

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts  
Minutes of the External Affairs Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, September 15, 2021, 9:30am  
Claiborne Robertson Room

There were present:

Ken Johnson, Chair  
Sara O’Keefe, Vice Chair *via videoconference; personal due to scheduling*  
Carol Ann Bischoff  
Gil Bland  
Ken Dye *via videoconference; health*  
Janet Geldzahler  
Martha Glasser *via videoconference; personal due to travel*  
Meg Gottwald  
Michele Petersen *via videoconference; health*  
Pamela Reynolds  
Pamela Royal  
Charlie Whitaker  
Monroe Harris, Trustee President, Ex-officio

Absent:

Marland Buckner  
Cindy Conner  
Ankit Desai  
Ashlin Wilbanks

By Invitation:

Alex Nyerges, Director and Chief Executive Officer  
Kay Baker  
Candy Banks  
Stephen Bonadies  
Caprice Bragg  
Shanna Chandler  
Jim Cheng  
Jasmonn Coleman  
Matt Cooper  
Stephanie Cooperstein  
Kristine Craig  
Erin Elder  
Maya Erhardt  
Tom Gutenberger  
Jan Hatchette  
Sarah Hendricks  
Ukay Jackson, Foundation Liaison  
Karen McGill  
Cindy Norwood, Office of the Attorney General  
Katie Payne  
Mimi Ryland, Council President

Suzy Szasz Palmer  
Mary Scott Swanson  
Michael Taylor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ken Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:29am.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Motion:** Proposed by Ms. Pamela Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Carol Ann Bischoff to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2021 and June 15, 2021 External Affairs Committee meetings as distributed. Motion carried.

III. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

Director of Government Relations Katie Payne reported that the legislature recently completed a Special Session to appropriate the Federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. An appropriation of \$5 million in capital funds for the replacement of VMFA's remaining outdated air handling units was approved during the special session. Ms. Payne concluded her report by sharing that the regular budget cycle has begun, the museum's requests are being finalized, and that she and VMFA representatives have met, and will continue to meet, with key government partners to brief them on those requests.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Jan Hatchette, Deputy Director for Communications, shared a communication update. She reviewed coverage for *Virginia Arcadia: The Natural Bridge in American Art*, noting that attendance has exceeded its goal of 30,000. She also reviewed these items in relation to *The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse* exhibition, which also surpassed its attendance goal. Ms. Hatchette noted the earned media for this exhibition, with articles appearing in *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

Ms. Hatchette provided a snapshot of communications plans for upcoming exhibitions *Ansel Adams: Compositions in Nature* and *Man Ray: The Paris Years*. After discussing the target audiences, Ms. Hatchette offered insights into the communications plan. She specifically highlighted using a monthly photo challenge to engage with community members.

V. ADVANCEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director of Advancement Tom Gutenberger reported that total gifts and commitments stand at \$14.5 million (against a \$7.4 million goal) as of June 30, 2021. Contributions in all categories are up and fundraising for *The Dirty South* exceeded its goal with \$1,133,397 in gifts. Notwithstanding this success however, total membership is down approximately 19% due to declines in the general and Circle membership categories. Mr. Gutenberger noted that there is a correlation between

membership and exhibition attendance, which was significantly lower in FY21 due to the Pandemic.

Total gifts and commitments to the \$365 Million Campaign stand at \$191 million or 52% of its goal. Of these funds, \$66 million is from private support. Support from the Commonwealth of Virginia is \$125 million in a 2:1 match. Lastly, Mr. Gutenberger introduced Ms. Erin Elder, Development Officer, to speak about the fundraising strategy for *Man Ray: The Paris Years*.

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Johnson asked that Director and Chief Executive Officer Alex Nyerges provide an update on the Reimagining Monument Avenue project. Mr. Nyerges reported on the staff's work with the City of Richmond and search for staff.

There being no other business, Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 10:31am.

Recorded by: Stephanie Cooperstein  
Executive Administrator to the Chief Strategy Officer and Deputy Director for  
Strategic Planning, Government & Board Relations