Meeting of the South Carolina State Commission

May 22nd, 2024, 11:30am

Chairman John F. McCabe Presiding

Commissioners Present:
Chairman John F. McCabe, Sharon Bryant, Dr. Alexander Patrick, Jed Suddeth, Lori Arledge

Absent:
Robin McNair, Gray Culbreath

Additional Persons Present:
Rita Caughman, Annie Wilson, Tony Denny

Staff Present:
Amy Bartow-Melia, Doug Beerman, Sonja Bradford, Tom Falvey, Emily Gallo, Dorothy Hall, Karen Hall, Paul Matheny, Jennifer Thrailkill, Jessica Olin

I. **Call to Order at 11:36am** by Chairman McCabe.

II. **Welcome Remarks** from Executive Director Amy Bartow-Melia. The Commission began the meeting by reading the Museum's mission and vision statements.

III. **Legislative and Budget Updates** led by Amy Bartow-Melia, with contributions by lobbyists Annie Wilson and Tony Denny.

a. Amy Bartow-Melia provided an overview of the Museum's legislative night which doubled attendance from the 2023 event.
b. A recap of the museum's benchmarking trip to Nashville, TN was given by Amy Bartow-Melia, Chief of Staff Emily Gallo, Director of Audience Engagement Tom Falvey, Director of Curatorial Affairs Paul Matheny, and Commissioner Dr. Alexander Patrick.
    i. The key takeaways from this benchmarking trip are as follows:
        1. State-wide Museum Commission and Board representation is paramount to garnering legislative and philanthropic support.
        2. The State of South Carolina is the #1 funder of the museum and should be the priority.
        3. We need legislative champions.
        4. We will over-invite legislators to every event at the museum and in their districts
        5. Re-establish core success metrics for state-wide reach (i.e. connecting legislators to the museum by sharing which schools in their districts are visiting, which traveling exhibitions are in their districts, and which artifacts are acquired from their districts)
        6. Position ourselves at the state's anchor and the anchor of the City of Columbia.
    ii. Each commissioner was provided with a personalized folder detailing their legislators along with contact information for these offices. The Commission was asked to connect with each of their legislators to discuss our budget requests (document provided with talking points) as well as current museum connections to their constituents through artifact acquisitions, traveling exhibitions, and events.
    iii. Gaps in state-wide Commission and Board representation discussed. Strategically define appropriate members in these areas based on specific legislative connections.
c. Of the $2,255,371 recurring funds and $50,000,000 capital funds budget requests of the State, we were allocated $292,520 for Retention & Pay Equity by the Governor. House lean budget allocated $285,951. The Senate allocated $1.2m for Retention & Pay Equity, and $5m capital funds. House budget 2 allocated $285,951. BEA determined new revenue on May 20th. General Assembly returns to adopt report of budget conference committee on June 18th.

IV. Events

a. Discussed importance of inviting stakeholders and VIPs to Museum Events (see: over-inviting legislators in section III). Commissioners provided physical invitations as well as copies of IMAGES magazine to distribute.

- **i. June 8th:**
  1. Opening of WWII exhibition *Shared Sacrifice: South Carolina in WWII*
  2. 80th Anniversary D-Day Salute at the Museum
- **ii. June 18th:**
  1. *The Blinding of Isaac Woodard* film screening and talk back in partnership with The Nick, led by Ramon Jackson
- **iii. June 22nd:**
  1. Artist Homecoming

b. Overview of Harvesting Heritage: Black Culinary Traditions in the Palmetto State kickoff event on Saturday May 18th in partnership with chef Amethyst Ganaway. Defined upcoming events highlighting other areas of the state including:

- **i.** August 17th: Coastal Connections
- **ii.** September 21st: Upstate Fusion
- **iii.** November 16th: Mountain Harvest

V. Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities. Chairman McCabe and Jed Suddeth gave an overview of proposed Commissioner committees and cross-functional teams with the Foundation Board for legislative & advocacy efforts. A draft copy of these responsibilities was provided as a handout to Commissioners and will be voted upon at a later date.

