Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Meeting of the External Affairs Committee

Thursday, 14 June 2018, 10:30am

Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Kenneth Johnson, Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Cindy Conner

Margaret N. Gottwald

Monroe Harris

Ukay Jackson

Sara O'Keefe

Karen Palen

Michele Petersen

Pamela C. Reynolds

William A. Royall, Jr.

Michael J. Schewel, Ex-Officio

By invitation:

Alexander Nyerges, Director

Stephen Bonadies

Jody Green

Jan Hatchette

Cameron O'Brion

Katie Payne

Hossein Sadid

Jayne Shaw

Michael Taylor

Kimberly Wilson

Absent:

Tyler Bishop, Vice Chair

Martin J. Barrington

Ankit Desai

Kenneth M. Dye

1. CALL TO ORDER

At 10:29AM, Chair Ken Johnson called the meeting to order. He welcomed Foundation Board of Director, Eucharia Jackson, and congratulated Mr. William and Royall, Jr. on receiving the John Barton Payne Patron of the Arts award at the annual board dinner the evening prior.

1. MINUTES APPROVAL

**Motion:** proposed by Mr. Schewel and seconded by Mr. Royall to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2018 meeting of the External Affairs Committee as distributed. Motion approved.

1. ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Ms. Jayne Shaw, Director of Development, provided an Advancement revenue report, noting that as of May 31, 2018, fundraising had reached 100% of its unrestricted goal and 121% to of its restricted goal. She reported that recent gifts include Dominion Energy’s support of the upcoming exhibition, *Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa*; Altria’s support of *Napoleon: Power and Splendor* and *Howardena Pindell: What Remains to Be Seen*; the Virginia 2019 Commemoration’s support of $100,000 towards *Souls Grown Deep*; support from the Robert Lehman Foundation for *Edward Hopper and the American Hotel*; and a gift of $25,000 from the Wyeth Foundation for American Art. Ms. Shaw reported that the Museum also received a planned gift via a bequest of $500,000. Ms. Shaw noted that two new gift officers would begin in July. Lastly, Ms. Shaw reported that all the member travel programs for FY19 are sold out with the exception of two slots for a Hudson River Valley Trip. She also noted that VMFA is continuing to develop leadership level trips, including the trip this fall to Paris for the opening of VMFA’s Mellon traveling exhibition at the Musée de la Chasse et de la nature.

Ms. Shaw then reviewed a donor base map, showing geographic expansion of VMFA’s membership base from FY12-FY18. She stated VMFA experienced 30% growth in member households between FY12-FY18. Chair Ken Johnson thanked Ms. Shaw for her leadership for the past year and applauded the Museum for working on the 2019 Commemoration of the arrival of the first Africans in America. Director Alex Nyerges expressed that VMFA is working on several projects that will enhance the 2019 Commemoration, including *Congo Masks: Masterpieces from Central Africa*, *Souls Grown Deep*, and an exhibition on the photography collective, *Kamoinge.* Lastly, Ms. Shaw noted that VMFA’s Council has been calling new members to thank them for joining the museum.

1. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT

Chief Financial Officer Hossein Sadid introduced Ms. Katie Payne, VMFA’s new Director of Government Relations. Mr. Sadid noted that Ms. Payne already successfully advocated for budget amendments and support for VMFA on the Road. Mr. Johnson then also welcomed Ms. Payne.

1. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Deputy Director for Communications Jan Hatchette reported that she hired four new team members for marketing and communications but noted that she has four additional vacancies in her department. She then began a review of the major marketing projects that have be planned for *Napoleon: Power and Splendor*. She noted that the exhibition will run through September 3 and has a projected visitation goal of 55,000. In the first week, the Museum received 4,000 visitors. Major projects include the large scale cling advertising the exhibition on the Boulevard facing windows of the museum; TV advertisements that will run on NBC, CBS, and ABC; billboards on I-95 and I-64; King Kong bus ads; and social media ads. Advertising has reached 2.14 million people so far, with an ad value of $19,000.

President Michael Schewel asked how this is used to grow VMFA’s outreach. Ms. Hatchette explained that marketing and communications monitors how these advertising modes work with audiences, and if it is not working, the team works towards a different approach. Her team examines data and looks at what people respond to most. She noted that people have enjoyed behind-the-scenes videos the best. Ms. Hatchette then shared several marketing videos including the Napoleon around Richmond video, featuring a Napoleon reenactor. She also noted that another VMFA After Hours event was coming up. The committee then discussed the membership conversion rate for attendees of After Hours programs.

Ms. Hatchette then gave a report on *The Horse in Ancient Greek Art*, noting that projected attendance is 70,000 with an actual attendance of 86,390 to date. The exhibition has over 2.1 million digital impressions with a reach of 533,772 people.

1. ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS BUSINESS

Chair Ken Johnson asked that Mr. Sadid give a report on budget benefits received from the state. Mr. Sadid reported that VMFA placed four requests for capital outlay support at $10 million and received three of the four at $7 million in support. He also noted that VMFA placed four requests for its operations and received two of the four given. Mr. Sadid reported that VMFA’s reputation within the Richmond community and everything that it does programmatically supports these efforts with the state.

Ms. Payne followed up nothing that the state budget process has taken some time but once it is signed, the Museum has a roadmap for the next year. VMFA on the Road will launch in October 2018 and will target appropriate districts to continue to request support. Also, the Museum has received a permit to have the ArtMobile downtown sometime during the first weeks of the legislative session. She also stated that the Museum continues to make progress on the Robinson House.

Director Nyerges noted that Ms. Payne has already developed a Government Relations plan and she is beginning its implementation now. The Museum is already seeing changes in support thanks to this plan. President Schewel noted that the Museum must remain aware that the ArtMobile will present operating costs and funding will need be sustained long term.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Johnson thanked the committee for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:30 AM.

Recorded by: Jody Green

Administrative Assistant, Director’s Office