



**Lowell Observatory Advisory Board
Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC)
Thursday 09 March 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**

I. Welcome, Millennium Fund and Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Beckage. Present were Executive Committee Members: Brooke Miner, Drew Barringer, David Chase, Kay Corbin, Leo Crowley, Tom Ensign, John Giovale, James McCarthy, Palmer Nackard, Donna Weistrop, and Pamela Ross (Secretary). Others present were: Sole Trustee Lowell Putnam, Erica Broman (Trustee Designate), Lisa Actor (Chief Philanthropy Officer), Amanda Bosh (Chief Operations Officer), Christoph Keller (Director of Science), Danielle Adams (Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer), Jeffrey Hall (Executive Director), Kyler Kuehn (Director of Technology), Anne LaBruzzo (Chief Financial Officer), Stephen Levine (Director of Education), and Stephen Riggs (Sr. Philanthropy Manager). Mattie Harrington and Pamela Ross recorded the meeting minutes.

The balance in the Millennium Fund was \$1,946,530 at the end of February. At the January EC meeting, a request for \$40,000 to support the Philanthropy Department travel for the Astronomy Discovery Center (ADC) was approved. There are currently no new requests.

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting on 29 January 2023 were approved with a minor correction noted.

II. Trustee's Remarks:

Lowell Putnam, Sole Trustee, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. There was a brief discussion regarding the status of NPOI (Naval Precision Optical Interferometer). Work is in process to shut down the site by the end of the month.

Information regarding the Advisory Board meeting in June will be sent soon. The package will include information on prospective new members of the Advisory Board.

III. Executive Director's Update:

Work on a new sustainability scenario should be completed and ready to reveal at the AB meeting in June. With the help of a lobbying firm in Phoenix, an additional appropriation request for ADC support has been made to the State Legislature.

Strategic Plan preparation is in progress. The Executive Director will be meeting with the steering group at the end of March to outline goals and actionable steps to achieve the goals set. There will be no more than five goals set. Customers/Stakeholders will be part of the discussion on the issues.

IV. Operations and ADC Update:

Amanda Bosh (Chief Operations Officer) reported that ADC construction was slowed due to snow in January and February. Audio loops have been installed. Sample seats for the Universe Theatre and Dark Sky planetarium have been evaluated. The Orbits Children's Gallery team conducted an internal review of its exhibits in preparation for the fabrication of new exhibits.

There were 16 responses received from the Request for Quote (RFQ) for the Universe Theatre production. The responses have been narrowed down to 6 and the RFP should be sent out by mid-April.

We are preparing to submit a grant proposal for forest thinning. There is a community wildfire defense grant that could cover 75% of the cost. The city contribution would be \$50K – the cost to Lowell is approximately \$192K. The total would be \$860K for the clearing. There is a codicil in Percival Lowell's Will giving the Government all rights to any merchandisable timber.

We are nearing the final stage of an emergency operations plan. Heidi Larson, Safety Officer, will lead evacuation drills for our campus in preparation for the upcoming fire season.

Communications – There will be monthly all-hands meetings to improve communications.

Shared values – Seven sessions led by Alice Ferris are being summarized.

Human Resources – Catie and Ethan recently attended training regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Performance reviews have been moved to November so they will not interfere with the end of year activities.

During December/January/February there were 20 nights that staff were unable to work at the Lowell Discovery Telescope (LDT) site due to weather. There has been discussion on whether or not the partners will be given the opportunity to make up for the days missed due to the weather. A clause in the contracts states that any nights missed due to weather will be charged to the partner as a night used.

V. Marketing & Revenue:

Danielle Adams stated that we are seeing record website traffic. While there were 11 nights when the observatory was completely closed in January and February, we were close to meeting goals during those months. Net reviewer scorers are high along with high Steele Visitor Center

membership conversions. There was an average spent per guest of approximately \$12 during Presidents Day weekend. The gift shop made \$10K on that Saturday.

The I Heart Pluto Festival showed nice increases in guest count and revenue over the previous years.

Lowell Observatory will be advertised on information screens in the terminals at Sky Harbor Airport.

There is a new Lowell Observatory billboard on I-40 west and four more are planned on routes approaching Flagstaff.

Danielle and her team are currently working on a program that will track how people find Lowell Observatory.

VI. Philanthropy:

Lisa Actor reported there is a million-dollar matching grant given by a generous donor to raise money for the ADC. We have currently raised \$870K toward the matching grant. The total raised for the ADC to date is \$42.82 million. The total amount required for the completion of the (ADC) with all the exhibits included is \$53 million.

VII. Lowell Observatory Foundation:

Donna Weistrop (Chair, LOF) reported that the value of the Foundation endowment was \$8.6 million on September 22, 2022. As of March 7, 2023, it is \$8.9 million. The Foundation is currently in the process of establishing a new Investment Subcommittee and will be considering alternative investment strategies.

The members of the Foundation currently serve 3-year terms. Some members will be coming up soon for reinstatement or replacement.

The foundation received \$201K in 2022. An expected estate gift should provide approximately \$300K later this year.

VIII. Chief Philanthropy Officer Search (CPO):

Erica Broman reported that the search committee has solicited proposals for the CPO search from seven firms. Four firms have been interviewed. One firm has been chosen and we are currently in the process of drafting contracts and scheduling a time for the firm to make a visit to Lowell Observatory for staff interviews and to refine the position announcement. They expect to release the announcement by May 2023 with a selection anticipated by November 2023.

IX. Bylaws:

An Advisory Board member suggested we change the word “disabilities” to “abilities” in the bylaws. Discussion regarding a possible change to the bylaws ensued. It was decided that the current language would not be revised without further discussion.

X. Other Business:

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on June 8, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

The Lowell Observatory Foundation meeting will also be held on June 8, 2023.

The Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for June 8 – 10, 2023.

The DON dinner will be held on Friday June 9, 2023

XI. Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.