



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

Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

I. Introduction and Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Present were Executive Committee Members: David Chase, David Connell, Donna Weistrop, James McCarthy, Palmer Nackard, Kay Corbin, Tom Ensign, Brooke Miner, Leo Crowley, Pam Ross, John Giovale, Drew Barringer, and Joe Marcus. Others present included: Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Erica Broman (Trustee Designate), Lisa Actor (Chief Philanthropy Officer), Stephen Riggs (Sr. Philanthropy Manager), Christoph Keller (Director of Science), Danielle Adams (Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer), Jeffrey Hall (Executive Director), Kyler Kuehn (Director of Technology), Sherry Shaffer (Philanthropy Manager), Anne LaBruzzo (Chief Financial Officer), Amanda Bosh (Chief Operating Officer). Guests present were Kent Colbath, George Jacoby, Stephen Brown, Stephen Levine, David Eicher, and Marjorie McClanahan. Also present was Mattie Harrington taking meeting minutes.

Minutes from the April 22, 2022 meeting were approved with correction as stated in meeting.

II. Trustee's Comments – Lowell Putnam

The Trustee welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation in person and via ZOOM. He advised that the Advisory Board picture this year will be taken at the Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC) building site. Section 17 will continue to be managed by Lowell Observatory. The trails currently in this section will be renamed the Lowell Observatory Trail System.

III. Millennium Fund – Michael Beckage

Beckage gave an update on the status of the Millennium Fund. The value as of May 31, 2022 is \$2,083,943. Funds available for disbursement in 2022 are \$81,600. Approved

funding requests in 2022 total \$66,815 for renovation of the Hendricks Center conference room and upgrade of the Giovale Open Deck Observatory rail system. There was a \$15,000 carry over from 2021 on top of the current disbursement. A motion was made that funds must be used in the year they are available with no carry-over. The motion passed.

A motion was made and approved to nominate Palmer Nackard for membership in the Executive Committee. Palmer will be on the slate for approval by a vote of the full Advisory Board at the annual meeting on June 25.

IV. Executive Director's Updates – Jeff Hall

Jeff Hall echoed the Trustee's comments and welcome. He advised that there will be a Visiting Committee on campus in August. As we consider sustainability, we must work to mitigate risks. The one-year delay on the ADC has cost ten million dollars. We must shift focus from managing scope of the project to managing budget and time. The reopening of the visitor center took several hundred thousand dollars. Insurance has increased over \$400,000. Pay raise adjustments have been made to bring staff up to the current rate of employees in similar positions so payroll has increased substantially. A SWOT analysis was done with input from staff. A big concern is the cost of living in Flagstaff versus the current wages being paid. The current number of employees at Lowell is approximately 112. This number will increase with the opening of the ADC. The plan is to leverage connections here in Flagstaff and use those to help where possible.

Jeff will provide a more detailed analysis of this information at the Advisory Board meeting on Friday, June 24, 2022.

V. Operations – Amanda Bosh

Amanda Bosh reported that the HR Assistant position has been filled. The Assistant will start on July 5, 2022. The Observatory is looking for an Exhibits Project Manager. An Observatory Operations Manager position is being considered and will be posted soon.

Several fires have occurred recently in Northern Arizona and we are reviewing the fire response plan and evacuation drills. Section 17 is currently closed to hikers and will remain closed at this time. Planning is now being done for 2023.

VI. Marketing & Revenue – Danielle Adams

2022 Q2 report shows revenue below forecast for general admission. May was 80% of projected goal and June will be less than 50% of the forecast. Tickets are currently being sold at \$18.75 per ticket for admission. Over time the ticket prices will be increasing in stages from \$25.00 to \$45.00 as we add more value to the experience. Average per guest revenue in the gift shop is \$9.33. The gift shop is projected to hit 50% of its forecast goal because of the slump in visitation. Danielle will give a more detailed report at the Advisory Board meeting.

VII. Lowell Observatory Foundation – Donna Weistrop

Weistrop (Chair of the LOF) gave a brief explanation of the Foundation and its mission. Endowments are down from last year. The April balance was \$9.74 million with June at \$8.76 million due to market volatility.

There is a new nominating procedure for the LOF board. The board will evaluate each nominee and recommend the nominee to the Advisory Board for a vote of approval.

Trustee John Menke is retiring. Ginger Giovale and Stephen Brown have accepted a nomination to continue for another term as Trustees. The LOF has nominated Camille Bible as a potential new trustee. Her bio has been provided for review. The Chair and Vice Chair of the LOF (Donna Weistrop and George Putnam) were re-elected for one more year.

The unrestricted support fund supports the entire Observatory. Requests for funds from this account should be submitted to Amanda Bosh, who will bring the request to the LOF Board for approval. The Observatory currently needs \$65,000 for a van. \$40,000 has been raised, so there is now a request for \$25,000 from the support fund to help pay the balance.

Progress on the Lowell Observatory Foundation website has been slow, but it will be up and running soon.

VIII. Philanthropy – Lisa Actor

Annual Fund and Membership funds are exceeding their goals. The grant opportunity from the State did not result in the \$19 million requested, but we were granted \$5 million. Funds raised for the ADC total \$33.5 million to date. The \$5 million will bring that up to \$38.5 million. The shortfall is approximately \$14 million. The information and bids for the completion of the ADC are expected by mid-July to mid-August. With the

firm numbers in hand, the Philanthropy office will focus on raising the additional funds needed.

IX. AB Business Meeting Preview – Michael Beckage

Michael stated that the business meeting will focus on:

- Election of Executive Committee Members
- An LOF report and election of Trustees
- Committee reports
- Board discussion
- Executive session

X. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for September 23, 2022.

XI. Meeting was adjourned.