

**OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
May 17, 2022**

Members Present: Philip Bradbury, Laura Peterson, Julie Bernauer, Matt Cornwell, Susan Goodwin, Bethany Ordaz, Juscha Robinson, Maurice Sheppard, Tim Sherry, Sandi Statz, Liz Dannenbaum, Laurel Neverdahl, Tanya Zastrow

Members Absent: Alnisa Allgood, Renee Boyce, Julie Rupert, Bill Patek, Bill White, Betty Chewing, Moira Harrington, Eric Knepp

Advisors Present: Fred Anderson, Dale Mathwich, Barb Tensfeldt, Paul Williams

Staff Present: Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Katy Nodolf, Liz Parker, Kai Skadah, Joe Vande Slunt

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

Everyone introduced themselves, since this was the first in-person OBS Board meeting in just over two years.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Statz and seconded by Ms. Bernauer to approve the meeting minutes of April 19, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. OLBRICH STAFF PRESENTATION

- A. Updates in the Schumacher Library** – Horticultural Librarian Eva Stefanski provided an in-person overview of the remodeling and programmatic changes that are taking place in the library. She showed how she made the room more open and inviting for guests, by removing the second desk and moving the children’s area from directly inside the door to the opposite corner. She pointed out that the line of sight had been improved by lowering the book shelves in the center of the room and using the tops of the shelves for timely, eye-level displays. Ms. Stefanski talked about new partnerships with plant societies and with the Talking Book and Braille Library, and how they are sharing their book collections with Olbrich members. She added that there are on-going conversations about partnering with other libraries in the area. She announced that we are now offering an online catalog of the collection, where the Schumacher Library collection could be viewed by everyone, and members are able place books on hold using their member number. Ms. Stefanski welcomed the Board to share their thoughts and ideas. Ms. Zastrow noted that the OBS Horticultural Librarian position was currently part-time, and staff would like to see the hours increased in the future.

V. REPORTS

A. President’s Report

- a. Corpse Flower Recap** – Ms. Zastrow announced that over 5,500 guests visited the Bolz Conservatory to see the bloom over the span of 4 days! She noted that staff learned many things from the experience, including how to make a long line more accessible to people that are less able. Mr. Vande Slunt shared that there were many positive comments online, and that a few artists were inspired and posted photos of their work. Ms. Nodolf added that we had a perfect storm of social media outlets and local news stations hyping up the bloom. A congratulations went out to Ms. Nodolf and Mr. Fullmer for their fantastic job of handling the media coverage.
- b. Update on Thai Pavilion Repairs and Upcoming Public Meeting** - Ms. Zastrow shared that the virtual, public information meeting would be taking place on June 1 at 6 pm, and that all were invited. She noted that staff and project partners would provide an update on the status of the

building condition, the proposed scope of the work, and the rehabilitation project schedule. For more details visit: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/projects/olbrich-gardens-royal-thai-pavilion-condition-assessment>

- c. **Wrapping up the Capital Project, Final Payment** – Mr. Vande Slunt presented on the capital project, recapping the project’s goals and each partner’s funding commitment (OBS and City). He described that OBS’s final cash commitment to the project was \$6 million, and the City of Madison’s final cash commitment was also \$6 million. He showed how both entities also covered an additional ~\$400k each, in other items and services costs throughout the project. He recapped what OBS had paid the City to date (\$3,758,416.52), and what remains to be paid (\$2,241,583.48), noting that once paid, OBS’s commitment to the project would be complete. He added that staff would like to present the final amount to be paid to the City to the OBS Board for action in June. Mr. Vande Slunt noted that the problems with the cistern were still unresolved, and that the City of Madison was committed to funding a separate capital project to remedy the problem.

B. Financial Report

- a. **January, February & March 2022 Financials** – Liz Parker reviewed the Financial Reports. She noted that as of 3/31/2022, all departments were over budget in revenue except for Development. Ms. Parker explained that the departments that were over budget in expenses YTD also had higher revenues YTD. She pointed out that most departments were over 2021 YTD actuals in both revenue and expenses.

C. Director’s Report

Staff Written Reports – Ms. Zastrow reviewed the Staff Written reports. She noted that the new website was estimated to be completed in October 2022. Ms. Zastrow reported that the deadline for the Strategic Plan Request for Proposals was May 20, a firm would be selected to help with the plan by June 7, and staff are intending on having the Strategic Plan finalized by the end of 2022. She mentioned that the Horticulture Interns started on May 16, and new this year is a partnership with Madison College with two students working with the Hort Dept. She added that the Madison College interns were funded by Madison College through a grant that a faculty member received.

- D. Development Report** – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed the Development report. He highlighted that Olbrich would soon begin work on its database and payment systems, working with Plative Consulting from Toronto, Ontario, to improve the Salesforce database and find a payment solution that would allow a donor to make a donation, renew their membership, purchase an event ticket, and register for a class at the same time.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no new announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.