Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Minutes of the External Affairs Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 12 December 2018, 9:30am

Theater Level Conference Room #1

There were present:

Kenneth Johnson, Chair

Karen C. Abramson

Cindy Conner

Margaret N. Gottwald

Ukay Jackson

Michele Petersen

Pamela C. Reynolds

William A. Royall, Jr.

Absent:

Tyler Bishop, Vice Chair

Martin J. Barrington

Ankit Desai

Kenneth M. Dye

Sara O'Keefe

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., Ex-officio

By invitation

Alex Nyerges, Director

Caprice Bragg

Kristine Craig

Jan Hatchette

Janet Geldzahler

David Goode

Tom Gutenberger

Laura Keller

Cynthia Norwood

Karen Palen

Katie Payne

Hossein Sadid

Jayne Shaw

Michael Taylor

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ken Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee. He introduced Caprice Bragg, the new Vice President for Board Relations and Strategic Planning.

**Motion**: proposed by Mr. Royall and seconded by Ms. Glasser to approve the Minutes of the September 26, 2018 meeting of the External Affairs Committee as distributed. Motion approved.

1. ADVANCEMENT REPORT

Deputy Director for Advancement and Membership Tom Gutenberger reviewed the Advancement Report dated November 30, 2018. He explained that the Foundation is in a similar position to last year at the same point, with unrestricted giving up slightly and restricted giving down slightly from FY18. He reported that Toni Ritzenberg, a longtime friend of the museum, bequested part of her estate to the museum. Mr. Gutenberger touched on the recent Foundation Advancement Committee meeting, during which the committee divided into focus groups to discuss corporate giving, exhibition fundraising, and statewide/education fundraising.

Mr. Gutenberger reported that the Foundation has engaged a consultant to sharpen and refine the campaign case for support. He anticipates having a draft to the Campaign Planning Task Force in January. Rather than conducting a feasibility study externally, he and Alex Nyerges will be meeting with donors personally. He also reported that the Foundation is in the process of hiring two new major gift officers.

Director of Membership Kristine Craig updated the committee on membership. As of December 1, 2018, the museum has 40,562 members. This places VMFA in the top ten museums in the country for membership, and the museum is first in membership per capita. Overall member retention is 70% excluding students, 83% for customized memberships, and 92% for leadership giving. She showed yearly membership figures and share a graph demonstrating the fluctuation of membership levels due to exhibitions.

There was a discussion of recent improvements to the process for gift memberships. Ms. Reynolds suggested considering the benefits for exhibition sponsorship versus the same level membership. Council President Karen Palen informed the committee that the Council will have volunteers at the Robinson House to answer VMFA-related questions from visitors to the Richmond Regional Tourism kiosk. Mr. Johnson recommended contacting universities to offer memberships for students, organize an ambassador program, or arrange memberships for faculty as a benefit.

1. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REPORT

Director of Government Relations Katie Payne updated the committee on the biennium budget process. The governor has finalized a draft budget for review by the General Assembly. It will be distributed next week. She explained that the museum has submitted requests for additional capital outlay and maintenance reserve funding, and the government officials she has contacted have been receptive to the requests. She hopes the museum will receive funds for planning the expansion and possibly language committing to a match for public-private support. Ms. Payne said that she would follow up with talking points and more details after the governor’s budget was published. She explained that operating support would be listed separately from capital outlay and maintenance reserve support. Ms. Payne also said that the museum hosted a ribbon-cutting and cocktail reception to celebrate the installation of *King Neptune* by Paul diPasquale, donated by Secretary and Mrs. Layne.

1. MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Deputy Director for Communications Jan Hatchette reported that there were 43,083 total visitors to *Howardena Pindell: What Remains to be Seen*, with great coverage in the *Wall Street Journal*. The videography team produced videos for social media and the website, and one video about the artist had 923,000 impressions. Between digital and print media, exhibition advertising had 2.9 million impressions.

Ms. Hatchette updated the committee on Audience Development events. On November 10th, the museum hosted VMFA After Hours: Love, Peace, and Soul Saturday. The event sold out and had 797 guests there to enjoy both *Masks of Congo* and *Howardena Pindell*. It featured host Kelli Lemon, DJ Lonnie B, and Legacy Band. The communications staff has also hosted pop up events to create masks and advertise exhibitions at festivals, malls, and other locations.

Next, Ms. Hatchette reviewed marketing initiatives for *Masks of Congo*. Attendance as of December 9th is 10,256. So far, the exhibition has been featured in *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Style Weekly*, and *Virginia Living.* There were also segments on CBS 6 and NBC 12. Media impressions so far total 9.94 million, including out-of-home, digital, print, TV, and radio coverage.

Lastly, Ms. Hatchette informed the committee that muralist Hamilton Glass will create a portable mural at the museum in January and February to celebrate local African American community impact makers. The artwork will be unveiled at the African American read-in on February 21st. Mr. Johnson thanked Ms. Hatchette for the incredible work she and her entire team have been doing. He suggested incorporating the narrative of the exhibition into the advertising.

1. OTHER BUSINESS/ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ken Johnson wished the committee a wonderful holiday season and encouraged everyone to remember those in need. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:59am

Recorded by: Laura Keller

Assistant to the Secretary of the Foundation