hopes that in the near future, we could dedicate a plaque at the entrance of the museum to that effect. I am happy to answer any questions. I can pause there, if you have any questions on that part.

Kenneth Johnson: Katie, I think the question I have is that, you know, we talked about this earlier during the week, is this does this letter need to be approved or presented from this Committee? Or is it coming from the President, the Executive Director, Alex, to the Board?

Alex Nyerges: Our recommendation, Ken, is that we review it here. We bring it up at the next meeting with a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees at the June Board of Trustees meeting for official adoption. We can, I can do it as an agency head, but we, the Senior Management Team, we decided that it would be better for this to be a statement of the whole institution and the weight and power of the Trustees is the strongest of all, so that is why we are presenting here today. Just for informational purposes. We do not obviously need to wordsmith it today. We ask people to provide their input and suggestions. We have, though, you know, run it all the way up the chain. The Secretary of Education, Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Office, everybody is on board. We have also then, you know, shared it with our friends in the Native American community so that we can make sure it is reflective of their needs and thoughts, as opposed to just ours. I think that the weight of the Trustee Board making the statement when we come to the June Board meeting would be the strongest.

Kenneth Johnson: So, just so that I am clear, Alex, the acknowledgement has already been written and approved by the Secretary, the Governor and others. Correct?

Alex Nyerges: To-date it, everybody acknowledges it is a draft form. What we will do with whatever changes that come from any member of the Board of Trustees over the next couple of months, we

will send a final, final draft to all of the various parties down at Capitol Square to make sure everybody is on board. I do not, they are, they are wildly enthusiastic. I would say that we are doing this. Everybody has agreed to both form and content. I do not see it as a challenge if we are making changes.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay. So, you all would like for us to take a look at it and then any thoughts that we may have about, okay, editing?

Alex Nyerges: Well let me see if Michael may want to weigh in on this because Michael has been leading the charge to create this.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay.

Michael Taylor: Yes, absolutely, Ken. I mean, it has been [indecipherable]. Everyone who has looked at it has shaped this language. I would say the crucial thing is also Cindy, you know, because you, we had her sign off. You know, words are powerful and I think this statement as it is really reflects a forward thinking museum, a museum that recognizes the past and navigates the future clearly because of that. But yes, I think we are right to slow down here. We did not want to bring it to a vote today because you are just seeing this. We are happy with the language, but it can always get better so we welcome your feedback.

Kenneth Johnson: We are, I am very much a process person. So, and I know for you all, process can be kind of complicated, you know, having your relationship with the Governor's Office and everyone else. So deciding who is first, second and third in something like this can be complicated. So I get that and by the time it gets to us it is a matter of us just saying this is very nice and keep it moving, right? Or offer some real commentary to it. Caroline, do you have thoughts?

Carol Ann Bischoff: Yes. I think I hear you saying this, Ken – that this Committee should also vote on this. So I was going to suggest that at the June meeting this Committee vote on it first before it goes to the Full Board, assuming everyone has had adequate input.

Kenneth Johnson: Exactly. I was, I was almost there, Carol Ann, but had one thought about it. Though I wanted to get additional comments from you all before I offer my last thoughts around it. Anyone else have any thoughts? Jim?

Janet Geldzahler: Hi. I am sorry, I have. Can you hear me?

Kenneth Johnson: I can. Thanks, Janet.

Janet Geldzahler: I understand how sensitive the issue of recognition is. Are there any tribes that are neither recognized federally or by Virginia who would be offended by their omission here?

Michael Taylor: I do not believe so because I think we are being inclusive and not just including the federally recognized tribes but also the ones who are not. That is where we really rely on everyone who has been identified by Katie and also Johanna Minich, our Curator of Native American Art, who is a big part of this. As I said, we do want it to be inclusive. I think the feedback that we have received has been extremely good because what tends to happen, I think, is that these statements are released in a vacuum. You know, the museum just says, "Yes, we are going to do this." Remember

many, many, many museums have made these statements, as well as colleges and universities, but we have deliberately made this an inclusive moment. I think that has really put us in good stead.

Janet Geldzahler: And this is a minor point, but if this is intended to be alphabetical Nansmond and Monacan are out of order. I did not know how we chose the ordering.

Michael Taylor: I think that is a good point and you have already made the first edit. This is why we wanted you to see it.

