Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the of the Campaign Planning Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, 12 June 2019, 3:00pm

Founders Conference Room

There were present:

Jim Klaus, Co-chair

Carolyn Garner

Kenneth S. Johnson

Lilo Ukrop

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Trustee President

Hiter Harris, Foundation President

Absent:

Tom Farrell, Co-chair

Kelly Armstrong

David Goode

Jil Harris

Ivan Jecklin

Denise Keane

Stanley J. Olander, Jr.

J. Sargeant Reynolds, Jr.

Vance H. Spilman

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director

Stephen D. Bonadies

Caprice Bragg

Bonnie Devlin

Tom Gutenberger

Jan Hatchette

Sarah Hendricks

Laura Keller

Cynthia Norwood

Hossein Sadid

Jayne Shaw

Mary Scott Swanson

Dr. Michael R. Taylor

Kimberly Wilson

1. CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

Co-chair Jim Klaus called the meeting to order and welcomed the task force, Trustee Executive & Governance Committee, and Foundation Executive Committee.

**Motion:** proposed by Dr. Monroe Harris and seconded by Mr. Hiter Harris to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2019 Campaign Planning Task Force Meeting as distributed. Motion approved.

1. INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

Deputy Director for Advancement Tom Gutenberger introduced Bonnie Devlin, one of Washburn & McGoldrick’s principals. She has a background in major giving and higher education, including experience leading multiple large campaigns.

1. FEASIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

First, Ms. Devlin reviewed the philanthropic landscape in arts and cultural organizations. She noted that giving to K-12 education has increased in recent years, and arts and cultural giving received the eight-largest portion of charitable dollars, behind religion, education, humans services, grantmaking foundations, health, and public-society benefit. From 2016 to 2017, contributions to arts, culture, and humanities organizations increased by 8.7%. She reported on recent capital campaigns in art museums in the United States, touching on the size, length, and purpose of each.

She also reminded the committee of the purpose of the study: to assess the museum’s feasibility of a campaign based on conversations with donors, to understand the attitudes and perceptions of VMFA’s top donors and prospective donors, to test responses to key funding objectives, to identify major obstacles to success, and to recommend goals and actions.

Ms. Devlin then reported on the findings of the feasibility study. 98% of interviewees felt positively or very positively about the museum, and participants listed far more strengths than concerns about VMFA. The group thought the case outlined the right priorities but felt it needed greater detail, impact, and urgency. All participants said they plan to make a gift to the campaign, an unprecedented result in Washburn & McGoldrick’s history. When ranking where VMFA falls in their philanthropic priorities, participants generally ranked the museum in their top three causes. Most voiced the importance of Commonwealth support and a leading gift for achieving the campaign goal, and most have not decided what strategic priority they would like to support.

Ms. Devlin recommended laying the groundwork now to secure gifts over $1 million and to determine the level of Commonwealth support. She suggested establishing the public phase goal after the leadership phase. Mr. Johnson suggested the importance of engaging long-time donors and making sure that people giving at all levels feel their contribution makes a difference, especially by personally thanking donors for gifts at any level. There was a discussion of staffing levels in membership. Ms. Garner noted that the identity of the Commonwealth Society has been a successful strategy for engaging upper level members.

**Motion:** proposed by Dr. Monroe Harris and seconded by Mr. Hiter Harris to recommend that the boards approve the plan for a comprehensive campaign as presented. Motion approved.

1. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation