

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Minutes of the External Affairs Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 10:00am
Claiborne Robertson Room

There were present:

Ken Dye, Chair, *virtual (medical)*
Gil Bland
Cindy Conner
Janet Geldzahler
Marcia Gilliam
Ann Goettman
Bill Keyes
Sara O'Keefe
Pam Royal
Christina Shin

Absent:

Brian Ball
Rooz Dadabhoy
Michel Zajur

By Invitation:

Kay Baker
Dayal Baxani
Nan Boyd
Loran Brueggen
David Cary
Jasmonn Coleman
Stephanie Cooperstein
Kristine Craig
Tom Gutenberger
Margaret Hancock
Andrew Harris
Jan Hatchette
Ukay Jackson, Foundation Liaison
Roxana Jordan
Sally Marvin
Karen McGill
Whitney Murphy
Lizzie Oliver
Marie Royce
Michael Taylor
Emily Weinstein

I. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Member Janet Geldzahler called the meeting to order on behalf of Chair Ken Dye at 12:31 pm.

II. MINUTES APPROVAL

Motion: Proposed by Dr. Pam Royal and seconded by Cindy Conner to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2024 External Affairs Committee meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

III. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

David Cary, Director of Government Relations, reported that General Assembly meetings have been positive for the museum, noting that its state agency capital account has \$5 million allocated for modernization of fire suppression systems and energy efficient lighting, and that the operating budget includes a one-time increase of \$248,000 for educational portions of the website. He shared that the pending Governor's budget includes a 1.5% one-time bonus for state employees. Cary added that the Governor's budget amendments are due March 24, 2025 with final action scheduled for April 2, 2025. He also shared that artwork from VMFA's collections are currently on display in the Virginia General Assembly and in the atrium of the Department of General Services. Ann Goettman added that the Art Experience at the Governor's Mansion includes a fabric piece from Ukay Jackson, VMFA Foundation Director and Liaison to the committee.

IV. ADVANCEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Tom Gutenberger, Chief Development Officer and Deputy Director for Advancement, provided an update on FY25 fundraising results. He reported that through February 28, 2025, total gifts and commitments are at \$29,023,430, a \$11.9 million increase over FY24. Gutenberger noted the campaign total, at \$372,020,637, is nearly at 80% of its new working goal of \$471 million, and that museum membership has reached 32,533 (a 2,500 increase from February 2024). Additional membership growth is anticipated with the upcoming Frida Kahlo exhibition. He next shared recent examples of campaign gifts, which included naming opportunities, internship program support, and exhibition sponsorship. Gutenberger concluded by sharing that regional events continue to help broaden the museum's reach throughout the Commonwealth, noting a recent preview event of the upcoming exhibition, *Frida: Beyond the Myth*, in Charlottesville, Virginia that had over 160 attendees.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

Jan Hatchette, Deputy Director for Communications and Marketing and Chief Communications Officer, presented a communications update, reporting on the success of the recently closed *American, born Hungary: Kertész, Capa, and the Hungarian American Photographic Legacy* and *A Long Arc: Photography and the American South since 1845* exhibitions. Highlights included a total attendance of 32,092, surpassing the projected goal of 20,000, and far reaching email, social, paid, and earned media impressions. She then presented an overview of the communications plan for *Frida: Beyond the Myth*, which includes extensive coverage through a variety of digital, social, printed, TV, and audio platforms. Preliminary engagement rates are above industry standards, indicating there is a lot of interest and

excitement regarding the exhibition. Hatchette discussed plans to expand audiences, which include promoting the exhibition in the Washington, DC area and through community partnerships with area hotels and restaurants and including Spanish versions of its material.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved by the committee at 1:03pm.

Recorded by: Kay Baker
Administrative Assistant, Office of the Director