

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on November 28, 2007 in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman - President
Daniel Olivieri - 1st Vice President
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones - 2nd Vice President
Michael B. DeLuise - Treasurer
David D'Orazio - Secretary
Marjorie Kossoy Fuhrmann - Trustee
Susan LeBow - Trustee
Dr. Anthony Pecorale - Trustee
Dr. William Rogers - Trustee
Matthew Swinson – Trustee
Carol Ghiorso-Hart – Acting Executive Director
John Pokorny - Staff
Ann Marie Pastore – Stenographer

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

William Macchione - Trustee

ABSENT:

Maria Figalora - Trustee
Ronald Parr - Trustee

(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

Good evening, everybody. This is a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. There do not appear to be any guests so the list is exceptionally short. May I have a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I'll make a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 17, 2007.

MR. DELUISE:

I'll second that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Motion carries. (Vote: 8/0/0/7 Not Present: Ms. LeBow & Mr. Swinson. Absent: Mr. Macchione, Ms. Figalora & Mr. Parr. Two vacant positions.)**

Public Relations Report?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Someone might be arriving at 7:30.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, we'll defer the Public Relations Report and move to the Education and Exhibits Report, Marge.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I'm going to do this as long as I can and then she's going to take over before I start to cry. Yesterday the Education and Exhibits Committee meeting was a bittersweet – I can't do this. You read the first paragraph, and then I'll take over.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

A bittersweet farewell to you, Marjorie. The staff feted Marjorie with food and lovely gifts and thanked her for her many, many years of service to the committee. In return Marjorie brought her own gifts, an entire SUV full of supplies and materials and gave them to the Education and Exhibits Committee.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Perhaps the best gift of all was all the news contributed by the staff. While we were meeting, the telescope actually arrived. The old telescope is being taken down, and several possible uses for it are being considered. This telescope was acquired through a grant from State Senator Flanagan. We thank him for his generosity. Having this new telescope enhances the planetarium and opens up the possibility for more programming and shows. Special viewings, such as a Mars special, are being planned.

Attendance has doubled at the laser shows over the last three weeks, due in large part to advertising and promotion in several venues, such as *Good News*, Channel 21, 55, News 12 and on-line *Newsday*. Staff is considering increasing the number of shows, possibly adding an earlier family oriented show in January.

Holiday preparations are right on track. Among the decorations on the tree will be butterfly clip-ons that are crafted by our Education Department. An educator will be available to demonstrate and help make these butterfly decorations for the tree. Beth and Dawn, of our Education staff, consistently designed these wonderfully inventive, imaginative great craft projects. It is the opinion of other staff members that the crafts offered and produced now are the best ever had at the Vanderbilt. The butterfly clip-ons are just one example of the museum quality crafts they produce. Additionally, 37 volunteers from six different garden clubs were in to decorate the mansion for the holidays, and some new decorations are almost completed.

Happily the first half of the funding for the star projector was appropriated by the Suffolk County Legislature, and we thank them.

Staff is looking at expanding our summer educational camp programs to ten weeks. The summer school letters will go out in January. We have a lot to offer – spectacular crafts, the mummy, the planetariums, dinosaurs – we have it all. The planetarium tree and lobby are being decorated in a snowflake winter wonderland theme. Look up and around and you will see it.

The taxidermists who have been working on the whale-shark and other specimens will be back in January after hunting season is over. They say the restoration is one half complete. They have taken a number of small specimens back to their shops to work on them there, such as birds and some other small animals.

Lorraine has put together a space outreach program for Margaret Finney in the William Floyd School District. These outreach efforts have been so very successful in the past. We were mentioned in *The Neighbor* newspaper in a front page article and photo featuring first grade students from St. Paul's Lutheran School in East Northport who had visited the planetarium. We're going to pass around the newspaper article for everyone to see. Lorraine was also given a citation for her November 14 presentation on planetarium and technology in software and how to use it to portray scientific concepts. She emphasized to the audience of educators and software vendors how well the planetarium technology works with the other museum assets and what an outstanding educational venue the Vanderbilt is. We'll pass around a letter and the certification.

