

**Florida Oceanographic Society  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
January 25, 2021**

**Board Present via Zoom Conference call:** Allen Herskowitz, Board Chair, - John Amerling, - Mark Cocorullo, - Gary Goforth, - Paul Hederman, - Linda Houston, - Matt King, - Bob Mathias, - Dan Merritt, - Patricia Noonan, - Nancy Rand, - Scott Turnbull

**Board Present via Telephone:** none

**Staff Attendance:** Mark Perry, Cathy Muir

**Not Present:** Matt Hooks

**Board Chair**

Board Chair, Allen Herskowitz, called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

**Consent Items**

- A. Minutes from the Board Meeting December 14, 2020
- B. Executive Director Reports-Education, Research, Animal Care, Operations and Development
- C. Committee & Task Groups  
(See Board Website for Minutes, Reports and details)

*Board Action* – The Chair requested approval of the Minutes from the December 14, 2020 meeting and the consent agenda. Pat Noonan made a motion to approve and Nancy Rand seconded it. It was voted on and unanimously approved.

**Mission Moment:** Brittany Biber, Director of Life Support and Animal Care

Brittany Biber gave a presentation on what has been happening in her department since Covid hit. She has been dealing with lack of supplies specifically much needed nitrile gloves which are needed to keep her staff safe. Fortunately she has been able to obtain them but not through her normal sources which has been challenging. Lysol has also been scarce. It has been proven in scientific papers as the best sanitation method when dealing with marine fish health. It actually beats out bleach and is less caustic because we have to sanitize the lab throughout the day.

Once lockdown hit on March 20, it has been difficult scheduling animal care staff. There has always been one staff member on site to feed, treat and train animals. Also, someone has to be on site to check equipment and the pump house across the street. Schedules were staggered as much as possible. We looked to our Strategic Goals and had staff achieve some of those goals. Chris worked on fish collections and Angelina Bruno worked on digitalizing 7 years of data.

Social Media has been used to provide infographics such as taking Turtwig to the Vet. FOS wants to stay engaged with our followers and keep them involved and excited to come back.

Turtwig had been exhibiting uncharacteristic behavior such as not feeding and being distant. Turtwig was taken to the Vet for X-Rays and an sonogram and it was discovered that Turtwig was actually a female. In 2014 we had a plasma test done and it was determined that Turtwig was a male. That puts us in a dilemma because we have to be either an all male or all female facility. Brittany Biber worked with the FWC and obtained a temporary permit to keep them all on property but separated.

There has also been some issues with construction and items falling into the lagoon. Flooding was an issue because it caused an overflow and breached the lagoon. That issue has been fixed. There was also a plumbing issue with the ray tank which has been fixed. All staff in animal care will be doing collections so the lagoon can be restocked.

#### Zabik and Associates Update Report, Larry Zabik

- The move went smoothly. Larry Zabik stated that Brittany Biber was one of the key people he dealt with daily to make sure that all animals were protected.
- Certificate of Occupancy was issued December 4, 2020.
- We are working on completing the sidewalk from Eco Center to parking lot. This was not in the original budget.
- Gary Goforth complimented Larry Zabik in keeping change orders under 5%.
- Trailers have been moved out and working on soil stabilization by end of February.
- Tanks for the exhibits will be delivered by March 1, 2021. Exhibit installation will begin on March 29, 2021 and exhibits should be completed with tanks stocked by May 7, 2021. Mark Perry will visit Color Ad on February 23, 2021 to see the progress.
- Gary Goforth said that is a million dollar view and complimented Mark Perry on making his vision a reality. He stated that he thought the bridges would take away from the view and would like to discuss that at later date.
- We are working on a design for the gift shop and will come back with plan that will keep operations functioning on a day to day basis.
- Larry Zabik stated that he was a little disappointed in the ODP Change log but we did save \$20K.
- The Financial Statement shows that we do have enough funds and because of timing of the payments we should not have to use the Line of Credit.
- Mark Perry shared drone pictures taken by Steve Rusnak, our former operations manager, of the aerial view taken without the trailers.
- Nancy Rand said that once we get in and have the building and exhibits completed at 100% and open to public we have to decide where to go next. We need to talk about the visitor's center, parking lot lighting, bridges and other items. Nancy Rand stated that the bridges would be a Board discussion at a later date.

