

The Westmoreland Museum of America Art

Board of Trustees Zoom Meeting

January 24, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Present: Ms. Helene Conway-Long, Mr. Albert Novak, Mr. Martin O'Brien, Mr., Stephen Yslas, Ms. Laura Gutnick, Ms. Ellen Swank, Ms. Susy Korb, Dr. Tuesday Stanley, Mr. Armour Mellon, Mr. John Boyle

Emeritus Members: Mr. Charles Loughran

Absent: Ms. Pam Kroh, Mr. Nathan Boxx, Ms. Patriece Thompson, Mr. Jim Broadhurst

Guests: Ms. Suzanne Wright, Ms. Lisa Stipp, Ms. Rhonda Madden, and Mr. Jeremiah McCarthy

Ms. Helene Conway-Long, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes- Ms. Helene Conway-Long, President

Ms. Conway-Long called for questions and corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. Novak motioned to accept the minutes as amended for the October 2023 Board meeting. Mr. Mellon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Executive and Finance Committee Report- Helene Conway-Long, President

Ms. Conway-Long stated that the Executive and Finance Committee met Tuesday, January 17, 2023 and the matters discussed at that meeting will be presented at the meeting today.

Ms. Conway-Long welcomed Susy Korb to her first Board of Trustees Meeting as a new member. She then noted that Mr. Jeremiah McCarthy has been making great strides as the new Chief Curator. Ms. Conway-Long thanked Ms. Suzanne Wright & Ms. Rhonda Madden for their interim leadership and keeping things going during this transition period. The Museum has been featured in the *Tribune Review's Out & About* highlighting the Museum's events. She noted that there were 475 visitors between Christmas and New Year's holiday week, and thanked the Museum employees for all of their hard work. She encouraged the Board to go see the *Gatecrashers* exhibition before it closed.

Ms. Conway-Long then updated the Board that the Search Committee is in the process of interviewing first round candidates. The Committee along with the search firm, Korn Ferry, have interviewed three candidates to date. She thanked the Committee including Mr. Steve Yslas, Mr. George Greer, Mr. Al Novak, Ms. Tuesday Stanely, Ms. Ellen Swank, Ms. Laura Gutnick, and Ms. Suzanne Wright for their steadfast commitment.

### Governance Committee Report -Mr. Stephan Yslas, Chair

Mr. Yslas started his report by stating that the Governance Committee has two potential Board nominees. Dr. Momodu C. Taylor and Ms. Natalie Robertshaw Kelley. Both nominees' resumes can be found on The Westmoreland Portal. Dr. Taylor is the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer of Seton Hill University with a doctorate in Leadership Studies from North Carolina A&T University College of Education. He has been a facilitator in DEAI practices for the Museum staff and docents. He attends many of the Museums events and programs. Mr. Yslas feels that he represents a real connection to Seton Hill University.

The Second nominee, Natalie Robertshaw Kelley is the daughter of Jack and Anne Robertshaw. Jack was a Trustee and Board President of The Westmoreland, and Anne continues to be a committed Museum supporter. Natalie is a collector, attorney, small business owner, and expresses a real interest in the Museum.

Mr. Yslas explained the next step is to solicit from Board Members any comments, and feel free to call himself, Ms. Wright, or Ms. Conway-Long. The nominees should meet other Board of Trustee Members so that they can be considered for nomination for the next meeting in April.

Mr. Yslas then thanked Ms. Swank, Ms. Kroh, and Mr. Boyle for committing to stay on the Board for another year. He closed his report by emphasizing the importance of the Members to continue recruitment of interested and qualified new members.

Mr. Chuck Loughran mentioned that he has a potential candidate to pass on, Mr. Joe Jamison. He stated that Mr. Jamison comes to many of the museum events, has connections in New York, is well-traveled, and is very interested in art. Ms. Wright agreed to follow up on this potential nominee.

### Directors Report: Ms. Suzanne Wright, Interim Director/CEO

Ms. Wright stated that she would be presenting highlights from the Directors Report that can be found on The Westmoreland Portal.. She noted that she is pleased with the current staff and has no personnel issues at this time.

Ms. Wright then spoke about training, which includes Ethics, Compliance, Physical Safety, DEAI Inherit Bias Training, and CPR and First Aide training coming up.

