

## SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on September 19, 2007 in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

**The following were in attendance:**

Dr. Steven Gittelman - President  
Daniel Olivieri - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Michael B. DeLuise - Treasurer  
David D'Orazio - Secretary  
Maria Figalora - Trustee  
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann - Trustee  
William Macchione - Trustee  
Dr. William Rogers - Trustee  
Matthew Swinson - Trustee  
Carol Hart - Acting Executive Director  
John Pokorny - Staff  
Bill Dieck - Staff  
Ann Marie Pastore - Stenographer

**ABSENT:**

Susan LeBow - Trustee  
Ronald Parr - Trustee  
Dr. Anthony Pecorale – Trustee

**(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:40 P.M.)**

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

This is a regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees. Do we have a list of guests in attendance?

**MS. PASTORE:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I gather we don't have any questions from guests. Can I have a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting?

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

I reviewed the minutes and didn't see any discrepancies. I don't know if anybody else has, but from my point of view, they looked okay. I'll make a motion to approve.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 9/0/0/6 Not Present: Ms. Figalora. Absent: Ms. LeBow, Mr. Parr & Dr. Pecorale. Two vacant positions.)**

Public Relations Report, Todd Shapiro is not here. Carol, do you have anything to add?

**MS. HART:**

I do note in your folder that we had a very nice article on our "Living History" program in the mansion in one of the local papers. We noticed a definite increase in visitation shortly after that went in, so we're very happy to see that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Bill Macchione, Buildings and Grounds Report.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

Basically two things. The Education Center is complete, and they started the boathouse today.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

The stuff in the Education Center, there was some discussion as to that stuff. Maybe I should take a look at it. Did you move all the material yet?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

No.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'll take a look at it, and I'll try to explain to staff what it is.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

The other thing is, and it's not part of that, but I just came back from a meeting today that the Carpenter's Union decided to donate \$5,000 sponsorship toward our gala.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Wonderful. Thank you. I should note that you've been doing that every year. We thank you again yet another year. Is there anything else?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

No, that's it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Development Committee, David.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

The "Night at El Morocco" is ten days away, and it's basically the only thing we're concentrating on at the moment. Yesterday we had a very long committee meeting of approximately three and a half hours. It wore some of us down, but we went over every detail being that the next ten days is going to be when 90 percent of the work happens for this event.

With that said, without counting many of our Trustees, we have over 100 tickets committed. We have pretty close if not a little over \$40,000 in sponsorships. We're in the black. We're going to be making money on this event. Tonight we will have a better grasp because we have, I understand, some more Trustees that have committed to taking tables. With that, I would recommend that all the Trustees who are bringing people with them would also reach into their pockets at the gala to try to pull it out by buying raffle tickets because every dollar now spent is going to be dollars that go to the Vanderbilt Museum from this point forward.

We have more sponsorships coming in. I don't want to include them until they're committed, but we have been told that there are more sponsorships and more ticket sales. This final week is historically when the public tickets get sold. Everyone usually waits, but we are getting calls with interest from a *Long Island Pulse* advertisement, which was I believe on page five or close to that. It was a great placement, full-page ad from Nada, who is a great friend of the museum. She donated that as part of her sponsorship. Additionally, she's donated approximately 200 goody bags for the event. She is a great friend of the museum, and we're going to get a lot of exposure from that.

Although this is part of the Public Relations Report, I'll have to make a point that Todd Shapiro has done some really nice things for us in regard to this event. Friday Channel 12 News will be here to do a piece on the Vanderbilt and the "Night at El Morocco" gala. We will have something, hopefully, for them to report on. It comes directly from Todd Shapiro's office.

Additionally, *Newsday* has committed to doing a piece on the "Night at El Morocco" and the Vanderbilt Museum for next week before the gala.

We have email blasts going out this week to remind people about the gala. We met with the event coordinator yesterday who did a detailed walk-through as to where décor is going to be located, tent locations, entertainment placement, and all of that so that everybody is on the same page. We went over décor. We went over the smallest little details as far as where extension cords are going to be and whatnot. We have a really good grasp on what's going to happen this year.

I'm pretty excited because I know we're going to make money. Hopefully next month we're going to come back here with a good report. That's about it for the "Night at El Morocco."

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Bill and Mollie Rogers are our honorees. Bill gave me this check earlier today to forward to you.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

Just to make a point on the record, if it wasn't for Dr. and Mollie Rogers, this museum wouldn't be where it is today. He has done a great many things for us, and for him to come forward and give us a sponsorship on top of the donations and work that he has done on the board is exemplary. There aren't a lot of men and women out there that would give this kind of gratitude to the museum. We appreciate it. Certainly we want to make a special night for them.

(Maria Figalora entered the meeting at 7:50 P.M.)

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think it's very important. Another thing that Bill has done, which is of critical importance to the museum, is that Bill has made a million dollar pledge to the institution and has given somewhere in the area of a quarter of a million dollars so far toward his pledge. Some of that money was borrowed by the museum to meet cash flow purposes. Since the money that Bill gave is targeted funds, we did that with his permission with the caveat that it would be returned to his fund. Bill understands that the museum is desperately in need of cash flow money. I believe there is an \$85,000 debt, and he has agreed to allow the museum to in essence not pay back these targeted funds. So he has agreed to transfer that to the operating fund as opposed to the targeted fund. That is a huge change in our finances. I don't know how much more Bill can do, but I greatly appreciate what he has done. I know that Bill and Mollie are a team, but Dr. Rogers represents the team. Thank you very much. In honor of all they have done, I think we should all do what we can show our appreciation. If you were to add the \$85,000 and the \$10,000, he's really almost to the \$100,000 level for this event. That's more than significant. That's fabulous. Go ahead, David.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

We're winding up at this point, just formalizing our numbers. In regard to raffles, this year we have a multitude of great raffle prizes, many more than last year. We have significant raffle prizes. My hat is off to Marjorie and Maria Figalora –

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

You didn't see the dress.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

Excuse me?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

Matt Swinson brought some really great pieces today.

**MR. SWINSON:**

She's going to use that as a dress.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

You mean the jersey.

**MR. SWINSON:**

Yes, she's going to use it as a dress.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

It's very, very long.

**MR. SWINSON:**

It's a XXXL.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

And it's signed.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

Thank you, Matt. He always comes through with the sports memorabilia.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

Oh, there's more in there.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Yes, there's more stuff in there.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

Yes, I think there's a Willie McGinnist jersey from the Browns in there.

**MR. SWINSON:**

Yes.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

They have always come through. A special note of thanks for Maria Figalora. She always pulls up with a truckload of items. I don't know how she pulls it off, but I'm never concerned. I remember saying to Carol, "Don't worry about the raffles. It's not going to be a problem." That's how much faith I have in our committee as far as raffled items. They make it easy. Everybody on this committee – this is not a name committee. These people on this committee this year have participated in a major part of this event. I can't think of anybody who sat idle on this event. That goes a long way because usually committees are formed by names, and not everybody always

contributes, but in this committee everybody has worked very, very hard on the event. With that said, let's have a great time. I'm looking forward to it.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

We are still accepting raffle prizes at this time.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I have four more in the car.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Great.

**MR. SWINSON:**

What do you have?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Paintings and a sculpture. That should be a little bit different. Some of them fit in with the theme because they're from Thailand and that kind of stuff.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

One other note before we finalize this part of the meeting. Any Board Members who are going to take tickets, try to let us know as soon possible because that gives us a good grasp on what we're doing. We have committed – we know from the Board Members that are on the committee what they're taking and the rest we would really like to know what your commitment is so that we can tabulate all the money on ticket sales.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Bill told me that he will be taking about 14 tickets.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

I think I wrote that down.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We'll probably fill out the 16 that he's committed to. Also the Bank of America came through again. We are very grateful to them. They matched what they did last year. I think that's four or five years in a row. We're moving along. We really are. Anything else, David?

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

No, I think that's it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

You've been a great Chairman. You have a great Committee. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

It's all about the Committee.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, Education and Exhibits Committee.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

We have a brief report tonight. As you look around the lobby, you'll notice that it is in the state of being painted. We have a new color scheme. We're going with blues this time and silver. I hope you all like it.

The staff is researching options to replace the rug. One of the options we're looking at is carpet tiles so that we will no longer have the large expensive replacement level it warrants.

Staff is putting together new exhibits for the lobby, such as an exhibit on different types of telescopes.

The whale-shark, the taxidermists have been here once a month on average since July. The repair work is done. This required lots of equipment installed in the habitat, the rolling scaffold, boost in the electricity going into the habitat, etc. In October they will begin the refinishing work, and after that all that will be remaining is the painting. When the taxidermists come it's not just one studio that comes. There are six different studios coordinating six different people. So it is a lot of work to bring the people here. We are very pleased that they are able to manage to come once a month, since July. Anyone who wishes to follow their work you can do so on-line. You can go to [www.taxidermy.com](http://www.taxidermy.com) and search for whale-shark. It's all about our whale-shark, and you can follow the progress. There are pictures and text including these pictures of our staff working on the whale-shark with the taxidermists.

A one-year extension of the IMLS grant was given to May 31, 2008. This is standard. We were very pleased to receive it. Carol has been approved as a signatory for the grant process.

The "Haunting Shows" have been installed in the planetarium and are now showing in preparation of Halloween. The "Moon Show" will begin in November. Education shows are now being installed in preparation for the beginning of the school year. That preparation for the school year has been completed, and the first education program will be given on September 25. The first planetarium show for the season was given on September 18.

The garden clubs are coming on October 15 to begin the planning sessions for the holiday shows and decorating the mansion. Yes, we are already talking about the holidays here at the Vanderbilt.

All planning is complete for our Fall Fun Fest, which is scheduled for the weekend of October 25 to October 28. That is a very well attended time for us, and we do raise a lot of money in that one very brief weekend, so it's good that everything is in place for it already.

Everything in the planetary is working well. I should knock wood. The stars are crisp and bright and bookings are going very well for the public, education and planetarium programs. They were very pleased to report.

Right now staff is in the process of creating a postcard, which we use to mail to members with current information highlighted, which will be distributed on a seasonal basis.

Also, we want to take a moment to pass on to you the news that Attila Hejja, the artist, passed away recently at the age of 53. I don't know if many of you recall the stamp display we used to have here in the lobby, but he designed the stamps that were displayed here in the lobby, and he did many shows for us. We could call on him in a minute's notice, and he would come down here and put up an exhibit for us and do shows for us and presentations. He was a very good friend to the museum, and we will miss him quite a bit.

That's the end of our report, unless anybody has any questions.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Thank you very much for that report. Finance Committee, Michael.

**MR. DELUISE:**

As Steve Gittelman mentioned before, we are still financially challenged. If you look at your report or actuals for the month of July, we're \$32,000 less than we had budgeted. Our Finance Committee met with Carol and Barbara on Monday, and we looked at seeing how we can take some baby steps to move things forward. Over the next few meetings, we'll talk about ideas on how we think we can move forward some of these.

Something that has helped us is our public relations person, Todd Shapiro, who has donated the money – we still owed Todd Shapiro quite a bit of money. We just have not been paying him, and Todd has donated that money to the museum, which will substantially help us with our payables to the tune of almost \$25,000 – over \$24,000, but what he has done has gone beyond that. He has actually agreed to help the museum by cutting his monthly fee in half. So for us right now, that's a big step. That's one of those baby steps. Again, we want to thank Todd for doing that.

He has been doing, as Dave mentioned before, quite a bit of public relations for us, so I don't think we're going to be minimizing the amount of work we're getting out of it. His donation of \$24,200 and change or whatever it's going to be is just very, very well received. We need that. Carol will work with us to see how we can do other things that will help make that deficit a little bit less.

I guess that's the end of my report. We do have to watch every dollar that we're spending, and we have to continue to do that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, Director's Report, Carol.

**MS. HART:**

It's been a very busy last few weeks gearing up for the start of the school coming back to our site. The renovation of the lobby is part of that. We're sprucing things up, as well as the grounds and any areas that are heavily used by our school children. We also are paying special attention to leaks that we had in a variety of places. We were able to bring some of those under control. We think we're in very good shape. This week, Friday, we start with our school programs, so we're happy to see them coming back.

You will also notice in your packets we had a request from Steve Israel's office to host a hearing here, a Congressional Hearing, on our site for the Long Island Sound. This will take place Columbus Day weekend, a Saturday morning, in our tent. This is a non-partisan committee that is discussing the future of our Sound. Our site, obviously, is the perfect location for such a site. I wanted to bring that to your attention and get your feedback on that.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Okay, let's bring that up for discussion purposes. It is bi-partisan. My understanding is that Christopher Shays is a Republican.

