

**OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2023**

Members Present: Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Maurice Sheppard, Laura Peterson, Philip Bradbury, Julie Bernauer, Matt Cornwell, Bill Patek, Juscha Robinson, Sandra Statz, Betty Chewning, Liz Dannenbaum, Moira Harrington, Laurel Neverdahl, Tanya Zastrow

Members Absent: Renee Boyce, Bethany Ordaz, Eric Knepp, Julie Rupert

Advisors Present: Jt Covelli, Kevin Hess, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Liz Parker, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting called to order at 4:00 pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Chewning and seconded by Ms. Dannenbaum to approve the meeting minutes of June 20, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

IV. **REPORTS**

A. **President's Report**

Approval of the amended December 20, 2022 board minutes

Mr. Vande Slunt explained when reviewing previous board minutes that he noticed an error. In the December 2022 minutes, as part of the motion to approve the 2023 nominations, Alnisa Allgood and Phil Bradbury were elected as officers, but were not elected to an additional term as Directors. Ms. Allgood and Mr. Bradbury had reached the end of their Director terms and needed to be renewed.

It was determined that this omission could be corrected by passing amended minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Goodwin to approve the amended minutes of the December 20, 2022 meeting as presented.

The additional language inserted into the minutes reads as follows:

"The Nominations Committee recommends the following Directors be elected for a third term, under special circumstances.

*Alnisa Allgood
Philip Bradbury"*

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sheppard inquired if the minutes would note that it is a corrected copy, and Mr. Vande Slunt confirmed that the minutes would reflect and note the correction.

Director's Fund Approval, Veevart Software

Mr. Vande Slunt presented on a funding request for Veevart software. He is bringing this request to the Board because it would be paid for by the Director's Strategic Fund, and under the terms previously set by the Board, any Director's Strategic Fund proposal greater than \$50,000 is to be approved by the full Board (with any Director's Strategic Fund proposal less than \$50,000 to be approved by the Executive Committee).

Mr. Vande Slunt provided a history and analysis of the Botanical Society's payment processors, how that impacts the donor and guest experience, and how those systems create more work for all staff, especially data entry. Veevart is a payment processor that will combine ticketing, classes, workshops, donations, and memberships into one system, which will reside within Olbrich's existing Salesforce database. This proposal is the result of a lengthy partnership with Plative Consulting, who began working on Olbrich's database in 2019-2020, pausing work during the pandemic, and resumed work on Olbrich's database in 2022-2023. Plative reviewed 13 different payment processors to inform and make their recommendation.

Reviewed in the presentation and discussion: the City's software approval process of Veevart; Veevart's history and current use within museums and public gardens; the Veevart vetting process, including interviews with peer organizations using Veevart, the consultant's meeting with Veevart, and the staff meetings with Veevart; data security; contracts; customer support from Veevart; length of the software build and anticipated launch; potential cost savings by reducing physical membership card mailings, renewal notices, and data entry; improved data on donors; and what the software will and won't do.

A motion was made by Ms. Dannenbaum and seconded by Mr. Patek to approve funding Veevart from the Director's Fund, with a first year cost of \$72,140. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Financial Report

- a. Treasurer Peterson shared that financials continue to be strong through May 2023, with revenue ahead of budget by \$68,415, expenses under budget by \$76,340, and year-to-date net income of \$19,799, which is impressive considering the budget called for a loss of \$124,956 through May 2023. Great job to the staff for their hard work during peak season while being short-staffed and under road construction on Atwood Avenue.

C. Staff Reports

No staff reports were shared beyond what was provided in the packet.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Strategic Plan Tracking

Ms. Zastrow reviewed the Strategic Plan tracking document, which lists Strategic Plan objectives by quarter, with a column showing percent complete for each objective. She also shared a separate tab that highlights the Strategic Plan objectives where the Board is responsible or involved. She asked if the Board wished to see all objectives or only the Board objectives. The Board asked to see the full list for quarterly updates, and if an objective is in need of assistance, to please highlight it. Ms. Goodwin suggested keeping the Board objectives as a standing item to track progress and what needs to be accomplished.

B. Board Meeting Structure

A robust discussion was had regarding future Board and Committee meetings and how it would be organized. President Allgood led the discussion, but had to leave shortly after 5 p.m. to attend another meeting. Vice President Goodwin chaired the meeting after President Allgood's departure.

While the conversation ebbed and flowed throughout many topics, for purposes of organizing the minutes, it will be organized as follows:

2024 Board Meetings

Move to meet every other month, with Committee meetings on the off months. Work on offering a hybrid option which encourages in person attendance, but allows for virtual participation. Recognize that virtual may be a challenge with Olbrich's limited technology capabilities, but work with City IT and within our building to try and make it possible by 2024, or seek out other local businesses where we could have meetings that allow for hybrid participation. Board Meetings would feature reporting from Committees if needed. Survey the Board to see if 4 p.m. on Tuesdays is still the best time. Recognition that the 4 p.m. time makes it difficult for some due to work and family schedules. Amend Bylaws to allow for electronic voting for sensitive/timely topics. Meet for 90 minutes.

Committee Meetings

Every Board Member is expected to serve on a Committee, and every Committee needs a Board chair. Every Committee meeting needs minutes and an agenda for each meeting. Meet monthly, but allow Committees to determine their schedule based on what's needed (for example, Finance may need to meet more or less depending on the budget cycle, etc). Have the Committees submit reports as needed to Executive Committee, but at least checking in quarterly. Advisors can be on Committees. Consider adding non-Board volunteers and outside experts as appropriate to ensure a strong Committee and good participation. Consider using Committee work to develop future Board members.

Executive Committee

Meets monthly. Determines the Board Meeting agenda, including if a Committee report is substantial enough for Board involvement or action. Retains same configuration with the five elected Officers plus the Executive Director and Development Director. Other Committee work (Finance, HR, Development, and Governance) likely reduces the workload for Executive Committee, which would be appreciated as many if not all Executive Committee members will also be serving on the new Committees.

The Board Meeting was running late, so Vice President Goodwin asked to begin September's Board Meeting (no meeting in August) with continued discussion of unfinished items, including the Board's dashboard (document used to keep tabs on critical components of Board responsibilities and organizational health, which will help determine discussion items at meetings), and finalizing the Board and Committee meeting structure.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made at 5:27 p.m. by Ms. Goodwin and seconded by Ms. Zastrow to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.