She shared a chart that is listed in her report to show the tracking results for the "Late night Thursdays" that were implemented December on Thursday nights from 5 pm to 8pm. She noted that looking at the results the data will be used to determine if we continue evening hours as we progress.

Mr. Wright shared that the gallery reinstallation includes 20<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery, with McKenna Gallery to follow, and 19<sup>th</sup> century in late 2023.

She spoke about visitor-focused activities, which included PNC art searches and art kits, Holiday Mart, Industrial Arts Weekend, participation in the Greensburg Holiday Parade, and Cantilever Conversations.

To conclude, Ms. Wright presented Marketing and Public Relations and noted that we had 121 articles in the second quarter. The *TribLive* has been a big part of this number by routinely attending our event and programs and reporting on them.

Ms. Wright then looked at overall attendance; we experienced a 44% increase from last quarter, which includes admission, tours, programs, rentals, shop visits, and school tours. The big contributing factor was attributed to our school tours. The average weekly visitor attendance for this quarter is 187 guests in a week, which she reported is very standard across the museum community nationwide.

Looking at COVES Data- "Collaboration for Ongoing Visitor Experience Studies" our net promoter

score was 87.5 with an overall experience rating of 40 respondents being excellent and outstanding, compared to other museums of our size that participate in this study we rated about 17 points higher.

She then said that Exhibitions and Collections; Gavin Benjamin: *Break Down and Let it All Out* was extended to May 14, 2023. *Gatecrashers: The Rise of the Self-Taught Artist* will close February 5, 2023, and *Action/Abstraction Redefined: Modern Native Art 1945-1975* opens on February 26, 2023.

Mr. O'Brien and Mr. McCarthy will talk about Conservation and Curatorial in the Collections report. Ms. Wright noted the upcoming exhibitions are *Block Party: Celebration and Community in America Art* opening this summer from June 25-September 17, 2023, and *Frank Lloyd Wright's Southwestern Pennsylvania* will open October 15, 2023- January 14, 2024.

Ms. Wright stated that there were over 1200 students visiting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter from counties across the region. The two notable programs in the quarter were The Vintage Ball, and Self Taught Series. Artist in Residence, Janel Young finished her residency in September and the next round of programs will be for *Action /Abstraction Redefined*.

#### Development Committee Report: Ms. Rhonda Madden, Interim Deputy Director & Chief Advancement Officer

Ms. Madden presented highlights from the Advancement report the can be found on The Westmoreland Portal. She noted that The Development Committee met on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Madden stated that one of the largest grants received was from PA DCED/ Tourism and Marketing for \$350,000. Justification efforts are now underway as the new budget advances; Bob Taylor our lobbyist will start sharing information with PA elected officials for the new tourism request.

The Museum participated in the EITC education credit program and received support from Robindale, NextTier, UPMC totaling \$31,000 to support K-12 education programs. We received a generous Operating Grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation of \$500,000, and also received an additional \$45,000 of annual gifts designated by family members. \$200,000 was received from Allegheny Foundation, a \$50,000 decrease from last year due to market impacts. Ms. Madden noted that the Museum received a grant of \$100,000 from the Heinz Foundation for our 2023 exhibition schedule.

She ended by reporting that outreach for corporate sponsorships for an Artful Evening is underway. Board members were asked to contribute premium wine and spirit items and travel opportunities to be able to offer a more robust silent auction feature.

Ms. Stanley motioned to accept the Development Report. Mr. Yslas seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### Collections Committee Report, Mr. Marty O'Brien- Chair, and Mr. Jeremiah McCarthy

Mr. O'Brien started with reporting that it has been a busy term within the Curatorial and Collections Departments. There were three acquisitions of art totaling \$97,766 from this last quarter. A glazed stoneware ceramic by Toshiko Takaezu at \$2,451, "Naima"- Bronze sculpture by Elizabeth Catlett at \$63,090, and "Flowers (Blue and Red Circle)" by Anila Quayyum Agha for \$14,220.

He noted that the Collections Committee met on January 18, 2023 to discuss new recommendations. The review of the collection has been moving slowly due to constraints on staff capacity with reinstallation efforts, traveling logistics for the Stephen Towns exhibition, and installation of new shows in the Cantilever. Sustained progress is also needed on the Conservation Project supported recently by conservation gifts in honor of Barbara Jones to ensure

more works are are restored and framed.