Dave and Lorraine have created a new program to offer in the planetarium. It's a "Story Time Under the Stars" program for parents and their children to come to the planetarium and hear stories read under the stars. They have entitled it, "Our Night Out," and welcomed children to wear comfortable pajamas and bring blankets. January's theme is stories about the moon, and February's theme is snow. Books and images will be projected onto the theater ceiling, and Lorraine will do an educational piece about the objects in the nighttime sky. We're passing around a first draft of the informational flyer postcard that will be mailed out about the program. If you have any children's books you'd like to donate,

they would be welcome. Dave reports that Ash Enterprise is coming in next week to evaluate the pit wall in anticipation of the installation of the new star projector. Our goal is to install the new star projector with the least amount of disruption to the routine in the planetarium. He has also developed a new planet program about moon exploration and space age. This is to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Sputnik and the beginnings of the space race.

You can finish.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

So as you can hear from Marjorie, it was all good news at the Education and Exhibits Committee meeting. I would just like to say that Marjorie has given many things over the years and her last collection of gifts caused great excitement as the staff sorted through an entire carload of things and supplies too numerous to detail. There literally was something for everybody. She has brought more stuff with her tonight. I don't know how that's going to be transferred but –

MS. FUHRMANN:

I need help. I can't lift any of it out of my car. I had to get help from my neighbors to get it in my car.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

I think it's computer monitors and things like that.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Computer monitors, baskets, that box of note cards, a carton of note cards that Beth wanted. She's going to rip off the hard part and use the covers to decoupage, except Stephanie said, "No, no, I want some of the cards."

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

We'll continue to benefit from all of her efforts, her contributions, and her generosity. We will certainly miss her humor, her expertise and her generosity over the years. You are truly one of a kind. I think she will be very, very difficult to replace and impossible to forget. Good luck.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Thank you. You've been a great partner. That ends our report -- the last "our" report.

(Susan LeBow entered the meeting at 7:25 P.M.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

Any comments or questions on that report? I don't know where or when the best time is to make remarks so I'm just going to pick a time and going to say now is a pretty good time. I forget how long you've been here.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Just shy of 15 years.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, I will tell you that during those 15 years, the one thing you were was intense. You were always there, generous with your time, and generous with your family's time. I remember the Eagle Scouts project you boasted about. Your attendance has been marvelous. Your volunteering in various committees has been astounding. You are the hardest working Trustee that I have ever experienced in my tenure here. Clearly you are dedicated. I'd love to have a half a dozen more just like you. You may have some more like you at home, but I have a feeling you're taking him with you.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I am taking him with me.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It actually came to a point where we started thinking alike.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Which is scary.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Which is scary. I don't think that there is any way that this institution can adequately thank somebody who has put in 15 years of hard work like you have. When you say that you and Gretchen made a great team, you were just a terrific team. You really were. I know that everybody in Education feels that way. I know that I'm speaking for many in saying that nobody would ever question your dedication and love of this institution.

MS. FUHRMANN:

They better not.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Agreed. Probably I'm hogging up too much of the time. Tony or anybody, would you like to add something to what I've said?

DR. PECORALE:

I was trying to think of when it would be an appropriate time to put a motion on the floor to thank Marjorie for the many years of dedicated service and to show our appreciation that we want to not only wish her well but to hope that whenever she is back in the area, that she'll stop in and see us.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Wild horses wouldn't keep me away.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I probably haven't seconded a motion in 20 years, but I'll second that motion.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm sure that it's unanimous.

(Matthew Swinson entered the meeting at 7:30 P.M.)

MR. SWINSON:

Sorry I'm late.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think what we were basically doing, Matt, was that you walked in on us thanking Marjorie for 15 years of service. You served as an officer. You've done it all.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I was never on Buildings and Grounds.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Never on Buildings and Grounds.

MS. FUHRMANN:

That's the only thing that I haven't been on. I missed that one. But my son did a project for them, so I guess that counts for something.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But I know that David would be the first to say that when it came to putting together the gala, you were the first one there, willing to help.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Absolutely. I want to say a personal thank you to Marjorie for your insight and your opinion when it was necessary. We needed your guidance at times. We had great conversations, and I really appreciate it.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think over the years you've offered many insights based upon your financial history, in terms of the work you used to do. You're just a wonderful, valuable trustee and friend. I guess it's my job to give you your fish.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Oh, it's beautiful.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You can't have it yet.