VI. Finance and Attendance Updates

a. Presented by Chief Operating Officer, Doug Beerman. Revenue performance as projected. Ending cash projected $2,371,217. Ending supplemental fund cash: $9,913,570. Current revenue is $1,476,244. April and May attendance decreased from historic average and FY23.

b. Admission and membership pricing successfully rolled out by SCSM and Foundation teams. No negative feedback regarding changes from guests.

VII. Staffing Updates

a. Recently hired (to begin in June): Membership Manager Clayton Evans; Donor Relations Specialist Hunter Brazell; Exhibition and Fabrication Specialist Lead Jeremy Burt (internal hire); Public Relations Manager.

b. Currently interviewing 2 History Curators, Manager of Rentals and Special Events, and Special Events Operations Coordinator.

VIII. 35th Anniversary Talk Back Board Data

a. Volunteer Manager Jessica Olin presented a top-level overview of data collected from the museum's 35th anniversary talk back board, located in the 35th anniversary exhibition. Jessica began recording data in November 2023. Commissioners were provided an extensive breakout of this information as a read-ahead document prior to this meeting.

- **i.** Over 2,600 responses have been recorded as of May 15th, 2024.
- **ii.** 77% of responses are from children due to the presence of school groups.
- **iii.** 55% of responses align with cultural history topics.

IX. RTE Phase II Updates

a. Amy Bartow-Melia gave an overview of America's 250th anniversary grant opportunities for which the museum will apply. Two applications will be submitted: one for an exhibition at the South Carolina State Museum, and one in partnership with the South Carolina Historical Society which will be a traveling exhibition program for 4th graders across the state. The traveling exhibition will be administered by the museum.

b. Floor plans and renderings updated by Gallagher & Associates were provided to Commissioners as look-ahead documents, which were revised to incorporate the potential expansion into the current

DHEC space in the Mill. Emily Gallo will schedule a follow up Teams meeting open to the Commission and Board to go through these floor plans in detail.

X. Foundation Report

a. Presented by Foundation Director, Karen Hall. The current Foundation operating balance is $94,781. The current Capital Campaign balance is $1,795,264. The total across all accounts is $4,828,376. The total Capital Campaign contributions and commitments total $3,388,000. An overview of commitments and capital funds received was provided.

b. The Midlands Gives total funds raised was $10,855 which was short of this year's goal.

XI. Discussion: Strategic Plan and SWOT Analysis

a. Commissioners were provided with a detailed document outlining the data collected by the Commission, Board, and staff during Mission, Vision, and Values exercises, as well as a detailed outline of the SWOT analysis data which was addressed in a staff town hall meeting. Commissioners were given the opportunity to discuss this data and ask questions.

b. The museum has engaged Pherabe Kolb, owner of Réveillon Solutions, for the following services:

- **i.** Conduct a workforce capacity assessment and advise on change management.
- **ii.** High-level outline of interconnected plans (strategic plan, capital campaign plan, renovation master plan, staffing/workforce development plan, and financial forecasting)
- **iii.** Recommendation of the overall strategy to successfully move forward with RTE.
    1. Pherabe lead the planning of the Smithsonian's $1.5B capital campaign.

c. Pherabe will be in Columbia visiting the Museum on June 10th and 11th to speak to the executive team of the museum, as well as select commissioners and board members. Conversations will also be conducted virtually.

XII. Old and New Business Presented by Chairman McCabe.

a. Retirement from the Commission by Dr. Amon Martin.

- **i.** Group of commission and museum staff will have the opportunity to deliver a gift to Dr. Martin in person at a date to be determined.

b. Duke University Interns

- **i.** Director of HR and Inclusion Sonja Bradford detailed the status of the 5 interns the museum is hosting from Duke University. These interns are supporting HR, Marketing, the Planetarium and Observatory, and Education. They receive a stipend from Duke University
- **ii.** Sonja is working to professionalize the museum's internship program along with Jessica Olin.

XIII. Approval of Minutes

a. Chairman John F. McCabe asked the Commission to approve the minutes from the last commission meeting on March 27th, 2024. Chairman McCabe made a motion for approval. Dr. Alexander Patrick seconded. Without objections, the motion carried at 12:48pm

XIV. Executive Session

a. Notes omitted from this report. Commissioners should reference supplemental minutes.

XV. Meeting adjourned at 1:08pm by John McCabe.