#### Capital Campaign Update – Pat Noonan, Chair & Nancy Perry, CFRE

- We have not only reached but has exceeded our \$7MM goal!

- We have had a lot of tours and the reaction from people is overwhelming. One of our donors who has already contributed has pledged \$100K towards the Gift Shop remodel. They are waiting to see the plans.
- We have a donor who is involved with a foundation that gives away funds for life achievements. Mark Perry received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Spirit of Freedom Fund, for \$50K. He has designated that the funds go to FOS. Linda Houston wanted to emphasize that this is a very prestigious award and past recipients include Bill Moyer and Sue Monk Kidd, so Mark Perry is in amazing company. The award is for his advocacy and inspiring environmental stewardship through the Coastal Center for so many years.
- Pledge payments of \$130K have been received. We have another \$200K coming.
- Many positive responses from donors who have had tours
- A long time donor and friend passed away and we have been in his estate plans for 15 years. This will be a tremendous kick start for our endowment.
- Another donor sent \$25K for our operational shortfall.

#### Financial Report, Matt King Chair

- Our cash position is at \$1,831,993 down about \$220,00 month over month due to continued draw on cash reserve for building expenditures as expected. It was a positive month from an operations standpoint
- Total Asset base is \$4,218,475 which is reduced by spend down on construction reserves and collection on pledges.
- Increase in accounts payable is primarily due to construction payments to Hooks and other subcontractors. We are left with total assets of \$3,794,111.
- The Seacoast Account has a balance of \$277,267. We had a positive operating result for the month of December and were up about \$ 59K. Total operating funds were at \$470,975.
- Movement in capital accounts due to expenditures coming up. Overall the Capital Fund is at \$1,199,500. Which is down about \$277K as we continue to draw down as expected.
- Endowment was up to \$161,517 due to a \$3K gift
- Admissions shows an improvement up from \$10K to \$25K in admission receipts but still off about 75% of where our normal would be
- Education did not have a lot of activity because early revenue for educational programs came in in November which normally come in in December
- November was a phenomenal month for General Contributions so it was down a little in November but still strong. An appeal was sent out for early renewal of memberships which accelerated some revenue forward. Total Revenue for the month of December 2020 was at \$191,942.
- Expenses are under budget in terms of actual results. Fundraising and administrative costs are in line. There was a surplus of \$59,494.

- The Finance Committee had asked the Board to give us leeway in terms of an annual budget. There was lack of visibility going into the year we have been forecasting on a quarterly basis. We will come back to the Board next month with an updated cash flow forecast pushing it out further through the balance of the year. We are tracking ahead of where we hoped we would be.
- We have secured the Line of Credit from Northern Trust for \$300K. We may not need it but it is nice to have in place.
- Gary Goforth complimented Matt King and the Finance Committee on their monthly presentations. They are clear and simple and not too much detail and gives the Board confidence that they are staying on top of things.
- Mark Perry presented the cash flow forecast from January to June. We will continue through September and present to the Board next month.
- The Capital Campaign work sheet shows Cash on hand, \$1,137,133. Cash needed for building without exhibits is \$338,696. Cash leftover to put towards exhibits is \$798,437. There was no contingency left because it was used on change orders. Contributions since December 31 were \$35,050. The subtotal in cash is \$833,487 towards the so cash needed to complete the exhibits is \$80,546.
- Nancy Rand wanted to draw attention to the capital campaign worksheet showing the balance due on building is \$338,696 so the building is paid. Moving down to exhibits it showed that we had shortfall of \$80K in cash. The payments will not be due until January and June 2021 so this this shows the exhibits are paid. The building and exhibits are fully funded. We need to have a discussion next month on having events on the third floor and lecture series on first floor and what project we will tackle next.