**MS. HART:**

He is.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

And Steve Israel is a Democrat. I'm only mentioning that so that you would know what their party affiliations are. I don't think this is a political event, but I do understand that it was originally scheduled at Coindre Hall and it is now looking for a place to land. I want to know from the Board input, and then I want a motion to approve or disapprove. Marge?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I think that this particular hearing is a good opportunity for us to expand our horizons a bit. We have never had anything like this here at the Vanderbilt. I think Carol is correct in saying that our venue is appropriate. We do have Cornell Cooperative here with the waterfront and their activities. But more than that, we look out on the Sound. It is bi-partisan. We are not taking a position. We are merely offering them the venue. I don't see a downside here. The publicity and coverage would be more than appropriate for us. It points out our scientific bend. I don't see a downside. I can't see one other than if someone is going to oppose the hearing itself on our site.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I'm not opposed to it. I should put that on the record, but I am concerned as to why Coindre Hall withdrew. We don't know. It just kind of always makes me nervous when someone else backs out. What was it that made them withdraw?

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Is it something like a cost associated with this meeting?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

That was my next question.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

Is there special security that's going to be necessary? Do they pay for all that and other items that may come up? I don't know.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think we could only take it on if all costs were covered and the Director would have to determine costs and put together a budget and submit that to the Congressmen for their understanding that we can't subsidize the event in any way. Our budget simply doesn't allow it. As far as whether we welcome

them or not, I certainly welcome the debate. It's great. But is it fitting for us to go ahead with this?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

C-SPAN usually covers these hearings. They may be covering this off-site.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We don't know.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

I think it would be an appropriate question to ask.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

When is this hearing?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

October 6.

**MS. HART:**

It's the Saturday of Columbus Day weekend. I forget what date that is.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

October 6. We really don't have a lot of time. We don't have a meeting between then and now. I think it comes down to discussion and decision. Would anyone like to formulate a motion?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

I'll make a motion that we authorize the Director to proceed based on the information that she receives and that it fits into what we're looking for as far as covering of the costs that are associated with it and anything else that might come up.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

If I may, on the motion. When you say proceed as long as costs are covered, you're not making the Director responsible for determining as to the appropriateness of it.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

No, not at all.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

This is a decision on costs.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

Yes.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Do I have a second?

**MR. DELUISE:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We have a motion and a second.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

So the decision is going to fall strictly on costs.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Essentially. If I understand the motion correctly, we are approving having it, as long as our costs are covered and that any necessary security is provided.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

We already basically said that it's a bi-partisan affair. Politically I don't see any problem, as long as everybody will be equally represented. This is something that's also out there to help the environment, which I believe with Cornell Extension and everything, a lot of their work is based on that also.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I would add that Willie would want us to do it. He would really be upset if we didn't. I look at it that way. He would want us to be involved. It fits with the mission of the museum. The question is, we will never know why Coindre Hall is not doing it.

**MR. OLIVIERI:**

It could have been something simply that they had a conflict in their schedule for that weekend.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We have to just go ahead blindly and make the decision. We're not making a political decision. We're making a decision as to whether we want to participate in the debate. We don't know that there isn't a political agenda behind this, and that we might be moving forward.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

I think the problem also is the time constraints that are here. We really don't have much running time to dig in and find out if there are problems or if anybody has a problem with us moving forward on something like this.

**MR. D'ORAZIO:**

It might be all the more reason why we have to in our motion state that their event could be held here at their expense. We can't be responsible for any of the expenses of this because of the liability. If it's a politically motivated event, than we don't want to be a part of it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I think we have to say that we're not expressing an opinion on any of the politics involved. We're providing a venue. We are not aware of the problems. I have not canvassed anyone on this issue.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

We are providing a venue on an environmental issue.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Are we prepared to vote? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Ms. LeBow, Mr. Parr & Dr. Pecorale. Two vacant positions.)**

You understand, Carol, what your charge is.

**MS. HART:**

Yes. Okay, I also wanted to report that Florence Ogg did retire. She was our Director of the Historic Mansion and the archives and collections. We had a wonderful going-off party, I think with the participation of the Trustees who were able to come. She sent a wonderful thank you. It was nice to have all the staff get together in honor of someone who has been here 14 years and certainly did have a very positive impact on the museum and was able to put our archives in a state where now researchers can come in from all over the world and easily find the information about Willie that they want to find. That was very nice.

Along personnel matters –

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

One comment on Florence. I'm sorry. I had a tremendous amount of interaction with her because I am continually working on the book that has yet to surface. It was wonderful to have somebody who had a great depth of knowledge about Willie, his yachts, his personal life, whatever it was that was around. I will miss the dialogue that I had with Florence because sometimes you just wouldn't believe the stuff that Willie did. It's great to go ahead and find something and call someone up and say, "Florence, you're not going to believe this." I think it's an important component that we have to have here. We will be losing that component that Florence provided. There are others, but we lost one.

**MS. HART:**

She was certainly a fierce protector of our collections. I think that spirit will live on, even though she is not here. I still feel that Florence will know if you touched something, and that's a good thing. She certainly brought that level of professionalism to it. We will miss her.

Again, we did lose another one of our staff members, Bridgett. She had left for maternity leave. She had her baby, a little boy, and she won't be coming back. She sent a letter and said she is going to be staying home. That was a full-time position. While she was out on maternity leave we had a part-time person in doing these personnel issues. She will continue to work as a part-time person. So that's a slight change.

In August I did meet with Budget Review. We had a very long meeting. We went over many aspects of our proposed 2008 Operating Budget. We did a walk of the property. I think we got a good understanding of where we're headed and what we were proposing. Budget Review was able to really make sense of all of my explanations. I was in contact with Lance Mallamo before, and he was very helpful since he had put together that budget in explaining his thought process behind that.

We look forward to working more closely with them. They had some interesting ideas. One is to look a little bit more closely to our utilities and

maybe help us on efficiency in that area. We have started the dialogue, and we will be continuing that dialogue with Budget Review.

Also we have had a few visits over the past month with DPW. We're developing a new working relationship. We had a four-hour meeting last week walking the grounds, going over all our upcoming capital projects, work that had been done in the past, future work, and the processes. Everyone has been very helpful in getting me up to speed on that as well. We will be meeting every other week on site here to go over these capital projects in more depth. I'm very thankful for the help I'm getting on that, as well.

August was a challenging month in some ways for our institution. We did have an incident that required us to shut down the planetarium to the public for about a week. Steve was very involved in that. He was hugely helpful to the museum. He was here night and day, 10:30 one night I know he was here looking after us. I don't know if, Steve, you want to talk about that incident.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

No, you can get into it.

**MS. HART:**

On Tuesday, I believe it was August 21 around 12:00, it was reported to me by one of our maintenance crew that he had noticed something while cleaning water in the basement of the planetarium that looks like it might have been mercury. I immediately came over, and we contacted Bill Dieck. Phil from DPW was on-site. We went down to look at the flooded area, and indeed the feeling was that we might be dealing with some small amount of mercury down there. We immediately decided we should close down the building and have all staff, as well as public leave the building until we determined exactly what we were dealing with. We contacted DPW and had the people who know how to deal with this come on site. They did come. They came with hand monitors. They did not detect any levels on any of the public areas on the first floor and actually even down in the basement it wasn't until they got very close that they determined it was in fact mercury. There were some very low levels of reading and that this mercury would require notification of the Board of Health, as well as the Haz Mat Unit to come in and deal with it. At that point, DPW came in and took over.

Again, I contacted Steve almost immediately to help in dealing with this problem from all the different aspects that something like this had. It did require the Haz Mat team to come in, other kinds of documentation and testing to make sure that the air was clear in all levels, and of course, making sure that the public was safe at all times. That was our foremost consideration. We were always very clear that we were not open to the public if there were any issues or questions at all on that. So we waited until we got the okay that everything was removed, things were tested again, and there were no levels detected anywhere in the building.

We have received a letter from DPW with the test results, again, that there were no detectable levels and a recommendation, which in fact we have already started to inventory the building completely so that we know where the mercury is and where there still might be more mercury. I should note

that we never were able to find the source of the mercury that was in the water on the floor of the basement. We didn't find anything broken – or actually, the Haz Mat team that came in didn't find anything, so we're not 100 percent sure what happened there. It's possible if something broke a while back and was in a box someplace and because of the flooding of the water that it came out a little bit.

There is still mercury in the building in our Goto projector. The projector has counterweights that have a small amount of mercury in each one. There's something like 32 of these counterweights. We have some switches or relays that are in the wall, and there is a degree of mercury in there. We have done the inventory, and I've been assured by our planetarium staff that there are no switches or counterbalances or other kinds of equipment with mercury in storage in any basement, closet or crawlspace. So at this point, we are dealing with just the switches and the counterbalances. We will be reporting back and asking DPW for help in figuring out if we can remove some of these switches. There is a whole panel – maybe a fifth of them are actually being used. The rest potentially could be removed, but it would require a lot of planning. It would probably be an expensive proposition. With the removal of the Goto projector, that problem will be taken care of.