MS. FUHRMANN:

You picked well.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You can have it soon, but you can't have it yet because you're not done as a Trustee.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I haven't resigned yet. I just can't bring myself to write the letter. Wayne knows.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I know Wayne knows, so as soon as you decide, you can have it, but you can't have it if you –

MS. FUHRMANN:

We move next Friday.

DR. PECORALE:

I think we can let her have it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You think so?

DR. PECORALE:

Yes.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Honest to God, you have no idea what my life has been like the last few months.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All right, this will be subject to –

DR. PECORALE:

Do we have a way to find her if we have to take it back?

MS. FUHRMANN:

You could always ask Lance to knock on my door.

MS. LEBOW:

Could Marjorie formally tender her resignation in the minutes and not have to write a formal letter?

MS. FUHRMANN:

No, I have to write to the County Clerk. The letter is home. I just haven't mailed it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think that the Legislators that do read this will get the idea, though.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Most of them know.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I want to read what we wrote. It says, "Marjorie Fuhrman, Trustee, Officer, leader of Education Programs, in recognition of many years of dedicated and loving service.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Oh, that's lovely. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

MS. LEBOW:

Does anybody have a camera?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Mr. Vanderbilt took one ship around the world. The plate is from that voyage, the '29 voyage, I believe.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Nobody wants to go on and stop thanking you, but we have to go on or we'll be here all night. The Finance Committee.

MS. DELUISE:

The Finance Committee, as you can see in your packets, we have information about how we're doing. I think we're cutting expenses. We're having another positive month. We are inching away positively forward. I think November will be another very good month. We're doing very well. Expenses have been really cut. I think staff is doing a really good job, Carol. I think it will help us at the end of the year. That's the end of my report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Michael worked very hard. Carol has worked extremely hard. Barbara worked extremely hard. We went through the statements and through Carol's efforts – what we did was we rebuilt – and Michael is aware of all this, so excuse me for saying it, but what we did was we rebuilt the statement based upon not projected revenues in the sense that this is what we think we might get, but built upon what we got in years past. Then we went through and to the best of our ability, one line at a time, with considerable research involved, tried to put down what we really thought each line would be. Then after doing that, we did get fortunate and discovered that there were a few, shall we say, liabilities that were eradicated that were one-timers. That helped us through the process. Carol discovered those. Carol has done a wonderful job with this. The huge staffing in the salaries and wages made it a tremendous difference.

Now we are currently projecting a \$10,000 deficit but at dinner Bill told me that he would make a \$25,000 contribution this year, so that even though we're projecting a \$2,000 deficit, we should come up with the \$10,000 to \$15,000 surplus.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Thank you, Bill.

[APPLAUSE]

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think Carol did an absolutely sterling job. We couldn't have done it without everybody pulling together to really sit down and put together a rational budget for this year. Do you want to talk about 2008 a little bit? This might be a good time.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have to sit down and will be doing the same thing for 2008. The year 2008 is going to be a banner year for us. It's going to be the turning point for our institution, but because of the timing of our new star projector being a little uncertain, we'll probably have to come up with a few scenarios. We will be doing that. Just like we went through 2007 based on past performance, rather

than hopeful outcome, is how we're going to try to have a realistic budget as possible, accounting for some possible down time with our projector but then when we are back on line, we should have this huge increase in our revenue. We will be looking at that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Carol and I have agreed, and Michael goes along with this, that philosophically what we are doing is we're taking past revenues and using that as a means of capping what we're allowed to spend. In other words, we're not putting in that we're going to have 20 percent growth, even though that would be great. That's where we have gotten into trouble in years past. What we're doing is we're putting in essentially – we're saying we've done this for three years. In other words, for example, in October we did \$62,517. That's the line you're going to see for anticipated revenue for 2008. In other words, we're basically going to hold the earned income side as a constant based on previous performance. It will be a real budget.

MR. DELUISE:

This is the way we do it. This is going to be very good for all of us.

