



**Lowell Observatory Advisory Board
Meeting of the Executive Committee**

Friday, October 1, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction and Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Executive Committee (EC) members attending in-person were Brooke Miner, Drew Barringer, Donna Weistrop, David Connell, Michael Beckage, and EC Secretary Pamela Ross. EC members, staff, and guests attending via ZOOM were Tom Ensign, David Price, Joe Marcus, Erica Broman, Kay Corbin, David Chase, Amanda Bosh, David Eicher, Palmer Nackard, Lauren Amundson, and Stephen Brown. Also in person were Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Lisa Actor (Deputy Director for Development – DDD), Stephen Riggs (Development Manager), Michael West (Deputy Director for Science - DDS), Danielle Adams (Deputy Director for Marketing), Director Jeffrey Hall, Kyler Kuehn (Deputy Director for Technology), and Samantha Gorney (Deputy Director for Education and Outreach). Also present was Mattie Harrington taking meeting minutes.

Minutes of the EC meeting on 24 June 2021 were approved with minor corrections as reviewed during the meeting.

As required by the Advisory Board Bylaws, an election of officers was held. The committee voted to elect Michael Beckage as Chairperson and Pamela Ross as Secretary.

II. Millennium Fund

Beckage gave an accounting of the Millennium Fund. Approved funding requests totaled \$68,000 in 2020 and were allocated for infrastructure updates, Section 17 consultants, and increased campus security during the pandemic shutdowns. Approved funding requests in 2021 have totaled \$13,680 to date to pay for updates to the

observatory's firewalls and website, along with anti-virus software. The Director requested \$15,000 for White House (Marketing Department building) renovation and \$12,000 for a membership acquisition mailing. The funding requests were approved, bringing the total of approved funding requests to date to \$40,680. The Millennium Fund balance was \$2,342,754 as of August 31st.

III. Trustee's Comments

Lowell Putnam reported that the Bill for Section 17 is ready for submission and approval. Arizona Senators have expressed support and Senator Mark Kelly will be putting the Bill forward. The only possible issue is the reversionary rights clause. The Trustee is requesting that everyone contact their representatives and voice support of the Bill. The Flagstaff City Council will decide whether to issue a resolution in support of the Bill during the October City Council meeting. The Trustee is asking those in support of the Bill to attend and support the measure. Written responses in support of the Bill are also welcome.

Trust performance is good. A conversation has begun with BNY Mellon regarding the status of the line of credit. Topics will include additional funding needed for the Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC). The Trustee is also checking with Alliance and Chase regarding financing for a construction loan.

IV. Director's Report

Director Hall reported on critical staff hires going into 2022. The search for a new Deputy Director for Science has resulted in the hiring of Christoph Keller. Christoph will join the staff in early 2022.

A new Lowell Observatory Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a 4-year appointment sponsored by the trust for five years, will be expanded in the future to cover four fellowships. The objective is to bring new ideas and intellectual capital to the Observatory.

Per the sustainability scenario, we are \$2 million below estimated. Improvement is expected in 2023 and 2024 due to new plans that will address sustainability.

COVID-19 update: The Delta variant wave in Arizona started in July and could remain the same for an unknown period. We are prepared to open to the public for those who can provide proof of vaccination, with the intention to move into Phase 3 reopening as soon as possible with some restrictions in place. The consensus of the group was very positive regarding reopening with restrictions requiring proof of vaccination.

V. Marketing and Communications

Danielle Adams reported that branding updates are done and there are only a few things left to be outfitted with the new Lowell logo. Marketing/Communications has hired six new visitor experience associates and a new Marketing Manager, Cody Halfmoon. A person dedicated to live streaming events will be coming onboard soon.

Evening tours are selling out, but daytime tours are not doing as well. The Starry Skies Gift Shop is doing well, and net reviewer scores are good. Revision of the website should be complete in November. Migration of the Lowell Observatory Foundation website will begin soon.

The I Heart Pluto Festival received a grant for \$25K from the Visit Arizona Initiative. The 2024 Solar Eclipse event will be in Waco, Texas and plans are moving forward to have a presence there. Discovery Communications plans to partner with Lowell Observatory for eclipse coverage.