Pam Royal: I agree. The intent is right. We can spend a couple months and pick up any details, make sure it does not omit anyone. We think like this when we start to list and always there is always a hazard that it blows up in your face. So give us some time. I think it should be endorsed by this Committee, go the Full Board and we can do that in June.

Michael Taylor: Thank you, Pam.

Kenneth Johnson: Great, good idea, Pam. I totally agree with you. I just had one slight tweak if you all would like the whole Committee to review and bless it. That is one approach. The other would be to task maybe three or four people do a Sub-Committee and review the matter in detail and just present it back to the whole group. We can all bless it and move forward so that is done in some genuine fashion. But if you just want comments from the peanut gallery, from the rest of us, that is fine too. I'm sorry. Charlie, caught what else I said, right?

Charlie Whitaker: Yeah, I've got a funny bone. Good. Yes, I agree with that. It is good idea.

Kenneth Johnson: Yes, so Janet would you care to work with Pam and Charlie on something like this?

Kenneth Johnson: Thanks, Janet.

Charlie Whitaker: Wait a minute.

Janet Geldzahler: Just to speak up.

Kenneth Johnson: You seem excited about it.

Charlie Whitaker: Oh happily do it.

Kenneth Johnson: Right. Thank you all and then come back, share with us. I think we can, yes we could be...

Pamela Reynolds: No, sorry that is my mic. My mic is so, I did not, I was not sure what you said. I apologize. I got, I do not, my mic. I just came on and it is just like this when you live in the country. So sorry.

Kenneth Johnson: Or a big house, but I understand. So Pam what I was saying is that we are going to give this to a small Sub-Committee to review the language and bring it back to the Committee which will bless it and push it to the Board and the journey for the June meeting.

Pamela Reynolds: I will catch up later. I do not know what can letter you are talking about so I apologize. I will reach out to Kay will send it to me, or Caprice.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay. You all need.

Carol Ann Bischoff: I am happy to join the Sub-Committee and add an extra two eyes.

Kenneth Johnson: Excellent, that is beautiful. Okay, thank you all for that and thanks for sharing. Alex, does that work for you?

Alex Nyerges: That is great. Good idea.

Kenneth Johnson: Okay. Thanks. Michael, appreciate this.

Katie Payne: Should I, would you like the actual Government Relations part of this update now?

Kenneth Johnson: I would. Thank you, Katie.

Katie Payne: Some of you have heard this update already so I will do it more quickly. We came out of our regular session at the end of February. On February 27 the Legislature passed the conference report to the budget which left us in very good shape. That report is sitting on the Governor's desk. He will bring them back for a one day special reconvene session on April 7 to discuss a few changes to bills that he has made but primarily this budget. So very quickly, the changes in the conference report on the operating side. We did get restored \$400,000 a year for IT upgrades and art storage, which was a big push. We are very excited funding would begin. Fiscal, we did get additional operating support for temporary wage positions which we can use to either hire some additional staff or to convert part-time folks to full-time positions. We got about \$10,000 for the last few months of this year and then \$115,000 for the year going forward. We had indicated to the Legislature that we would like to have more help in on the housekeeping side and on security, to help us continue to deal with the Pandemic. On Monument Avenue, which is the one that has received the most attention. You will recall that the Governor initially put in about \$11 million for forming a group doing the administrative work, hiring two positions. Then that would have been about \$970,500 for that work. The remainder would have been saved in our operating budget to do the actual brick and mortar work down the road that we agreed to do. When we got into session, it was clear that most legislators on both sides of the aisle prefer a slightly different approach, which we actually think is better in many ways. What it does is gives us \$250,000 now and then \$750,000 at July 1 to go ahead and make those new hires for this group and to go ahead and start the administrative structure for considering how Monument Avenue could be transformed. Then we would come back to the legislature and the Governor with a very draft work plan of our timeline and our goals on September 1, at which point they would appropriate through our capital budget money to do the actual work. The assumption, frankly, is that it might cost more than what the Governor had originally put in and that it was a little awkward to put that money in the operating side, where it would just sit in a bank account for years and years until we were prepared to use it. There is just so many needs right now at the Pandemic that that felt like a difficult push for several of the legislators. So the approach they landed on was postponing that capital part until we come forward with the plan, but giving us more money actually at the outset to do the planning work. So we were pleased with that. What we are hearing from the Governor's Office is that that will