DR. GITTELMAN:

From there, we will come up with our expenses. If our expenses exceed revenue, then what we will do on the expense side is we will make the expenses fit the earned income from prior years. That's a pretty strict way of approaching it.

Now, as Carol mentioned to you, we have a problem. That problem is that it's a good problem, but it's still a problem. We have the first part of the projector coming in soon. We have the second part of the projector coming in later. The installation of the second part of the projector is going to be an eight-week process. Unless we could get the appropriation to fit just perfectly and get the delivery just right, it's going to fall just wrong. What we're going to try to do is be at the Legislature knocking on their door as soon as they're done with their business meeting and say, "Look, unlike normal appropriations for the Vanderbilt, you have to give us the second half to the projector in the beginning of the year so that it will coordinate with our school scheduling. Carol has already mentioned this at the Legislature. I have mentioned it to the Legislature, and we're starting to get the buzz out. This all fits in finance, but was there anything you want to add to this?"

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No.

MR. DELUISE:

No, I would like to commend Carol, everyone else, and you, Steve, for really doing what's right and making this the strongest museum. I think everything is really going to go really well. I think the year 2008 is going to be the year for the Vanderbilt.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Mike, as Treasurer, you deserve a tremendous amount of credit. I also want to thank Carol for meeting me at all hours of the night to work on some of the stuff

no matter where we are. Everybody is doing a really good job. Marge, you're leaving us in very good shape. Thanks.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I'm just sorry I'm leaving at the most exciting time of all with this new stuff coming up.

DR. GITTELMAN:

To end the year on a positive note – Tony, do you want to say something?

DR. PECORALE:

I just have a question. When the first half of the projector comes in, does that mean we're closed down from the time that it's installed until it – in other words, does the planetarium still operate with just the one half?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We will have different operating capabilities but we will have new and pretty exciting capabilities from the first half.

DR. PECORALE:

The first half, I take it, is January through say March or April.

DR. GITTELMAN:

One of the things that we're finding here is that getting this thing purchased has been a bit of a problem. For some reason, it hasn't gone down the traditional pathway, and we're trying to find out who signs on the bottom line to buy it. That is a challenge that's going to involve some time between now and weeks to come. We've got the money, and we need somebody to do a purchase order. It's just that right now it doesn't seem as if DPW thinks they're the ones who do it. Although, they say that normally they would be, correct?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's just a very unusual –

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's a strange thing. Unusual means caution in government. We have to get that first part purchased, and then we have to get in early, right after the business meeting to get the second part, because it takes time for the manufacturer to create it. Then when they come to install it, there will be a lag time.

DR. PECORALE:

How long?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're estimating about eight weeks.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

To install.

MS. LEBOW:

At that point, nothing is going on in –

DR. GITTELMAN:

For those eight weeks, we will not be in operation. The reason why that relates so importantly is that what we're going to do with 2008 is come up with multiple scenarios. If the eight weeks falls here, this is what we expect to anticipate the damage to be to revenues. If the eight weeks falls here, this is what we're going to do. But we're not going to change the revenue line, per se. We can't have multiple revenue lines, but you can have notes to the budget. Our budget is already submitted and has already been published. We still have to come out with a budget that reflects this change in philosophy.

DR. ROGERS:

I would like to say something here. The contribution, I would like to see it used as a general operating expense. I would like to see it applied as to the audio system, the dinosaur system, which we have spoken about and hasn't been coming about. We have been trying to hold them off on making any donation toward that because nothing has happened. But in view of the fact that we need this audio system, I would like to see that the money be applied to something of that nature to help facilitate getting that started and getting it in here.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, it would still fall as income during 2007.

DR. ROGERS:

That's okay. I mean, I don't care how you apply it on the books, but I would like the Trustees to realize that this thing has been hanging for some time, and I did make a commitment to help get it started. I would like this to be considered as part of it, so somebody could get it started.

DR. PECORALE:

Are you talking about the audio system for the planetarium or the audio system for the –

DR. GITTELMAN:

He's talking about the sound system.

MS. FUHRMANN:

He's talking about the audio antenna.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right. Was there anything else? Are there any questions? Really, if you have them, go ahead, anything that comes to your mind.