VI. Marketing and Revenue Strategy Team (MARS)

Tom Ensign reported that the LOCKs (Lowell Observatory Camps for Kids) program in Cave Creek is doing very well. The school district has expressed interest in expanding the program/curriculum from one to seven schools and will put a line item in its budget for LOCKs. Additionally, the Kiwanis Club will continue their support.

Talks have begun with Annunciation Catholic Schools and the feedback is positive. They are open to testing the Orbits curiosity boxes. We will be approaching 'for profit' organizations like KinderCare for use of the curiosity boxes. This would allow kids to take the boxes home so learning activities can be done with the family.

VII. Development

Lisa Actor reported that we have raised \$5.3 million to date in 2021 and should close out the year with at least \$11.5 million raised after closing several large capital and endowment gifts. A meeting is scheduled with the Hearst Foundation to discuss a possible donation to the ADC. The total raised for the ADC as of Sept. 30th is \$30,300,000 and there are still naming opportunities.

The Membership and Annual Funds are at 61% of their goals as of Sept 30th. We will be hiring a membership acquisition and retention coordinator. A meeting with the Arizona Department of Tourism is scheduled to discuss a marketing grant opportunity. We are talking with some donors about a grant for planning the technology center.

There are two new Percival Lowell Society members and four estate gifts that will close in 2022. A new program with BNY is providing estate planning advice to our donors at no cost to the donor or the Observatory.

VIII. Outreach

Samantha Gorney reported that Safety and Security Planning is ongoing, and we will have a visit from Dave Ellis to do an assessment of the Observatory's safety and security.

ADC interpretive planning will stress math as a language that is essential in astronomy. We want to make sure that message comes across to children. Operational planning is currently working on a program and business plans for the curiosity boxes. An ad-hoc committee will be formed to review plans with Advisory Board participation.

IX. Putnam Collection Center (PCC)

Joe Marcus reported that Judge Mary Schroeder has joined the PCC Committee.

Lauren Amundson's quarterly summary of PCC activities was relayed. Briefly, disaster recovery supplies have been received and assembled into four caches for Lowell Observatory, Museum of N. Arizona, NAU Cline Library and Dine College. Staff attended several virtual meetings of the Libraries Association and Society of American Archivists. A new NAU/NASA Space Grant intern, Melissa Valenzuela, came on board in August for the academic year to create a virtual Pluto exhibit. Volunteers are digitizing the Lampland logbooks with three now online. They have cataloged and processed Planetary Patrol films and correspondence. The entire archives catalog will migrate next year to "ArchivEra."

PCC active issues include the Lowell Observatory History of Astronomy Colloquia, the Historian function, and the Lampland Dome and Telescope renovation. The PCC Committee continues in its charge to raise the profile of the Putnam Collection Center both internally and externally.

X. Technology

Kyler Kuehn reported that we have hired two new facilities personnel. The new Technology Center is being integrated into the Mars Hill plan. Discussions are taking place with the Development group for funding.

The new Peggy and Eric Johnson 1 meter telescope will be housed on Anderson Mesa in the existing LONEOS dome. The annual risk review was completed in August for the Lowell Discovery Telescope (LDT). Space Mission kickoff was Sept 15 – 16. Lowell faculty are contributing astrophysics science cases.

Staffing needs were discussed. New hires for 2021 will be Head of Instrumentation, Night Operations Manager, Mechanical Technician, and NPOI Software/Systems Engineer. Staffing needs for 2022 have been identified and succession planning is being considered for all managers and senior staff.

XI. Lowell Observatory Foundation

Donna Weistrop reported the Foundation balance as of June 22, 2021, was \$9.19 million and \$9.30 million as of September 30, 2021.

David Chase and Donna Weistrop were re-elected and started their new terms on the board. Marjorie McClanahan was elected and joined as a new trustee. The Foundation board elected Donna Weistrop as Chairperson and George Putnam as Vice-Chairperson.

The Membership committee is charged with increasing the number of trustees and diversifying membership. The Strategic Planning Committee will work on website improvement and BNY estate planning. The Investment committee will monitor Vigilant Capital's performance and has suggested minor changes in the IPS (Investment Performance Statement).

XII. Other Business, Future Meetings

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned.