

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2020

Members Present: Philip Bradbury, Renee Boyce, Bill White, Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Kevin Hess, Laura Peterson, Tim Sherry, Betty Chewning, Liz Dannenbaum, Eric Knepp, Laurel Neverdahl, Roberta Sladky

Members Absent: Julie Rupert, Mary Phillips, Erik Lincoln, Dick Wagner, Brad Hinkfuss, Nancy Ragland

Advisors Present: Dennis Birke, Jack Bolz, Jt Covelli, Sandy Dolister, Barb Tensfeldt, Paul Williams

Staff Present: Jeff Epping, Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Katy Nodolf, Rylee Schuchardt, Kai Skadahl, Elizabeth Spry, Joe Vande Slunt

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

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Boyce to approve the meeting minutes of August 18, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the public who wished to comment on items not on the agenda.

IV. **OLBRICH STAFF PRESENTATION**

- a. **Plant Pandemonium (it's a good thing) – Our Gardens in 2020** – Jeff Epping, Director of Horticulture, reviewed what has been going on in the outdoor gardens since the start of 2020, from the Spring Show that was only open for one week to the landscaping process for the Frautschi Family Learning Center. Mr. Epping shared photos of the Gardens, the 2020 interns, and some of the volunteers that started back at the Gardens in June. HE recognized Tree Health Management's donated care of the Swamp White Oak in the Morse Terrace and the support of Longshadow who lent about 30 planters for the project. He concluded with the message that gardens heal and give hope for the future which makes Olbrich important to our community.

IV. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. **OBS's Response to COVID-19 – Re-opening the Bolz Conservatory** – Roberta Sladky reviewed the re-opening plan for the Bolz Conservatory, which could open any time after October 1. She explained that Public Health Madison & Dane County approved to allow up to 50% capacity (100 people) at one time and that the City Parks Commission approved to raise the admission to \$6 so OBS could pay a cashier to work at the desk, as volunteers cannot return at this time. She noted that a staff team is working on details needed for a safe re-opening. She added that this plan has been approved by the Park Commission through the end of January 2021, so staff will review in early January and develop a report.
- b. **Board Engagement Process** – Joe Vande Slunt thanked the Board members who volunteered to help with the three working group/committees: Bylaws, Nominating, and Gift Acceptance Policy Review. He summarized the purpose of these three working groups and detailed who from the Board would be sitting on each committee.
- c. **Resolution approving OBS to opt out of participating in the Presidential Memorandum allowing employers to defer withholding and payment of the employee's portion of the Social Security tax** – Vice President Bradbury read the resolution:

WHEREAS, there is a Presidential Memorandum allowing employers to defer withholding and payment of the employee's portion of the Social Security tax, and,

WHEREAS, this tax would eventually have to be paid back in full by May 1, 2021.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Olbrich Botanical Society declines participation in this voluntary payroll tax holiday.

A motion was made by Ms. Allgood and seconded by Mr. Sherry to approve the resolution. The Motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that after the Executive Committee looked in to this tax deferral, they concluded that the main objectives are to maintain staff, not require furloughs, and to keep wages and benefits where they are as much as possible. It was determined that this deferral would not be beneficial to that plan.

B. Financial Report

- a. **July 2020 Financials** – Rylee Schuchardt reviewed the July Financial Reports. She described that due to the pandemic and corresponding shutdown, all departments were below budgeted revenue with the exception of Development which was \$35,000 above budget as of July 30. She noted that all departments were under budgeted expenses, according to the original 2020 budget. There was discussion about the projections that staff are working on which take into consideration two things: What OBS 's year-end loss will look like at the end of 2020 (figuring around \$115K) and how much cash on hand OBS will have to cover necessary costs. It was noted that the cash flow projection and the draft 2021 budget would be presented to the Board at the November meeting.
- b. **Capital Campaign Closeout** – Joe Vande Slunt recapped the information that was presented at the August 2020 OBS Board meeting about what was needed to close out the Capital Campaign and keep OBS from going into debt. Since that meeting, members of the Executive Committee met with Ms. Dolister and Mr. Birke from the OBS Foundation to propose what would be needed to close out the Capital Campaign and also update them on how 2020 was starting to look and what OBS may need in 2021.

It was noted that after the OBSF meets formally, the OBS Board will first be asked to approve a resolution to ask the OBSF for the funds necessary to close out the Capital Campaign and another resolution later in the year to ask the OBSF for funds for OBS, once there is a better idea of what will be needed at the end of 2020 and in 2021.

C. Director's Report

Staff Written Reports – Ms. Sladky reviewed the staff reports. She talked about how inspiring it was to read through the reports and see all of the ways that staff are collaborating and helping each other across departments. She noted that many staff came together to get the Gift Shop online, that the Conservatory re-opening team has staff from multiple departments working together, staff came to be a part of the Volunteer Visit, and that the Pollination Celebration involved every department.

- D. Development Report** – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed the Development report. He mentioned that staff are working on the 'Hope Blooms Here' Fall Appeal that will present information about Olbrich's budget shortfalls, while remaining positive and upbeat. He noted that since Olbrich re-opened in June, 42,000 people have visited, showing just how important Olbrich is to the community, especially during this time. He highlighted that staff are looking into a highly competitive potential grant with the Wisconsin Department of Administration's COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grant Program, which could replace lost income from program cancellations. Mr. Vande Slunt invited to Board to participate in the Ian's Pizza

Garver 'Doughnation Night' fundraiser on September 30th where Ian's will donate a portion of their sales from any order that mentions Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

E. Marketing & Public Relations Report – Ms. Nodolf reviewed the Marketing and PR Report. She noted that the first newsletter in seven months was recently mailed. She also talked about how they are working on promoting the Gift Shop going online and how they are learning about retail marketing, which needs a different strategy than is used for classes and programs. Ms. Nodolf also explained the award nomination application that she and Mr. Vande Slunt are working on for the inaugural 'Garden Stewardship Award' from The American Horticultural Society.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

VI. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There are no announcements.

VII. **ADJOURNED**

The meeting adjourned at 4:53 pm.

DRAFT