DR. PECORALE:

Well, school is closed for a week in February. That has always been a pretty strong week for us. We're not talking about closing down that week.

MS. FUHRMANN:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

No.

DR. PECORALE:

And we're not talking about closing down Easter week.

MS. FURHMANN:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're looking at September.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

September is our slowest month. The end of August, September or beginning of October, that would be our preferable shut-down time.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Look at this year's actuals. If we were to be hit in August and September – September had \$36,000 in revenue – but the planetarium revenues probably are lowest still because in September the schools are not sending out buses to go to the planetarium. When you close something that isn't in that drastic use for that particular period, it's not going to hurt you that much. Change that, move the same installation to October or November, and you might have a completely different scenario.

MS. LEBOW:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And the idea is to get everything to fall right. Wish us luck. We'll all need it, but that's the idea. We have to sell them. We have a window here that will make a big difference; let's do it rather than clobbering us at a bad time. Okay, are there other questions regarding this Finance Report? This report replaces everything else you've received. This is the real McCoy.

MR. OLIVIERI:

I have a question.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Sure.

MR. OLIVIERI:

On the appropriations for this projector, when would that – they just passed something now for the appropriation. When is that money actually available?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Technically, that money is available now.

MR. OLIVIERI:

Right now?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right now. The question is, it's kind of like you have the money in your checking account, but you have to write the check.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

My understanding is that that first appropriation will not result in a shut-down of the museum. That's going to be the run-up to the shut-down, which will be the second appropriation.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's correct. Anything else?

DR. PECORALE:

Do we have anything that we can put in place of the planetarium for the period of time the planetarium is closed down?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

What we're looking at as far as why September is so attractive is we do have this wonderful event tent on our grounds that can hold almost 300 people. Staff has been in contact with some organizations that are looking at borrowing an inflatable dome. It looks like we'll be able to do that, so that will be one opportunity for us to make use of our event tent, to get an inflatable dome, not maybe to do as many people as we do here, but we'll be able to do something. In addition, I think NASA -- and a few things Lorraine has been investigating is getting traveling vans that have different displays. I think NASA has one, if we can time that to be on the property again. So we are looking at these other options for us. It's a little bit of a different experience but we will have something to offer our students.

DR. GITTELMAN:

When I say to you that we're going to hold expenses to the earned income, that means that we're running with a very, very stripped down machine. Making up the difference is going to fall somewhat on this board. We have to be prepared for it. We've got to pull through that September closing or whenever that closing is. Whatever the scenario is, it's a one-time thing, and we have to do the best we can to make it work.

DR. PECORALE:

Is there any chance we can get our dinosaur exhibit up and running for September? Will we have a special dinosaur something or another?

DR. GITTELMAN:

The process that Carol and her staff will do is they will come up with ideas and put them into action. They have to come up with a game plan to make up the difference from their side of it -- from the programmatic side. We, as a board, have to come up with our game plan, whatever we can do to close the gap.

DR. PECORALE:

Are we planning on terminating people or furloughing?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right now we have -- you know what? This is a balanced budget. Some of the cuts did not apply to the first half of the year. That's where we're going to get additional revenue.

DR. PECORALE:

So we are talking about if this necessity occurs of reducing staff.

DR. GITTELMAN:

No, I think we have reduced staff as far as we can. If anything, we may have to think about adding staff. Tony, let me just draw your attention to something, if I might. Look at the payroll for September and October. Those are real numbers. If you will allow my simple arithmetic, I'll just say it's \$65,000 average, those two months. Now look at the months previous to that, \$85,000 and \$75,000 – that's \$80,000. That's \$15,000 a month less on average for September and October versus all previous months for the year, roughly. That means that for January, February, March, April, May, June, July, and August, we had about \$12,000 to \$15,000. That's eight months times twelve – let's say, \$100,000. That's our \$100,000 cushion to replace staff. There will be a few staff that we have to replace. We can't go completely the way we are, but we made our changes in September.

