



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

**Friday, April 22, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**

**I. Introduction and Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Executive Committee Members Present in person or via ZOOM were Tom Ensign, Joe Marcus, Erica Broman, David Chase, Brooke Miner, Donna Weistrop, Michael Beckage, Palmer Nackard, John Giovale, Kay Corbin, Drew Barringer and Pamela Ross. Others present in person or via ZOOM were: Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Lisa Actor (Chief Philanthropy Officer), Stephen Riggs (Senior Philanthropy Manager), Christoph Keller (Director of Science), Danielle Adams (Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer), Jeffrey Hall (Executive Director), Amanda Bosh (Chief Operating Officer), Kyler Kuehn (Director of Technology), Anne LaBruzzo (Chief Financial Officer) and Stephen Brown. Mattie Harrington took meeting minutes.

Minutes from the January 30, 2022 meeting were approved with minor corrections.

**II. Trustee's Comments**

The Trustee welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He reported that Samantha Gorney is looking for volunteers to work with her on a new committee for Education and Outreach. A volunteer is also needed to Chair the committee.

The Trust is doing well and the payout from Robert (Bob) Ayers' estate is almost complete. Those funds will be used to expand engagement with schools throughout Arizona in keeping with Bob's wishes. The observatory has also received some unexpected unrestricted funding in the amount of \$67,000. These funds will be put in the Trust and overseen by the Trustee.

### **III. Millennium Fund**

Michael Beckage gave an update on the status of the Millennium Fund. The fund balance as of March 2022 was \$2,193,298. There is approximately \$80,000 available for distribution in 2022 and so far, \$28,000 has been approved to support renovation of the HCPS conference room.

Amanda Bosh, Chief Operating Officer, made a request for \$36,815 to upgrade the rail system on the Giovale Open Deck Observatory. This system allows the building to move back and forth to cover or uncover the telescopes for viewing. The current system has rubber seals along the rails that are deteriorating allowing water to accumulate after any rain or snow. The new system will close the width and depth of the gap between the rails and the concrete surface. After some discussion, the request was approved.

### **IV. Executive Director Update**

Executive Director Jeff Hall noted he will be traveling more now that restrictions and the pandemic have subsided. During his absence, the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Amanda Bosh, will be in charge.

Hall stated that it is time to update the strategic plan which was created in 2013/2014 and updated in 2017 and 2020, and the Campus Master Plan needs to include the Technology Center, new road, and plans for Section 17. The Observatory will be collaborating with the City and the Forest Service regarding Section 17 and potentially changing the trail name on Mars Hill from Flagstaff Unified Trail Systems (FUTS) to Lowell Observatory Trail Systems (LOTS). This will signify to everyone using these trails that they are on Lowell Observatory property and the trails are not part of the city trail system.

The Observatory will host a visiting committee the week of August 8<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the visit is to review the Observatory and its future plans and provide a report with observations and recommendations.

### **V. Operations:**

Amanda Bosh reported on the status of the Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC) construction. There were delays in executing the electrical and plumbing contracts, but they are now signed, and work is underway. Once the mechanical contracts are signed, the completion schedule can be finalized. Dedication of the ADC is now projected to take place after the solar eclipse in April 2024. There will be a further update at the June Advisory Board meeting.

Bosh gave an update on staffing, noting that an Exhibits Project Manager will be added to the ADC staff. The search for a Chief Human Resources Officer was not successful and the position title may be changed to “HR Manager.”

**VI. Science:**

Christoph Keller (Director of Science) has been speaking with the science staff to define needs for the new go-forward plan for science. There is a need to redefine the Slipper Society process and clarify who is eligible to apply. Keller is looking at national surveys to help determine where Lowell Observatory can make the most impact.

Post-Doctoral Fellow recipient Tyler Richie is now onboard. Regarding succession planning, we will be looking for a tenure track astronomer and considering other tenure track positions.

**VII. Marketing and Revenue:**

Danielle Adams (Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer) reported that earned revenue is trending up now that the observatory is open full time. Premium Access tours did well and continue to be a source of revenue. General admission is doing well as visitation numbers are going up. Trends show the Steele Visitor Center is doing a good job on membership conversion. The Starry Skies Shop and General Admission are projected to continue trending upward.

We are currently working with Discovery Channel, City of Waco, and Baylor University on the total eclipse event happening on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**VIII. Philanthropy**

Lisa Actor (Chief Philanthropy Officer) reported that the fundraising total for 2021 was \$17.27 million. Funds that were anticipated to be counted in 2022 were added to 2021 as the auditors require that funds pledged must be counted in the year pledged even though the receipt of those funds does not occur until a future year. A total of \$452,000 has been raised to date in 2022.

There is some concern that the total cost of the Astronomy Discovery Center has not yet been finalized. The initial estimated total was \$39.5 million which included \$3.5 million in contingency. The estimated total is now \$49.9 million which will include \$6 million in contingency. The total raised to date for the project is \$33.5 million. We do have an

outstanding grant request for ARPA funds from the state totaling \$19.6 million. The State has not yet approved that grant request.

**IX. Lowell Observatory Foundation (LOF)**

Donna Weistrop (Lowell Observatory Foundation Chairperson) reported that the value of the Endowment was \$9.74 Million as of April 20 and has remained fairly constant since January 2022. There is a desire to seek increased diversity on the Foundation Board and the Chair of the foundation is asking for suggestions for candidates from diverse backgrounds to serve as Foundation Trustees. A new nominating procedure for the LOF Board, which can have up to 15 members, has been proposed.

**X. Other Business, Future Meetings:**

Future meetings include:

- LOF Board – June 23, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.
- Executive Committee – June 23, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.
- Advisory Board Meetings – June 24-25, 2022
- Executive Committee – September 23, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.

**XI. Adjourn**