probably stay as it is when he signs the budget. But of course he could revert back to his original proposal and see if he can get it passed. I think it is more likely that this will get signed as it is and the Governor might put in more capital money in the budget that comes up in December as he is going out of office. So that is Monument Avenue. On the capital side, we retained the \$112 million for the expansion renovation project. Nothing changed there. We got a new capital project for life safety, replacing some HVAC units and the roofing above them in the main museum building. That was about \$5.8 million and that will make it so that every HVAC system in the main museum building has now been replaced and has up to the highest standards, which of course makes our visitors feel more comfortable, especially right now. The only other change in the conference report is the legislature recommended converting what they had proposed to be a one-time \$1,500 bonus for full-time state employees to a 5% raise. We discussed this at length at the Executive Committee meeting but from the state's perspective that raise is only for general funded, full-time employees. Of course, the museum in the past has extended a similar or the same raise or bonus to all of its employees, even though most do not fall into that very slim category by the state. So reconvene session April 7, we will have some decisions on the budget. I will keep you all posted. The only other thing I wanted to quickly mention is you know the Federal Government has passed the new stimulus bill that has a lot of money earmarked for Virginia. The difference between this version and the last is that this has a much longer spending horizon. The other one had to be spent very quickly, within like six months, or you lost the money that you had been appropriated. Because this newer bill extends the horizon to about 2024, it is likely that most of the money will be held until we go to the next biennial budget which will be introduced in December and then appropriated over those next two years. There is a chance that the legislature will come back into a very short special session this summer to spend a portion, probably a very small portion, of the money more quickly for places that really need it. Probably will mostly go to healthcare and broadband and those sorts of things but as of right now there has been no date announced for that special session report. I am happy to answer any questions.

Kenneth Johnson: Thank you, Katie. Charlie?

Charlie Whitaker: Yes, a question that the Monument Avenue decision sounds fiscally prudent. I am just wondering if there was any, anything behind that that they wanted to wait and see how they liked the design before they commit the money and is there a risk that this could turn into a political issue on what the design looks like, right?

Katie Payne: Great question. We heard nothing but positive feedback on the museum handling and having control over the process. I think everyone trusts us to do it correctly. I do think the main driver behind changing the way it was funded was just freeing up money right now. But there was a secondary current of waiting to see what happens with the lead monument because it is difficult to appropriate \$11 million before we even have that court case finalized. I think there is you know, we obviously are going to have to work very closely with the city going forward on this project. Until that decision is made it is very hard to judge how the city can work with us on planning what should come next, if that makes sense.

Alex Nyerges: It is a good question Charlie. We are talking to a lot of people, are keeping our ear to the ground and sensitive to the political nature because the vast majority of people want to see a positive change, which is what we have been asked to do. There are some people who do not want to see any change. In fact, one of the other monuments to go back up where they were. That will not be happening. We have every confidence that the Governor and the state will prevail with the

lawsuit as it pertains to the Lee sculpture. Then that will proceed along our planning horizon though is much improved by doing this. We can start hiring staff. Michael and I and a couple of others, Caprice and Stephanie and folks have been fielding the deluge of calls, emails and the likes from people with ideas of what should happen to Monument Avenue, what should not happen to Monument Avenue. So this is going to help us enormously internally because we obviously do not have staff to devote to this. This is going to be very important over the long-term, but the planning horizon is really what we are focused on for the next 15-18 months to do planning because we have to do a lot of listening before we can commit to a beginning, what might even begin to resemble a plan, of how Monument is going to be transformed. Our goal is to make it a transformation that is all inclusive so not just the pedestals for the monuments that were there but the circles, the Boulevard itself, which you know because you have got that grass and tree area in between as a true Boulevard and stretching all the way from what was the circle where the Jeb Stuart sculpture stood, all the way down to Arthur Ashe. We are going to bring in every possible kind of expert, which is what the money being appropriated is for, the hiring new staff is a relatively small cost. We are talking a couple of, two or three people. The majority will be green the plan together and that is going to be archetypes, architectural storylines, historians, landscapers, architects, urban planners, and the like. It is going to be very rewarding process, but the one thing we remind everybody is, it will be inclusive. For the folks that get mad at us when we, hear me say that, I am sorry because it has to be inclusive. We will listen to all voices. Obviously we are going to be listening much more to the voices of protest and looking forward to create a Monument Avenue that is forward-looking, not backward looking. Because we are an art museum, the artistic element is going to rule the day.

Kenneth Johnson: Did anyone else have other questions? Thank you Alex. Other questions for Katie?

So Katie, I have a question or two for you if you got a stimulus for a year, or Hossein. When you talk about the stimulus package, will they be available or could they be available for the museum? I know a lot of money is going towards early childhood we have missed out on in terms of this year. You know, arts and education and kids been an example of the last year or so. I do not know if there is an opportunity for us in that space, the second part of that. This has not been ratified yet, but I know that Congress is still working to save I have been used for the performing arts and others. Will they be an opportunity for us to seek support next as well? Do you know?

Katie Payne: I think on the first yes. That has obviously been a priority of the Governor and First Lady on early childhood education. So we will definitely pursue that when we put in, if we are given an opportunity to put in a list of new requests. From what I have read on the Federal level about the save our venues, I think you have to have, the venue has to have been closed for longer than we were closed to apply. Is that right, Alex?

Alex Nyerges: That is correct. Hossein has been on top of all of the Federal stimulus money. Hossein?

Hossein Sadid: Yes, you are absolutely right that that window is closed for the museum given the duration of our closure. The other challenge we are facing at the museum has to do with the nature of the business we are in. Most of these programs, really as they relate to the agency of the Commonwealth, sort of a government agency. They flow through the Commonwealth, as opposed to directly extended to the agency per se, so we have that challenge. We faced that challenge when

we applied for the PPP program and was disqualified as the museum obviously on the Foundation side, we have had some opportunities to take advantage of, and we have done so.

Kenneth Johnson: Well, thank you, Hossein and Katie Thank you so much for that.

Hossein Sadid: Wonderful report.

Kenneth Johnson: Jan?

Jan Hatchette: Hi.

Kenneth Johnson: Your communication highlights.

Jan Hatchette: Yes. Stephanie, if you will share.

Stephanie Cooperstein: Give me just a moment and I will pull it right up.

Jan Hatchette: Great. Thank you. Okay, so if you guys remember last year, around this time last year, there was, the Pandemic started and then after that social unrest. There was quite a bit of commotion going around on social media, not just at our museum, but at museums across the country. At that point, we decided that we needed to develop a communications plan that would help us highlight our efforts around diversity. Next slide please. So we decided to work with an agency, West Cary Group, on developing a strategy and helping us get this message out. So the whole theme and strategy around what we are trying to accomplish will be to have the community view the VMFA as an all-inclusive space that reflects who they are, regardless of their race or background, be a preeminent source of engagement and inspiration, and increase the number of diversity of our future of visitors and members, and also humanize the VMFA. Next slide please. So, after some careful thought and sort of going back and forth, we came up with this idea of “See yourself here.” Those words are inclusive. They are very directive and reflective. Next slide please. So if you take the word see yourself, our hope is that people will be able to relate through dynamic snapshots of our exhibitions, of our different programs, showing different people within our space and the word “here” that is basically open for interpretation. So you can visualize yourself actually in the museum, looking at the art or a staff member through a staff member’s perspective. And the phrase, it is a wordplay, are going to be open for creative interpretation. We will use the words and the messaging of “See yourself here” throughout the campaign. The next slide. I am going to show you a video, one of the ways of course, we all know, video is a compelling way to get a message across. So our hope is to develop a video that will include all the great things about the VMFA, Here is just an example of what we will do. Of course we will create this video from scratch. This is sort of just the concept. Next slide. So how will we communicate this messaging out? We will demonstrate that VMFA is addressing the needs of a diverse population. Our hope is that we can use a grassroots approach so that we are very authentic. Our messaging will use webinars to showcase the VMFA as approachable and inclusive. We will encourage dialogue through public engagement and we will integrate the promotion of diversity VMFA experiences. Next slide. To do this, we know that will have to serve things up in different phases. We cannot come out with everything all at once, so we will use a phased- out approach. I will about sort of the phases within this campaign. Some of these things we are already doing. We already have on our sort of agenda to put out in messaging. So an example of one of the things that we are currently doing is *Cocktails with a Curator*. That is a perfect example of something that we are already doing. Our goal is to put all of