Okay, do we have anymore questions? I think there's one additional item on the Finance Report.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Our audit for 2005 was complete and hand-delivered to a number of different County offices and mailed to the necessary places. We're a good way through the 2006 audit. In fact, we've done most of the field work here. I think we have to come back for one or two more days. We anticipate and they anticipate completing the work for the audit by the end of December for 2006. We're good with that. The nine-nineties, the fifty-five hundreds were done and compiled on time, November 15. It's been a heavy duty month for finances, but we've been really looking at things closely. I'm learning more about our payables and spreadsheets, looking at the way we're calculating the different categories, a lot of help in that regard in getting a strong handle on this. We all know the budget; it's all about the money. We'll be looking really carefully now as we go forward at the areas that we might be able to make some changes and to help balance this budget. We are very pleased that the audit is going very smoothly for 2006. We don't anticipate any problems.

MR. OLIVIERI:

When do we expect to get proposed drafts of their audit report?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Again, I expect by the end of December.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The audit was submitted to the County. The first reaction we got was, "Why are you depreciating?"

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We are not kidding. I did hand deliver it to the County Executive's Office, and that was their only comment.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I cannot be involved in the Audit Committee, but I do suggest that the Audit Committee inquire of Budget Review on how we clear this up, because that was

the Budget Office from the County Executive, not Budget Review for the Legislature. Somebody has to talk to somebody because –

MS. FUHRMANN:

This is crazy. It can't go on this way.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We do have that anomaly still in there. The year 2005, as you know, went out with that anomaly. But I'm not privy to what's going on with 2006. I just suspect that it's something that has to be dealt with. I would ask that whatever has to be done be done. Carol just glossed over this. Everything went out on time. The 2005 audit got finished, and now 2006 is going out. It didn't happen by accident. Carol has been pouring over those books. Barbara is working very hard to straighten things out. Michael, the accountant, got involved with the books, the Treasurer has gotten involved with the books, and I have gotten involved with the books. We have gone through, and we have been challenging item after item after item. Like, why are we still carrying this? Why are we still carrying that? We got opinions to reduce other things. We do have one or two more things that are going to be carried into 2008 that will work in our favor. Our payroll has dropped dramatically, but our cash flow is horrendous, just in case anyone is wondering.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We do have tremendous cash flow – in fact, the one thing that might hold up the audit is if the work won't be complete, if we can't pay the bills. That might hold it up.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But the year 2007 will not have contributed to the cash flow difficulties. Any other questions?

Nominating Committee.

MR. OLIVIERI:

The committee met and are ready to proposed a slate for today.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Let me explain. This is just a proposed slate. You vote on it in January. For those of you who don't remember or haven't been exposed to this, in January you can then nominate anybody from the floor for any position.

MR. OLIVIERI:

For the moment, this is the recommended slate by the Nominating Committee. Starting with Secretary, Gretchen; Treasurer, again, Mike; 2nd Vice President, Matt; 1st Vice President, David; President, Steve.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All right, thank you very much for your service. I appreciate it. In January we will pick it up and take it from there. Carol, your report.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It's been a very, very busy month. I was going to recommend that the December meeting be cancelled.

Since the last board meeting, it has really been a focus on our capital projects, on the audit, budgets and moving forward and thinking ahead about next year in those regards. I have had the opportunity to meet with many of our Legislators in talking about our capital projects, which was very, very helpful and interesting.

I had the opportunity to meet with Senator Marcellino. He's very interested in helping us out, so it's been a good month to start to network and start to understand how to make these happen here.

I have to really thank people in Budget Review, Jill Moss, Lance Reinheimer, people in the County Executive's Office, and people in the Clerk's Office. People are helping me learn the ropes, and most importantly, Steve Gittelman. It's been remarkable, really, to watch how the County operates, how Steve's knowledge of the ways of politics works and how important it is and how much of what he's guiding me through and teaching me is unspoken. It's not written.

As an anthropologist, I find this very interesting. It's the unspoken rules, but there are ways to get things done and to learn the system. I've got a really good appreciation for our County political system and the ways that things are working through watching Steve and through Steve helping me get a handle on the system and, again, people within the system as well have been wonderful in helping me out. I am now developing a network that I think is making the information and the communication flow a lot better. That will be helpful for us.