Are there any questions?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

There should be a ton of questions. Let me say this, Carol did a superb job on this. I mean, this was a trial under fire. It was clearly a situation that she should not have been confronted with in her second week on the job. It was, first of all, something that shouldn't have happened. It was something that – the flood itself was due to a large circulation unit in this space. The space is, by the way, if you go outside of the building and you go behind the building, there is a rather uncomfortable little alley way and then there is a short stairwell that goes down and beneath that back side of the planetarium there is a utility room that has circuit boards and on air conditioning circulation unit or two. It's a room that should not be used for storage. That's one of the requests that I made, that no storage be stored there. So picture this room that has a large circulation unit and it draws air into the building from outside. There's a grate. The air comes in from the grate, it condenses in the condenser, it falls onto a panel, and then the panel has a pipe. The pipe goes into the ground, and the water should be pumped out there. That's if the level rises.

My understanding is that periodically there would be a flood. It would overflow the panel, the catch basin, and because the pipe might become clogged, it's not hard to picture how the pipe would become clogged, and that that's what happened. It clogged, but there have been floods previously. I cannot say to you that the floods previously would do to the clog of the overflow from the air conditioner, but it does seem to me and to the engineers that I was with, that that was the source.

The first thing is that you have a source for a flood that happened repeatedly and had happened repeatedly in the past year. So we're not going back that far.

The second thing is that there was storage. I'm going from the theory for what might have happened because this is a theory that the engineers have come up with, that there had been a clean-up some years ago, by the way, and during that clean-up perhaps the instrument that the original mercury had come from had been removed during – by the way, 17 micro-grams was the highest reading I saw when I was down there. The OSHA requirement is 100 micro-grams. So 17 is a detectable amount. It's above the calibration of the equipment. Therefore, we took it as if it was 200 micro-grams. It didn't matter. We handled it that way.

Throughout this process Carol stuck to it like glue. She was on it all the time. I think she really deserves a lot of credit. That was quite a test. It probably wasn't on her resume. That's just something that you have to understand. Whatever she could have done in the past two months she did, and it was very well handled. Extremely well handled.

The conditions that led to it I would put on the not well handled category. After that, I understand that Carol requested that all the ignition units be checked and to make sure that the same conditions didn't exist elsewhere. Her follow-through was superb. Her ability to call in the various authorities was right on the money. There was no question that, yes, she called me into it. Yes, she did use my decision making powers representing the Board repeatedly and appropriately. It would have been I think wrong of her not to involve me, but I think if I wasn't there she could have handled it. She did a superb job. I think you need to know that because when they don't do what we want them to do, we sure do complain. When they do -- and you're all sitting here probably most of you hearing about this for the first time. When a problem like that rolls down the road and this is when you're hearing about it, this is the way it's supposed to be. Right on the record. I think you ought to know that she did a great job.

**MR. SWINSON:**

I'm just curious. When was the last emergency for a situation that came about like this at the museum?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

I don't think the last one rose to this level.

**MR. SWINSON:**

Okay.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

There was a clean-up, but I don't think it was to this level. Marge, do you have a different recall? I'm only asking because I heard you talking.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

There was a mercury spill in the planetarium from the Goto.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Yes, but that was localized. There was no reason to believe it was spreading. It was –

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

We had to call in DPW and then had to call in a Haz Mat team, I do recall.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Right, but it was nothing to this level. That was where something broke. Here is a localized, if you will, puddle of mercury. This wasn't like that. Here it is where there was a droplet here and a droplet there. We were reading it in the air. We're not talking about what we had last time. I think this was far more significant and extremely well handled.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

Are we considering looking into purchasing Edmund Scientific Emergency Mercury Clean-up Kit?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We haven't gotten to that. We have been working with the Department of Health and taking their advice. The letter that we received from the Department of Health, and Carol has already told you this, but we received an inquiry regarding our inventory or possible sources of mercury, and they wanted to discuss with us the potential need for clean-up. That's where we are with the Department of Health.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

It came up when we had the leak in the Goto.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

But if that happened again, I would still handle it the way we did this time. I honestly do not feel that staff should be cleaning up mercury. I commend staff for its enthusiasm but I would prefer staff to simply upon discovering a spill of any hazardous material, that they withdrew and that they get the public out of range, and let the Director handle it from that point. They would be amateurs when they did it. We don't need amateurs doing clean-up. It's just not the way to handle it.