this in a cohesive package and serve it up. So if you go to the next slide, Stephanie, for me. So, for example, phase one could include on display discussions. The whole hope and goal of this will be to create these series of webinars where there is dialogue between the audience and the actual museum so it is not just the talking head, but an active discussion and a guided discussion where people will be able to bring information and questions to us and we will be able to share content based on that. Next slide please. Another example is to share perspectives. Imagine if we had the Mayor come and share his perspective on a piece of art that he particularly enjoys in the museum. Or if you have artists, and like I said, some of this content is content we are already doing so there are plenty of artists talks that we have going on now. Our goal will be to serve all of this up in a very cohesive way. Next slide. So you all know we have got plenty of events and upcoming exhibitions that we have going on so our goal will be to message these things out using our press releases using our regular emails that we send out on a weekly basis. Topics will include new exhibitions, new hires, publications that we are working on so we, just a matter of taking all of this and packaging it up. Next slide, please. Conversation starters. We know that we have to engage the community and a great way to do that is through polls. So our thought is that we can push out some thought-provoking questions to get the community engaged and elicit their responses. So an example could be, "What kind of programs are you interested in seeing in the future at the VMFA?" Next slide. Our curated VMFA experiences. This is something currently that we are doing now so through our virtual tours. We will not stop these. The development of these virtual tours will continue to do that and push that information out. Based on interest, audience interest will be able to serve that content up to people that have expressed interest in these kinds of things before. Next slide. The virtual visitor communication will promote the ways in which the VMFA can be enjoyed from afar. So practicing social distancing and being able to highlight the virtual experience. So how can we do that? Well, through unscripted conversations Members can reveal their favorite moments in the museum, their favorite spaces. So this will be an opportunity for us to really engage the community by their, through their interest. Next slide please. How can we execute this? What will reach our audiences where they live and where they work? Our goal is to reorganize existing assets into our user-friendly format and maximize our audience reach by rethinking how we are pushing this information out in our digital channels. Next slide. So what you will see from this is will design a unique landing page. So what that landing page will help us do is to curate all of the information in a space and be able to track metrics based on the users' experience and then also look at our website and make some changes to existing content and repurpose them for this campaign. Next slide. With this approach, it will have to be an always on, what we call an always on awareness campaign. It is not something that we can start and stop. It is something that we will have to continue to do. So through our social channels, through our advertising, whether it is on television or out of home, or digital through our email channels, through our website, we will constantly have to be pushing out this information. Next slide. Then we will be able to track it so that is why I was talking a little bit, few seconds ago about the ability to really measure the campaign's success. So our goal will be to be able to look back at page views, how much time folks spend on a page, how many visits to the landing page, really look at our social content and see how much engagement is there. Will really be able to track through our measurement processes. Next slide. So the one thing that I just always want folks to remember is that diversity has not been something that we just started talking about as a result of, you know, what took place last year. We have been doing this, started back in our strategic plan and is a very concerted effort. But this will allow us to be able to package it up in a way that people can actually see themselves at the VMFA. We are able to actually track what it is that we are doing . So our goal will be just to serve this information up so that people are more aware of what we as a museum are doing. Next slide. So my question for you all today and I do not think we will have a lot of time to go through this, but what I would like for you guys to do is to help me

think through this and offer any sort of suggestions that you might have. If you think of a staff member or community leader that we should highlight, if there are some interesting stories that you think we need to be sharing, some interesting conversation starters that you think will engage the community, I encourage you to send that to me. I am so interested in hearing from you guys. What it is that you think will help make this a successful campaign. I believe that is the last slide. I will take any questions that you all have.

Kenneth Johnson: Wonderful.

Jan Hatchette: Let us do that. Sorry. It is okay.

Kenneth Johnson: That that was fantastic. Thank you for sharing it with us. Who has questions for Jan? Ukay?

Eucharia Jackson: I really do not have a question. Maybe a comment just in terms of staying somewhat non-political as you market because we obviously have two parties and the idea of the Mayor was a bit unsettling to me, all due respect.

Jan Hatchette: That comment. Thank you, Ukay.

Kenneth Johnson: Office. Hi.

Monroe Harris: Can I borrow? When we look at people that we could highlight in a community, I think that the one person that came to mind will be Hamilton Glass. I think he would be, we should put on.

Jan Hatchette: Absolutely. Thank you, Monroe.

Eucharia Jackson: I was actually leaning towards just very non- very, very much. Thank you, Monroe, you really got what I was trying to say.

Kenneth Johnson: Charlie?

Charlie Whitaker: Just a comment. I think that campaign's tagline is fabulous. That was exciting to see that video. The way you have done it really, really hits the nail on the head, in my view.

Jan Hatchette: Thank you, Charlie.

Pam Royal: Great work. I would say show more of us. We lead by example and examples imagery look at. I often say the organizations that I am involved with, we start out looking at leadership, take a snapshot. You know, look at the machine, look at leadership of the Board. Looking and we have to call names. We do not have that self-promoting but it is hey we are leading by example. We are already doing that and then everything else just brings excitement and brings the community in. But do not forget about the imagery of just us and showing people what we look like. People that are leading the team, they are and that speaks volumes over really giving, being a credible source about inclusivity and diversity. So kudos.

Eucharria Jackson: And, if I may add real quick, just the diversity of the two boards is worth highlighting. Take Monroe, for instance.

Monroe Harris: Yes, that is something that we kind of take for granted but you are absolutely right, we could just show a picture of the two Boards and that speaks for itself.

Kenneth Johnson: Others?

Pamela Reynolds: I was just going to say that I just think it is just an amazing, it was just a really thought provoking presentation. It is something that it is not, it is very easily to catch on and feel a part of it. I also want to say Jan, you have done an amazing job, you and Alex and the team, for the last year and I just want to say thank you for leading that effort in and taking the museum through the past year

Jan Hatchette: Thank you, Pam.

Martha Glasser: I had one question. One to thank you for all the work you have done in such an uncertain year that we have all had to navigate through. You all did not stop a minute behind the scene. I thought the video, like Charlie said, was so exciting. The tagline, did you do that in-house?

Jan Hatchette: So, we actually worked with West Cary Group so no, we did not do it in house. They did all of the creative for us. We wanted to try to reach out to an outside agency that had experience in sort of dealing with sort of diversity campaigns. We came across West Cary Group, they were recommended by several folks. They really spent a lot of time getting to know us, going through our research, going through our website, reading every single publication, going through our strategic plan. So they spent a lot of time. It was almost like they were a part of a team because they were so dedicated and passionate about really understanding who we are as a museum. So it was not our efforts in-house. It was done externally.

Martha Glasser: Well, it was very well done and very polished.

Jan Hatchette: Thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: Any other comments for Jan? Jan, I have a couple. You know I am one of your biggest fans. I know I challenge you all the time.

Jan Hatchette: In a good way, though.

Kenneth Johnson: In a way, I am a big fan and so this will be a little bit of that but I will not be as bad, Jan, with you. When I look at this, you know I, we work with West Cary Group all the time and they are phenomenal. I know the great work that your team does. But the question I have is, looking at insights, what informed the campaign? The reason why is because I want you to be able to benchmark and when you talked about measuring I did not hear the word sentiment. And that is why I was somewhat, I want to say hesitant, to give it a glowing yes, yes, yes. I mean, I like the music, the video, all that stuff was fine but when you talk about measuring the success of the campaign, how do we see, how do we know that people will see us in a different light after this campaign or as we continue to move the needle for years to come? Because like you said, this is a continuum. And you and I have talked about this, but I want to make sure that folks understand that

the different things you can measure here. One is just sentiment towards the museum from diverse communities.

Jan Hatchette: Right, that is a great point. Yes, so one of those things I think can is you know we did several surveys in the past to sort of, kind of measure what kind of what thoughts were, how people felt about the museum. Our goal will be to do some of that surveying again to sort of see what has changed, what has evolved. I think sentiment is something that we can definitely ask the question and sort of see how people are feeling about the VMFA. I think we will also see it in our responses on an engagement on social media. People are not afraid to give feedback and comment on social media so I think we will be able to measure sentiment there as well. But it is a great point, thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: Good. Okay. I have some thoughts for you too. We can talk about offline if you want in ways in which you can approach.

Jan Hatchette: Absolutely, thank you.

Kenneth Johnson: Any other questions

Pamela Reynolds: Can I, just would say, just because when I have been at Amuse, it is amazing to look out into the sculpture garden and see everyone picnicing and having their children and do so maybe it is just you know, if you did another picture to have to show everyone after eating in their dogs and it is just a real, it is just a real mix of wonderful people just having a good time, just something like that, with the summer coming.

Jan Hatchette: Great point. Absolutely, yes.

Kenneth Johnson: And Jan, to that point, the reason why I asked about the service is because I think that museum has done a great job, as you pointed out, especially in the past five years, and engage in all communities. As I look back almost 20-25 years ago when Linda Smith and Colin items and all those people created the Friends of African American and American Art. We had the Friends of Chinese Art. You know we have been really working hard as a museum for years in various communities and cultures. So we have a lot of work to do. So I really appreciate the campaign but also feel as though we have done a lot of good work in this space, too, and I want to lead from a positive perspective and not necessarily from a negative perspective. So I just want to talk to you about tweaking a few words in there because we have leaders in the space absolutely and I know we have work to do but I am just saying I do not want to pretend like we have not done anything right.

