

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2021

Members Present: Philip Bradbury, Alnisa Allgood, Mary Phillips, Julie Bernauer, Laura Peterson, Juscha Robinson, Maurice Sheppard, Tim Sherry, Sandi Statz, Bill White, Betty Chewning, Liz Dannenbaum, Brad Hinkfuss, Laurel Neverdahl

Members Absent: Renee Boyce, Julie Rupert, Susan Goodwin, Bethany Ordaz, Moira Harrington, Eric Knepp

Advisors Present: Jack Bolz, Jt Covelli, Kevin Hess, Barb Tensfeldt, Paul Williams

Staff Present: Jeff Epping, Jake Immel, Missy Jeanne, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Kaylee McDonald, Katy Nodolf, Kim North, Marty Petillo, Rylee Schuchardt, Kai Skadah, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting called to order at 4:01 pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Peterson to approve the meeting minutes of August 17, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

IV. **OLBRICH STAFF PRESENTATION**

A. GLEAM: Art in a New Light Update – Special Projects Manager Missy Jeanne presented a PowerPoint about GLEAM: Art in a New Light. She shared that over 800 guests (goal 500) attended the opening viewing of GLEAM on Saturday, August 28, generating \$24,700 (goal - \$11,500) in support for the Gardens. She introduced the creative GLEAM team, explained each of their roles, and showed photos of the 7 art installations and other illuminated points of interest between exhibits. She detailed the safety precautions that are in place: a one-way designated tour route and separate entrance and exits; timed ticketing; a new mobile friendly website with a virtual exhibit guide that visitors access on their personal phones; face masks required indoors and recommended outdoors. She discussed how timed ticketing has improved the visitor experience by streamlining communication, helping with parking, and keeping lines shorter.

Ms. Jeanne described the improvement in GLEAM's management with the hiring of a garden seasonal position, a visitor services manager, visitor services representatives, and 6 volunteer hosts per evening. She noted how the exhibit has grown since its start in 2015 and how every department plays a part in its success. Ms. Jeanne emphasized the future goals for GLEAM, which include increasing underwriting, acquiring equipment to support the designers, pop-up events, elevating membership recruitment, collaborating installations, and engaging new communities.

President Bradbury asked what staff would like to see the OBS Board do to help looking forward. Ms. Jeanne expressed that helping source underwriting could open new opportunities. She also emphasized how important it is when Olbrich ambassadors bring their friends and family, as word of mouth is the most highly rated way people hear about the event.

V. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. **OBS Recruitment Committee Update: Garden Director** – Assistant Parks Superintendent Lisa Laschinger acknowledged the Olbrich Staff Team, and called out Joe, Jeff and Marty specifically, for leading through the transition over the past several months. She explained the comprehensive hiring process and expressed her appreciation for the Board members that assisted in this process. Ms. Laschinger announced that Tanya Zastrow had accepted the offer to be the next Olbrich Botanical Gardens Director and she will start on Nov. 1. She summarized Tanya Zastrow’s portfolio of experience and noted that she received glowing reviews from previous supervisors and co-workers.
- b. **Education Director Update** – Mr. Vande Slunt announced that Olbrich’s Kim North was promoted to her new position of Education Director. He explained that over the past 2 years, Ms. North had grown Olbrich’s education mission with limited resources. He noted that after discussing with the OBS Executive Committee and OBS’s HR consultant, it was decided that Ms. North had proven to be the best fit to lead the Education team into the future. Ms. North thanked the Board for their support of herself and the entire Education team.
- c. **Grand Opening Update** – Joe Vande Slunt reported that, after consulting with OBS’s Executive Committee and OBG’s Interim Leadership Transition Team, it was decided that the Grand Opening of the Frautschi Family Learning Center and new greenhouses would be rescheduled from Saturday, September 18 to Saturday, October 16, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. He noted that Mayor Satya was confirmed to attend and would be part of opening remarks and a ribbon cutting. He shared that a videographer would capture the day’s highlights, and would provide a highlight video that can be shared on social media. He added that the morning’s remarks and ribbon cutting would be livestreamed for those unable to attend. Mr. Vande Slunt will be working with individual donors and families to hold smaller receptions throughout the fall, winter, and spring.
- d. **COVID Concerns**
 - i. **Upcoming programming** – Joe Vande Slunt shared that OBG had its first staff member test positive for COVID-19 and that everyone that was identified as a close contact was tested. He added that out of caution, GLEAM was shut down for 2 nights.
 - ii. **Mandatory vaccinations** – Lisa Laschinger reported that the City released guidance on its Vaccination Policy/Procedures. She noted that by Oct. 1, every City employee must fill out a vaccination attestation form and show proof of vaccination. She added that weekly testing would start Oct. 18 for non-vaccinated employees and guidance for this process would be coming from City HR. There was discussion about OBS implementing this policy and procedure for OBS staff. Ms. Laschinger will forward the City’s information to President Bradbury when it is fully available so decisions can be made by the OBS Board.
- e. **2022 OBS Budget** – Joe Vande Slunt explained that the OBS Executive Committee has asked staff to write a 2022 budget that is realistic and conservative, knowing that we still will be dealing with the effects of the pandemic heading into 2022. He noted that department heads have started the budget process and that the plan is to have the 2022 budget finalized by early November. He added that the hope is to recommend that the Board votes on the final budget at the November meeting.
- f. **2022 OBS Recruitment** – President Bradbury mentioned that Past President Julie Rupert would be reaching out to current Board members that have terms expiring at the end of 2021. He noted that not many vacancies would be opening up this year.