One of the positive things that's been happening lately is I meet every other week with the Department of Public Works to discuss our capital projects. We have 14 capital projects in various stages here. We have a wonderful checklist. We go through each capital project, what the status is, what I need to do, what's happening in the County, and again having him touch base with me on that, has been very, very helpful. I thank Steve for attending our last meeting and giving me a bit of the history on this.

I'll just quickly go through some of them. You might not be aware of all of them. The restoration of the habitat wing, that's a capital project where money has been budgeted for planning in 2008. We will be looking at that.

We have the vitalization, of course, of the William and Mollie Rogers waterfront, another capital project. The study phase is complete. The design and development phase is going on.

Restoration and stabilization of the seaplane hangar is another capital project. Consultant work is nearly complete, with a final construction document, issues to come up before that can be complete.

Improvements to Normandy Manor, again, planning funds have been adopted for 2008 budget. We have actual work being done now, funds that have been appropriated. Work continues on that project.

The restoration of the driveways, gutters, catch basins and walkways is a capital project that Steve and I will be working really hard for. It will be laid on the table Monday and will be coming up for a vote. This is a very large capital project that will help us get the netting down off our bell tower and enable people to walk safely on the property. That's a very important one for our historic buildings and for visitors as well. It's going to take work to get done. None of this just happens. Just writing a letter and making a phone call isn't enough. It requires a lot of face to face time and contact.

We have the capital project improvements to the planetarium. From that project we're replacing windows, doors and I think we're going to get a new rug. That's very exciting. It looks like we're going to have enough money for that.

Restoration of the boathouse is another project. Work has started on that. We have an engineer on site often who works really well with us. It's very exciting to see what's going on down at the boathouse. They just started the entrance way. The work they had to do just to start the project is really pretty amazing. The construction they have to do just to get ready to be able to do it in the spring is pretty remarkable.

Waterproofing masonry walls and drainage is another project where funds have been appropriated and are in the process of being spent.

Our security system at the Vanderbilt Museum, drawings are just about finished on that project. That will be a spring project.

Restoration of the facades is the other big capital project that's coming up. It's being laid on the table on Monday.

Another major project, again, for the safety of our visitors, as well as the protection of the building, we'll be able to remove some of the protective netting that's had to go up in sort of a wood scaffolding. This is an important project and, again, Steve will be ushering that through, I'm sure.

Then we have HVAC and electrical improvements. That project is nearing completion. We have a few things more to go with that.

Another capital project is rehabilitation of the plumbing system. The prior construction is just about completed on that, but the adopted '08 budget has some additional construction funds in the next few years. We're going to have to create new resolutions for that.

Modification for compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, we have money that has been appropriated for that. We're going to be looking at different purchasing of accessible vehicles, doors and walkways. Again, we'll have to be putting resolutions in '08 and '09 for further appropriations.

Finally, the replacement of our Goto projector, this is another project that we will have to be moving forward in '08.

All these projects, some are in the planning phase, some of them are in construction or design. It's all very complicated. It's wonderful to have the communication now going with DPW and the background that we'll need to make

sure we get monies appropriated and spent in a way that would be in the best interest of the museum. That's been a very helpful and positive thing.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony, do you have a question?

DR. PECORALE:

I have a question. I learned through some other organization that the federal government -- and you may want to contact Steve Israel -- has money available for providing handicapped facilities for historic sites. Supposedly the theory is to try to come up with a way that you can provide for the handicapped facility without taking away any of the historic -- they were talking about President Madison's home in Virginia, which I guess they spent a lot of money on renovating. The way I came up with that is that this other organization is looking for a way to move people to a second floor without doing away with the historic significance of everything they had there. I was told that the federal government has a sum of money that they have put aside for projects of this type for anybody who is handicapped to be able to get to remote areas within a historic site. I don't know anymore about it than that. You might want to check with Steve Israel because he's always been interested in the museum.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, I've had many conversations with him about that. It's time we hit them up for some money.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Okay. Thank you for that information. We were on capital projects. We do have the holidays coming up this weekend. On Saturday night we have a holiday dinner. I gave you each an invitation. We do have some openings at the 5:30 spot, but 7:00 is sold out. Please come if you can. It's a wonderful night. Sunday night is our tree lighting. I wanted to thank one of our guides, Susan Cappell, who donated a tree to us that was growing on her front lawn. It was about a three story tree that she was having cut down. We were able to go over and lop off I think it's about 20 feet. It's a spectacular tree. It's down in the courtyard now. It's really just stunning. I think we can get some wonderful PR and photographs taken.