Jan Hatchette: Yes.

Kenneth Johnson: Tom? Thank you again, Jan.

Tom Gutenberger: Thanks guys, appreciate it. I know we do not have very much time so I will be pretty quick. What I wanted to do is give you an update where we are in the campaign, overall fundraising, and then talk quickly about how we had to pivot during COVID. At the end, I really actually wanted, I am going to go through this probably in less than five minutes because I want to take about five minutes at the end to get your advice as far as what has worked that you have seen, how other organizations have handled the last year, and get your input on what we have done well and what we should do differently because I think we are going to be under these times for a while.

So, just leave it on this page. Right now the campaign, a year and a half into the seven year campaign, it is a \$365 million goal. Today we have raised \$183 million. Of that, the big boost was \$125 million from the state but we raised \$58 million in private support. That is actually up 38% just in this fiscal year. So even given the challenging times, our donors have stuck with us. Many of you who are on this call today are on the Campaign Committee and have made significant gifts also to the campaign. So thank you. Overall fundraising as you know, we have got the challenge of continuing to be the budget and make up for some of the shortfalls for us being closed and having limited capacity of people coming in. So overall cash and pledges for the year, where it is \$7.8 million. That is actually 106% of goal for the year so we have already achieved our goal but do not worry, we are not going to stop. The challenge, it really for us, is Kristine on this call now?, is really in terms of the general membership. For in terms of general and circle memberships, we are down \$570,000. So that has been a real challenge for us. We are actually up in leadership memberships which is, we consider that to be \$1,000 and up. We are actually up \$200,000 in the annual fund and corporate matching gifts. That is 157% of our fiscal year goal. We actually, the COVID Relief Fund has been incredibly successful for us. Thanks to Carolyn and Tom Gardner for creating that challenge last year. We carried the COVID Relief Fund into this summer and the fall. In terms of our annual fund campaign, the unrestricted giving though, which really does feed the budget, is down \$300-\$400,000. We did know that was going to happen because of the limited ability for folks coming into museum. Particularly what the challenge we are going to have, in general memberships and so, although we are down, we have hit our goal for year-to-date for unrestricted giving but that is something we are really going to focus on for the rest of year. Membership is, as I mentioned, is where we are challenged. Leadership membership, we are fine but really at the generals, we are taking a hit. Memberships at 33,000, which is down about 2,800 from your day, from the previous year. Exhibition fundraising, and I am going to talk about it in a second, has been successful for us. We are actually at 101% of goal for the year for exhibition fundraising, I am going to talk in a second about *The Dirty South*. But that most of that fundraising came during COVID and our goal was \$900,000 for *The Dirty South*. We are now almost at \$1.1 million. So we learned some lessons and implemented some new things. *The Dirty South*, which I will talk about in a second, so if you want to go to the next slide, I can talk about some of the things. So as we mentioned, we know we are closed for about four months and Jan mentioned that some of the virtual programming, you know *Cocktails with Curators*, so on May 4 we launched *Cocktails with Curators* and it was our first virtual programming for actually Advancement, but also for the museum. This gave us a really good opportunity for our Gift Officers to reach out to folks and their donors to say, "Hey, here is a program coming up. Please tune into it." We are doing them weekly through July. Then we moved to monthly with the programs, but this allowed us like I said, to stay in touch with our donors and because we had actually suspended our solicitations for six weeks and so we started back up and what we started to do was get in touch with our \$1,000 members and say that we were going to, they were going to receive their renewal letter in the next couple of weeks and that we understood those challenging times and we did not want to be insensitive to everything but we wanted them to know that they were going to get that and we hope that they would continue to support us. It actually worked out really well. So the personalization really helped us, but so being able to do the virtual programming helped a great deal and also the fact that we typically have rely on people coming into the museum and are in a lot of our events. So this was a good way for us to continue to connect with our donors. To go to the next slide. We were able to move in the fall to some hybrid programming. We actually can put up a tent in the Pauley patio. So we were able to have a limited number of people come into the tent. So we did *Cocktails with Curators*. People came in and actually some people came and joined us to watch it We actually had our Campaign Committee meeting there. Some people joined virtually, some people were there. So the hybrid programming actually has worked really well for us