C. Financial Report

- a. **July 2021 Financials** – Rylee Schuchardt reviewed the July Financial Reports. She noted that the \$60K in Administration revenue is due to revenue from Bolz Conservatory admissions and that the high revenue total in Programs & Exhibits was due to the Home Garden Tour and Summer concerts coming in considerably higher than the anticipated budget. She also pointed out that YTD, all departments remained mindful of expenses and stayed within budget. She explained that the Gift Shop was still closed for all of July, as Gift Shop Manager Sarah Wilcox was familiarizing herself with the product on hand, was hiring Retail & Hospitality Associates, and was performing inventory.

She noted that there was a journal entry made to true up the actual inventory on hand which resulted in a \$15,548 debit to inventory and a credit to Cost of Goods Sold to bring inventory to actual after the switch over from Giftlogic to Square. Ms. Schuchardt added that she and Ms. Wilcox spent time going through outstanding gift cards and store credit dating back to 2011 and recorded this as a liability on OBS's books in the amount of \$6,252.

Treasurer Mary Phillips mentioned that she, Ms. Schuchardt, Ms. Skadahl, and Mr. Vande Slunt are working with Baker Tilly and moving forward with the ERC (Employee Retention Credit) application process. She noted that Baker Tilly would also help OBS with the PPP2 loan forgiveness application.

D. Director's Report

Staff Written Reports – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed the staff reports. He highlighted that the Schumacher Library had reopened and also launched Olbrich's new online catalog, which allows anyone to browse the library collection from home and enables members to put books on hold for seven days. He also pointed out that over 900 pounds of produce was donated to Goodman Community Center's Fritz Food Pantry and Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin over the course of the Children's Kitchen Garden's season. Mr. Vande Slunt mentioned that August attendance numbers looked great, despite not having Blooming Butterflies.

E. Development Report – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed portions of the Development report as part of the President's Report.

F. Marketing & Public Relations Report – Ms. Nodolf reviewed the Marketing and PR Report. She pointed out that RFPs had been sent to six firms for proposals to redesign Olbrich's website and that plans are in place to interview select vendors in October with hopes of making a selection by the end of November. Ms. Nodolf added that GLEAM marketing was continuing. She noted that it's been eye-opening for staff to see the power on a social media influencer through GLEAM Visitor Services Manager, Mercury Stardust's, Tik Tok videos. With over a million followers, Ms. Stardust has served as influencer encouraging her patrons to visit the GLEAM exhibit.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no new announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.