#### Development Committee Update, Linda Houston, Chair

- We received \$25K through the Langford Foundation.
- The Impact Report brought in 49 donations for \$26,400.
- Oceans Alive donations are coming in slow which is not unexpected. To date we have the following sponsorships: 2 Silver, 8 Bronze, 3 Patrons and one River Warrior.
- We put out flyers to local communities that we needed a golf cart and received one.
- Admissions and Gift Shop revenues for December exceeded our progressive budget.
- We have scheduled orientations for 8 new potential volunteers as exhibit guides.
- We are creating a new position as an Advocacy Engagement volunteer.
- Linda Houston discussed price modeling for admissions. Linda has been working with Abbie Flood researching what different attractions in the area charge. There has not been an increase since 2013. The proposed increase will be 33%. Admission price for Adults will be \$16, children will be \$8 and under 2 are still free. Memberships will be: individual, \$100, Family \$175 and Patron \$300. A new level would be the River Champion at \$2500. The other membership prices will remain the same. Different levels would have different perks. If members renew by a certain date they would get 2020 pricing, Gary Goforth thanked Linda Houston for the time and effort she put into this.

- The next step is the brand of marketing for the launching of the Eco Center to We need to market the third floor as a revenue center.
- There needs to be discussions on how we will limit number of visitors when the Exhibits open.

Strategic Planning Task Group – Paul Hederman, Chair

- Mark Perry and staff are updating the Strategic Plan which has not been done since August of 2019. Once we get the current status the plan Paul will send it out to the committee and schedule a meeting to get together and discuss.

Governance & Nominating Committee, Scott Turnbull

- Scott Turnbull reported that there is nothing new right now but there are several vacancies coming up at the end of this term. Scott will reach out to those Board members to see if they are interested in remaining on the Board. Once we open the Eco center, it will be a good time to transition new members onto the Board.
- Twinks Irvine and Andrea Lutz were honored and excited to be named as Honorary Trustees.

Information Technology Task Group – Dan Merritt, Chair

- Mark Perry would like to meet with Dan Merritt on all the IT updates.

Advocacy Task Group- Gary Goforth, Chair

- Gary Goforth reported that he has been working with Abbie Flood on an exciting new initiative to create a new volunteer position to support the advocacy mission at FOS. It will be an Advocacy Engagement Volunteer position and John Amerling has enthusiastically lined up to volunteer. He will work with Mark Perry and the advocacy team to develop a newsletter, help with communications, helping with the blog and staying up to date in areas to allow the public to participate in the FOS advocacy element.
- The other exciting initiative is that we are adding a web page to the FOS website which is live now and being modified along the way. It is called Florida Estuaries in Crisis and is geared toward folks who want additional details on some of the problems facing the St. Lucie Estuary, Lake Okeechobee Estuary and the Caloosahatchee Estuary. They can get engaged and take action on water quality issues These issues are the foundation for our research and education programs in terms of what activities staff will participate in such as oyster restoration and seagrass. We are focusing on a limited number of key issues such as advocating sending the water south. The Board has taken action in terms of a Resolution towards moving water south and supporting other programs. We are hoping that this new activity will result in increased donations in support of our advocacy program Any feedback would be appreciated.
- Matt King inquired as to whether we were going to take a position on the EPA decision granting Florida wetlands permitting authority. Gary Goforth has stated in a Stuart News article that he is opposed to it After much discussion it was decided that the

public would like to hear what our stand is and the Board should take a position. It is consistent with our mission. Gary Goforth has offered to draft a Resolution.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm. The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2010.

Minutes recorded by Cathy Muir, Administrative Assistant and submitted by Nancy Rand, Secretary of the Board of Directors of Florida Oceanographic Society.

Respectfully submitted,

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Nancy Rand, Secretary Chair of the Board of Directors  
Florida Oceanographic Society