

**OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2023**

Members Present: Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Laura Peterson, Philip Bradbury, Matt Cornwell, Bethany Ordaz, Bill Patek, Juscha Robinson, Betty Chewing, Liz Dannenbaum, Laurel Neverdahl, Tanya Zastrow

Members Absent: Maurice Sheppard, Julie Bernauer, Renee Boyce, Julie Rupert, Sandi Statz, Moira Harrington, Eric Knepp

Advisors Present: Jt Covelli, Kevin Hess, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Jake Immel, Katy Nodolf, Liz Parker, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting called to order at 4:05 pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Dannenbaum and seconded by Ms. Goodwin to approve the meeting minutes of April 18, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

IV. **REPORTS**

A. Board Member Skill Assessment Review

- a. At the OBS Board Retreat, members self-identified their skills on a chart based off a skills matrix provided at board effectiveness workshops from the American Public Gardens Association (APGA).

Board members looked for gaps in skills where we need help. Areas of need included:

-International affairs, with no members listing it as a skill, although it may be more appropriate to have someone with that skill serve in an ad-hoc committee re: the Royal Thai Pavilion restoration.

-Human resources, Finance, Fund Development, Communications, and Marketing were all identified as needs.

-Need to add a 'Legal' category for when we do the assessment next year. Legal expertise will be important as the Gardens considers Master Plan implications, and we do have attorneys who specialize in construction/real estate on the Board.

B. Financial Report

- a. Treasurer Peterson shared that 2023 1st quarter finances are strong, with performance ahead of where we were last year. Even with heavy road construction, revenue and attendance figures are outpacing 2022, which was a record year. The Board was very appreciative of staff efforts and performance.

C. President's Report

- a. **Bylaws Review** – President Allgood shared her plan for reviewing and updating the bylaws. She has been working with Past President Phil Bradbury to make sure the bylaws reflect OBS's 2023 business practices, including provisions on electronic meetings and updates to elections. She plans on bringing the bylaws to the Board in July for feedback and amendments.

Kevin Hess shared that in his experience as President and other committees that the language in the bylaws and other policies has been carefully chosen, and that we should be mindful of changes made. President Allgood agreed, and added routine policy review as part of efforts to support the changes to the bylaws.

- b. **Meet the Staff** – At the Board retreat, members expressed interest in learning more about the staff's work, and also getting to better know, especially those the Board might not see as often. Conversation focused around two types of engagement:

Board Meetings: As part of changes to the Board meeting structure, Board members would like to tour staff workspaces and see staff in action. Perhaps each month could have a different tour or focus.

Social Gathering: Board members are interested in a picnic-style gathering with staff, and the OBS Foundation Board, to get to know each other. Bethany Ordaz suggested an icebreaker bingo card that makes attendees seek out shared hobbies/interests/traits.

Other suggestions were made, such as volunteering alongside staff, attending Vol-a-Pa-Loo-Za or other existing presentations to learn more, or attending holiday parties to help thank staff and get to know them.

- c. **Committee Reports** – Updates were shared from two committees in early stages of development: an HR committee, and a Finance committee. These two committees were identified by the Executive Committee as top priorities to develop. The HR committee has been helping Executive Director Tanya Zastrow with the latest round of hiring. The Finance committee has not met, but Development Director Joe Vande Slunt and Financial Coordinator Liz Parker shared ideas on areas that need help.

A larger discussion developed around the need to see the complete picture of committee structure, Board meetings, and a schedule of discussion topics for the rest of the year. All were in agreement that this needs to be better defined, and asked the Executive Committee to come up with a schedule for the next several months that organizes and details the work ahead.

President Allgood confirmed Executive Committee will develop an action plan at its next meeting.

Past President Bradbury reminded the Board that regardless of the committees the Board establishes, it will be important for the Board to define the scope of said committees, and that the Strategic Plan must guide the work.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

VI. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no new announcements.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made at 5:03 p.m. by Ms. Goodwin and seconded by Ms. Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.