Meeting of the South Carolina State Museum Commission and Foundation Board
Wednesday, September 25th, 2024, 4:00pm
Commission Chairman John F. McCabe and Foundation Board Chairwoman Rita Bragg Caughman Presiding

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

Board Members Present: Chairwoman Rita Bragg Caughman, Regina Brown, Geoffrey Hardee, Lenora (Nonie) Price, William (Bill) Quattlebaum, Jan Shackelford, Philip Simoneaux, Alexandria Stathakis, Rodger Stroup, Adam Vance, Deborah Vandeventer, Margaret Wallace, Beth Webb

Museum Staff Present: Lili Aitchson, Amy Bartow-Melia, Doug Beermann, Sonja Bradford, Hunter Brazell, Clayton Evans, Tom Falvey, Emily Gallo, Dorothy Hall, Karen Hall, Ramon Jackson, Meeghan Kane, Paul Matheny, Robyn Thiesbrummel, Jennifer Thrailkill

Others Present: Tony Denny, Anna Kate Twitty

I. **Call to Order:** The annual joint Museum Commission and Foundation Board meeting was called to order at 4:31pm by Commission Chairman John F. McCabe and Foundation Board Chairwoman Rita Caughman.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** At 4:32pm, minutes from the Commission meeting on July 10th, 2024 and minutes from the Foundation Board meeting on July 11th, 2024 were approved without objection.

III. **Welcome Remarks:** Foundation Director Karen Hall welcomed new Foundation Board members Deborah Vandeventer from Aflac and Beth Webb from Parker Poe Consulting.

IV. **Presentation by Flock and Rally:** Executive Director Amy Bartow-Melia introduced Anna Kate Twitty, Director of Channel Strategy at Flock and Rally, who presented the Museum's *Reimagine the Experience* (RTE) Messaging and Plan update. Ms. Twitty provided an overview of the messaging plan project, identified goals, shared targeted audiences, and gave a preview of brand and messaging guidelines for this campaign. Flock and Rally was hired to deliver a messaging toolkit, messaging outreach plan, crisis communications plan, and to provide media training. The team gave an overview of the audiences who will be impacted by RTE. A brief overview of brand and messaging guidelines was provided. The full RTE communication plan will be shared with the Commission and Board before the holiday season.

V. **Executive Director's Report:**

Attendance and Revenue Update: Chief Revenue and Operations Officer Doug Beermann provided an Attendance and Revenue update. Overall revenue generation is positive despite decreased attendance from the five-year average, likely due to the early start of the 24-25 school year (a loss of

approximately 10 weekdays). Revenue raised to date is $373,638 with projected revenue for the year of $1,870,205.

Blockbuster Exhibitions: Ms. Bartow-Melia presented an overview of "blockbuster" exhibitions purpose and strategy. We are able to install a blockbuster exhibition this fiscal year, and more information will be released at a press conference next month.

Budget Request Overview: Ms. Bartow-Melia provided an overview of the Museum's budget requests for FY25-26. She reviewed how the funds received in FY24-25 have been allocated. A $1 million allocation for retention and pay equity includes a 12% increase in part time staff wages, reclassification of eight positions to include salary adjustments, and the onboarding of 8 full time staff. The second allocation was for $4,255,465 in capital funding towards the RTE campaign.

In FY25-26, the Museum will request funding for the following items: rent enlargement, staff retention and recruitment support, technology replacement and upgrades, an updated emergency public announcement and wayfinding/alarm system, new server, and capital funds for the *Reimagine the Experience* project. Lobbyist Tony Denny led discussion of revision to the State Museum's proviso 29.6 regarding rent remittance to the Department of Administration.

Foundation Board member Bill Quattlebaum identified a need for an outline of projected revenue when the Museum expands within Columbia Mills. Museum staff will follow up with a revenue projection to include information from the visitor experience plan created for RTE by Gallagher & Associates showing projected increase in revenue from the museum upgrades achieved through the capital campaign.

Staffing and Organizational Updates: Ms. Bartow-Melia provided an overview of staffing and organizational changes to include:

- Retirement of Tom Falvey, Director of Audience Engagement
- Promotion of Robyn Thiesbrummel to Director of Collections Management
- Promotion of Sonja Bradford to Chief Administrative Officer
- Change in Doug Beermann's title to Chief Revenue and Operations Officer
- Change in Meeghan Kane's title to Manager of Community Engagement
- New Senior Position: Chief Engagement & Content Officer
- New Senior Position: Capital Campaign Director

Ms. Bartow-Melia provided an overview of staff congratulations and accolades.

State-Wide Reach Updates: The museum's state-wide reach efforts were discussed with a focus on Laurens County. Staff shared the 200-year-old Word/Johnson quilt with the Laurens County Museum and members of the community. Staff also attended the South Carolina Federation of Museums conference, project managed by SCSM Curatorial Outreach Manager Timia Thompson.

Upcoming Exhibitions: Ms. Bartow-Melia reviewed upcoming exhibitions coming to the Museum from 2025-2027 (including traveling and in-house produced exhibitions).

Grants Overview: Ms. Bartow-Melia gave an overview of grants awarded to Museum teams since the last Commission and Board meetings. The SCSM was awarded an additional $250,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to continue our digitization project. We were also awarded $800,000 in grant funding from the SC250 Commission for a major Revolutionary War

exhibition and are partnering on a traveling exhibition and educational trunk project with the South Carolina Historical Society (project awarded $233,208).

VI. Foundation Report

Reimagine the Experience (RTE) Capital Campaign Update: Foundation Director Karen Hall gave an overview of the RTE Fundraising Initiative for phase two of the project.

Current RTE funds raised to date: $18,769,000 (23% of total needed). We need to raise an additional $56,292,000 (77%). There is a three-tier approach to the next phase of fundraising.

Blockbuster Exhibition Sponsorship: Ms. Hall gave an overview of the sponsorship levels which will be offered for our upcoming Blockbuster exhibition. They include: Exhibition sponsorship levels, including Presenting Sponsor ($100,000), Community Impact Sponsor ($50,000), Gala Sponsor ($50,000), and Special Event Sponsors ($40,000 for all or $15,000 each).

VII. Public Programs Update: Dr. Ramon Jackson, Curator of African American History and Culture, and Meeghan Kane, Community Engagement Manager, shared a video highlighting our Harvesting Heritage program series in partnership with chef Amethyst Ganaway, that explores Black foodways across South Carolina. Commissioners and Board Members as well the community are encouraged to attend the events in this series to discuss food and culture in our state. The next event is on November 16th at 6:30pm and will focus on Black Appalachia. There will be three additional programs in this series in Spring 2025.

Additional public programs coming up this autumn include:
October 3rd: College Night
October 10th: Constellation Concert with Wilder Flower in the Observatory
October 14th: Film Series: Preview of Cosmos by Carl Sagan at the Nickelodeon
October 18th: Event with the USC Center for Civil Rights and History and Research

VIII. Deaccessioning Process Overview: Director of Curatorial Affairs/Chief Curator Paul Matheny, and Director of Collections Management Robyn Thiesbrummel, gave an overview of the Museum's Deaccessioning process.

- Deaccessioning is done only to improve the collection and there are specific circumstances under which an item can be removed.
- First deaccessioning at the SCSM was in 1989, most recent was 2012.
- An overview of the Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was provided as well as how this effects the South Carolina State Museum.
- Per updated NAGPRA guidelines, the museum has two years to provide summaries of the items in our collection meeting the guidelines set by NAGPRA.

IX. Old and New Business: Neither old nor new business was presented by the Museum Commission or Foundation Board for discussion.

X. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:56pm.