Mr. McCarthy then presented a series of outputs with his Curators Report that included the gifts and purchases that were made. The report can be found on The Westmoreland Portal. He noted that gallery reinstallation has started for the first time since the renovation. The reinstallation will include these four constellations that organize the galleries; People, Places, Things and Ideas. He hopes that as we move through the year, they will create a flexible framework to swap work out, introduce new work, highlight new acquisitions, and to show that we have modern and contemporary holdings, while reintroducing what we have to audiences.

He spoke of the previous mentioned acquisitions that Mr. O'Brien reported on, and highlighted the gifts of Photography, which include 25 Photographs by Berenice Abbott.

Ms. Korb motioned to approve the Collections Report . Mr. Yslas seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### Finance and Investment Committee Report- Suzanne Wright Interim Director/CEO

Ms. Wright stated that she would be giving the report due to Mr. Boxx's absence today. She noted that the Audit was issued after the October Board Meeting, and the 990 draft was presented to the Executive and Finance Committees. It is still in draft form and available on the portal for everyone to review. The Museum received the final COVID tax rebate for 2020 in the second quarter. Ms. Wright commented that First Commonwealth and BNY Mellon will be presenting their investment performance summaries next Tuesday to the Finance & Investment Committees.

Ms. Wright reported that the second quarter and the first half of the fiscal year ended with a very strong cash flow that was favorable to budget despite the market challenges and some uncertainties. As Ms. Madden noted in the Development Committee Report, the DCED Tourism Grant has been approved. It will be received in the second half. Ms. Wright said she is grateful to all the foundation support that Ms. Madden also mentioned. She noted two Individual gifts received from Robert Kendra & Susie and Roy Dorrance.

Ms. Wright announced that June 10th will be *an Artful Evening* Event and that tickets and sponsorship revenues are planned at \$95,000 for the second half of the fiscal year. Three hires were made for part-time positions in the second quarter, two independent contractors were hired for the Curatorial Team, and there were two part time separations in the Second quarter.

She reported that capital improvements needed in the first half of the year were the three new HVAC Chillers at a cost of \$12,000 each. There is sufficient liquidity as we go into the second half of the the fiscal year both with operating funds and emergency funds from the bequeath.

Looking at Operating results, gifts and grants align with the budget mid-year. Allegheny Foundation is a key to our operating giving, but came in less than expected. Distributing income shows a negative variance to budget in the line item, reflecting market volatility. Earned income shows a positive variance, resulting from Museum Shop, "Winter Lights" Sponsorship, ticket sales for Jazz nights, and outside rental income. Operating expenses are positive to budget by ~ \$168,000 primarily driven by our compensation favorable variance due to the vacant CEO/Director and Individual Giving Manager positions.

Ms. Wright summarized overall, a solid first-half financial performance for The Westmoreland. The cash operating cash reserves are above 4X monthly cash needs with additional emergency reserves still above \$500,000, allowing adequate liquidity for museum operations through the rest of the fiscal year.

Ms. Stanley commented that Teter and Associates are no longer working and people in their office will be looking for work, and encouraged Ms. Wright to share museum job postings with them.

Ms. Wright continued the report with restricted funding, stating that it supports audience development and all the exhibition programming most notably by the Hillman Exhibition Fund. The Museum received the last payment on a 10-year pledge in 2022. Foundation representatives

asked Museum staff to reconvene in the fall to introduce the new CEO/Director and to discuss continued foundation support.

Significant new grants received this past quarter included funds raised at The Westmoreland Society dinner in December 2022 support the WMAA Art Acquisition fund including a \$25K pledge from Eden Hall Foundation through Laura Fisher's Discretionary Fund; EITC contributions through Robindale and NexTier Bank; and a grant from the Richard C. von Hess Foundation for the Gatecrasher exhibition.

Mr. Novak motioned to accept the Financial Report. Mr. Mellon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### Adjournment

With no New or Old Business, Ms. Conway-Long announced that the next Board of Trustees meeting is April 25, 2023 and with no further business, called the meeting adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

