

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021

Members Present: Philip Bradbury, Renee Boyce, Mary Phillips, Julie Rupert, Julie Bernauer, Susan Goodwin, Bethany Ordaz, Laura Peterson, Juscha Robinson, Maurice Sheppard, Tim Sherry, Bill White, Betty Chewing, Liz Dannenbaum, Moira Harrington, Eric Knepp, Laurel Neverdahl, Tanya Zastrow

Members Absent: Alnisa Allgood, Sandi Statz, Brad Hinkfuss

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

Staff Present: Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Kaylee McDonald, Marty Petillo, Kai Skadahl, Joe Vande Slunt

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

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Sherry and seconded by Ms. Peterson to approve the meeting minutes of October 19, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

IV. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. **Welcome New OBG Executive Director, Tanya Zastrow** – Executive Director Tanya Zastrow shared that she was excited for the future and looking forward to working with the staff and Board. She expressed her appreciation to Joe Vande Slunt, Marty Petillo, and Jeff Epping for their work as transition leaders and bridging the gap between Directors.
- b. **COVID Concerns**
 - ii. **Mandatory vaccinations Update** – President Bradbury reported that every OBS employee had submitted their COVID-19 vaccination attestation forms and that process was now complete.
Ms. Petillo reported that on October 27, all 2020 and 2021 Olbrich Volunteers received an email explaining the new vaccination policy, stating that starting January 2022, all volunteers working onsite or volunteers who attend trainings and socials onsite would need to be vaccinated. She noted that to date, 130 volunteers have provided proof of vaccination and no one has objected. She added that she has received positive responses from volunteers that have reached out.
Ms. Zastrow confirmed that Olbrich would wait for guidance from the Mayor concerning the mask mandate that is expiring at the end of November.
- c. **2022 OBS Recruitment** – Past President Julie Rupert reported that there are up to two openings on the Board for 2022 and asked the Board to reach out to her with any recommendations, especially looking for fundraising, community outreach, and diversity and inclusion qualities. She added that filling the two openings could be postponed, if the right candidates were not found.

C. Financial Report

- a. **September 2021 Financials** – Treasurer Mary Phillips reviewed the September Financial Reports. She noted that actual revenue for September was nearly doubled what was budgeted and that total operating expense went over budget, adding that this budget was conservative. She pointed out

that one year ago, we were anticipating a deficit of around \$300K in 2021, but as of September 30, we had a positive net income of \$261K.

Mr. Vande Slunt added that GLEAM numbers would be reported in December's Board Packet when the October Financials would be available.

- b. **Approval of the 2022 OBS Operating Budget** – Joe Vande Slunt reviewed the *2022 OBS Budget Development* presentation that was sent to the Board before the meeting. He noted that the Olbrich Botanical Society Foundation had not yet approved their annual distribution, and that would be happening at the OBSF meeting on Nov. 23. When going over the 2022 budget process, he explained that the OBS Executive Committee asked the OBS staff to develop a realistic, revenue-neutral, budget based off of actual figures, with the understanding that we have not fully returned to normal due to continued COVID uncertainty. Mr. Vande Slunt highlighted the 2022 OBS budget key points which included the following: cost of living increase for staff; maintaining current benefits for staff; restoring the internship program and increasing their wages to \$15/hr.; bringing back Blooming Butterflies and CRACKLE; increasing membership revenue to pre-pandemic levels; diversity and inclusion funding; and restoring tram service. He reviewed the budget rationale for every department and explained how the income goals were somewhat aggressive to fund major priorities, based off of actual 2021 year-end revenue projections.

There were some concerns about why the 2022 budget was not providing funding for planning and initial designs for the expansion across the creek. President Bradbury noted that this would be a capitol expense outside of the operating budget. After some discussion, it was decided that staff from Olbrich, and from the City, would work together and submit an update to the OBS Board within 90 days. This update would layout the initial steps needed for the capitol project including who would be involved from Olbrich and the City and how to involve the community.

There was also discussion about the fee to enter the Bolz Conservatory. Ms. Petillo confirmed that the \$6 admission has not been a barrier for access to the conservatory. She explained that there is free entry for all youth ages 5 and younger and for OBS members every day; free entry from 10 am-12pm on Wednesdays & Saturdays for everyone; and free passes offered (from a donor scholarship fund) to anyone who asks every day. She shared that there have been no negative comments from visitors about the fee and that online reviews show that the community is supportive and feels it's a value. Ms. Petillo added that this fee is comparable to neighboring conservatories.

A motion was made by Mr. Sheppard and seconded by Ms. Robinson to approve the 2022 OBS Operating Budget, with the understanding that an 'across the creek' update would be submitted to the Board within 90 days. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Director's Report

Staff Written Reports – Ms. Zastrow reviewed the staff reports. She highlighted that attendance continues to rise, that GLEAM wrapped up and was a huge success, and that the garden is getting winterized. She also reminded the Board to save the date for the Volunteer Appreciation event on February 14. President Bradbury gave kudos to the Exact Sciences Staff that have been using their 'Volunteer Time Off' service hours to volunteer at Olbrich.

- E. Development Report** – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed the Development report. He mentioned that the mailer introducing Tanya Zastrow to OBS's supporter base was sent out to around 11,500 homes and that the year-end appeal would be mailed at the end of November. He also congratulated Jake Immel on the \$8K grant that was received from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust.

F. Marketing & Public Relations Report – Mr. Vande Slunt reported that the new Olbrich website project is underway and RFPs are being reviewed. He noted that the team plans on making a decision on a vendor by mid-December.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

VII. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no new announcements.

VIII. **ADJOURNED**

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

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