Is there more, Carol?

**MS. HART:**

Just to thank you, Steve. It was an example of when an emergency happens how I can call and have some back-up and have some assistance. Steve was here 10:30 on a Friday night meeting with DPW and the other guys, the engineers. I also have to say that the engineers from DPW were wonderful. This was over a weekend. They were here 8:00 in the morning. They were working almost around the clock to cover this. The weekend, unfortunately, hurt us because we had to wait longer for lab results. Again, being very, very overly cautious, unfortunately, on one of our biggest weeks of the year, it almost made me cry. It was raining outside this Tuesday. We were sold-out, and I had to send everyone home. We were closed for a week. That is going to impact our August budget.

Staff also, Bill and his staff, did a terrific job in the clean-up and dealing with the public.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It just went great. It really did. The County was superb. They did not have to come to our assistance in the fashion that they did. If you notice, it's not a

budget item because the County agreed to pay for the clean-up. They didn't have to do that. We have to be grateful for that. Had they not agreed to pay for the clean-up, I don't know how we would have accomplished things in an expeditious and safe manner. It really was outstanding. It really was.

Anything else?

**MS. HART:**

No, I think that's it.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

President's Report. I have spent a lot of time with Carol. I made my thoughts clear as to how she handled that event. Carol, I feel comfortable enough in a sense to give you my opinion as to how things are going.

In the first week, the transition I thought was a little rough between Lance and Carol because Lance was gone most of the time, which made it difficult. Then subsequent to that, I think Carol has been working seemingly around the clock. She seems to be on top of everything that I could imagine. She has a steep learning curve, and she's climbing it extremely well. I wanted to put that on the record. I hope that I can come back and tell you that every month. I think I will. I just want you to know that.

I want to reiterate that there is some business that we should discuss in executive session. One thing that we have is an issue of a contract with Cornell Cooperative that is outstanding in the sense that it has been on the table for a while. Quite frankly, if you want to discuss that contract, I would be glad to go into executive session because it is a contractual negotiation.

The second executive session I would like to have involves certain staff changes that we made. Since this involves discussing certain staff members, I would like to bring that into executive session. Can I have a motion to go into executive session for those reasons?

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

So moved.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Ms. LeBow, Mr. Parr & Dr. Pecorale. Two vacant positions.)**

**(Executive Session 8:35 P.M. – 9:20 P.M.)**

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We are now back from executive session and are in session. Matt Swinson has agreed to serve on the Audit Committee. Carol, you had something to say.

**MS. HART:**

We would like to appoint Stephanie Gress as Director of Curatorial Affairs of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

It's the Director's prerogative to make that appointment. Are there any other reports? In executive session we discussed the pending contract with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Can I have a motion, please?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

The motion would be to start charging them for their utilities effective October 1.

**MR. DELUISE:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Is there any discussion? I thought we had agreed that they would pay the utility bills that they received, that even if the utility bill covers a period before October 1, that they start paying for all utilities beginning October 1 for their use and that any facilities that aren't covered by a separate meter, the Director would be empowered to arrange some way of measuring, perhaps a percentage of the total. All in favor? Opposed? **It passes unanimously. (Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Ms. LeBow, Mr. Parr & Dr. Pecorale. Two vacant positions.)**

Any new business? Old business? We have already established a need and have had an executive session. Gretchen?

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

We have a meeting scheduled for November 21, which is Thanksgiving Eve.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

We are really hard working people.

**MS. OLDRIN-MONES:**

Could we be hard working the week before?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Of course.

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

The second Wednesday of the month I can't make it. What about the 28<sup>th</sup>?

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Is the 28<sup>th</sup> okay with everyone? It's the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, then. Please send out a memo to that effect.

Okay, let's get there and sell those tickets. Let's make this gala something to be very proud of. Let's bring it over the top.

**MS. FUHRMANN:**

If anyone has any raffles, please let me know.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

Can I have a motion to adjourn?

**MR. MACCHIONE:**

Motion.

**DR. ROGERS:**

Second.

**DR. GITTELMAN:**

All in favor? Opposed? We're adjourned. **(Vote: 10/0/0/5 Absent: Ms. LeBow, Mr. Parr & Dr. Pecorale. Two vacant positions.)**

**(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:40 P.M.)**

**SG:ap**