in terms of doing some people on-site and then live streaming for other folks. You want to go to the next slide. What created a really big challenge for us was that we have to provide benefits to our members and our sponsors. So, as you know, *Sunken Cities* was our exhibition that was when we were closed and then, fortunately, we were able to have it during summer. But we had to really pivot in terms of how we deliver our benefits. So we have delivered a lot of benefits virtually and we also had our we created Wednesday evenings members only. We also created a handful of ones Monday mornings where members only could come in. Then we also, for our sponsors, reserved sometimes where only sponsors could come through the exhibition. We really had to look at providing some of the lectures and other things virtually. If you want to go to the next slide. So all the fundraising for *Sunken Cities* had been completed by the time we had closed. We really had a lot of work to do in the next major exhibition, which is *The Dirty South*. We had to really think about how are we going to raise money for this exhibition because typically we would have prospects come into the museum. Valerie, who is the Curator, would, we talk about the show and then we would give our pitch. Obviously we cannot do that. So what we did is decided to put a whole campaign around *The Dirty South* and have to use virtual technology. So we hired the West Cary Group to work with us on a short video, which I know we have shown during one of our previous Trustee meetings. So we had to really go about it differently. We created the video and then campaign around *The Dirty South*. If you want to go to the next slide. What our campaign was is we had volunteer hosts who recruited their friends to for a series of ten different Zoom sessions where Alex joined us. Valerie, we showed the video, presented the exhibition. We showed the video and the host gave a testimonial and then what we did also had our, Charlotte, who is our Gift Officer that created the campaign and manage it for us, made the pitch at the end. Then we followed up with each of the people who were on the Zoom calls. So we really learned some good lessons from this and how to start to engage with our prospects if we cannot do it in person. I mentioned were almost \$1.1 million towards *The Dirty South* so it was effective and it engaged a lot of people in the process. You want to go to the next slide. What we have learned through this process, in terms of pivoting to some virtual programming and trying to stay in touch with our donors in different ways, is it has actually worked for us. So what you can see is the personal contact from our Gift Officers really has worked in terms of upgrades and having people continue to support the museum and also the people, continuing to be involved with this, with over 1,500 people or households having participated in the virtual event. If you want to go to the next slide. So some of the things that we learned that we are going to keep doing is that you know more personalization outreach from our Gift Officers. As I mentioned, *The Dirty South*. We learned a lot from that campaign that was successful and so we are going to use a lot of those lessons learned to raise money for the next major exhibition after *The Dirty South*, which is Man Ray. I think that will hopefully things will open up and be able to do more things in the museum but we are still going to use some of the lessons learned from the virtual programming and the campaign to help raise money for Man Ray. Then we are going to have to really focus on our lapsed donors, particularly at the general membership level. One of the things that we pivoted towards after we closed, is that instead of to make our solicitations really benefit driven, which they still are, but we really started to talk a lot more about philanthropy. So we are going to continue with that messaging and we will continue with virtual programming because it did allow folks in Florida or other places, who have not been in the museum, and years to actually engage with us. So we will continue the virtual programming and we will probably end up doing a lot more of a hybrid things as well. If you want to go to the next slide. So really what I want to do and we only have about two minutes, I think, but was to see, get any of your advice or opinion on what we think worked well for us, continue to do and but what we have seen really at other organizations that they have done during these times that you think has been effective, that we might be able to utilize. So really, just any questions, but also some feedback will be great.

Kenneth Johnson: Questions for Tom Gutenberger?

Tom Gutenberger: What is that? Thanks again. Thanks guys.

Kenneth Johnson: None. Well, Tom, thank you again for that great report. We greatly appreciate that. Tom, may I add just one other item?

Tom Gutenberger: Okay.

Kenneth Johnson: Alex and Hossein and Caprice been talking about the opportunity to do a good strong. We do have I given office and all so I am glad to hear that, Alex shared with me, that you guys are going to do that and just look at the processes that we have in place there.

Tom Gutenberger: I appreciate that.

Kenneth Johnson: Any other new business? Any business? Well, I want to officially just say to you all enjoy this great weather today if you're allowed to get out. Unfortunately I am double and triple booked today so I will not see you at the noon meeting but I know it will be a great one lead by Monroe of course. I wish you all a fantastic weekend and stay safe. Will not be long hopefully that maybe the next nine months or so, we will be out of this craziness. So you all take care and have a beautiful day.

Meeting adjourned at am.

Transcribed by: Kay Baker
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