I'm looking forward to a good holiday season. Staff has been working incredibly hard, the grounds crew. Just getting that tree here was a job. Getting the lights on everything -- people from all different departments have been volunteering helping out down at the mansion to get things decorated in time, as staff in the planetarium has been working here, as well.

We're looking forward to a good holiday season. Christmas week between Christmas and New Year's, we're going to try to do maybe some candlelight tours and offer a little bit more in the way of planetarium shows. We are looking into doing a New Year's Eve laser maybe marathon and hope to be able to promote that. So we're looking forward to the upcoming season in our decorated mansion.

I just wanted to thank many of the Trustees who I have had an opportunity to get to know better over the last month and a half as we worked very hard on the audit. We have had daily calls. Our Treasurer's Report -- Michael has been

meeting with me. He's been very nice, but when I'd give him the call, "Can you meet me," he's been willing to meet me any time to get that through.

I want to thank Dave for his work on the gala. We have had some wonderful long three hour wrap-up meetings, and we're looking ahead to next year, as well, Gretchen with our education issues. We're moving forward on our personnel manual. That's now rising to the top of my list. We hope to get that done. I look forward to working with other Trustees.

Now I come to Marjorie. I just have say, again, how much we will miss you here. When I started there 13 years ago, you were here. To me, you are part of the Vanderbilt. You've always been part of my world here. So it's going to be very strange not to have you here. It seems not that long ago, but I remember that your son, Joshua, who is in college now, I did a special mummy birthday party for him.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Yes, you tried out the mummy birthday party theory on my son when he was about seven.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Anyway, so when I realized how long ago, when you look at the kids, you're like, how long has it been.

MS. FUHRMANN:

We were talking at the Education and Exhibits meeting about how we could utilize the mummy in a birthday party theme, and we used his birthday party. I paid for it – just to be clear. Carol was one of the people who ran his birthday party that time. When I said to him, Carol is now acting as the Director, he went, "I remember her at my mummy birthday party." I said, "Yes, that's the one."

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

So anyway, I thank you for many years of brushetta and chocolate and for your incredible passion for the education and exhibits here. No matter what else went on, we could count on you to have your finger on that pulse. I thank you and the staff does. We will certainly miss you as part of our team. I hope you will keep in touch with us. That's again what I've been learning here as our numbers have been dwindled staff wise, we're really watching each other's backs. We're working as a team. People are cross cutting departments. I think there is a good feeling here, and certainly again 2008 will be that transformational year for us. It's a really exciting time. You're leaving on a high note.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I know. I'm kind of sad about that. Everything is coming to fruition.

DR. GITTELMAN:

You'll be back.

MS. FUHRMANN:

I will. I'm putting the ribbon on the star scope, remember? You promised.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Absolutely.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think that's probably enough for now.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's amazing what you could fit on three stickies, isn't it? That was a wonderful report. Are there any questions?

Then it's the President's Report. Today we were at the Legislature, Carol and I. We went to the first very important step of getting the endowment for 2008 through committee, the \$1.2 million guarantee. It passed unanimously. We are very grateful. That can be a very tricky thing to do sometimes. It's through committee. It will go in front of the Legislature at the next meeting. We are hopeful that it will pass. It's critical. We will simply have to shut down if it doesn't go through. I don't even know if we could shut down. I have no idea what would happen if that did not go through. We might not have enough money to shut down. Does that sound rational?

Also, Jon Cooper asked me to work with him on an amendment to change the way in which Trustees are chosen. I thought as Trustees I would explain to you that there will be a change in one of the codicils of that amendment. My understanding from the draft is – and it was not laid on the table yet – but that the change will now allow Trustees to be added who have significant experience in fundraising. I don't know exactly the wording that Jon has planned on, but I think that they are going to add to the mix, beside educators and people with museum experience, they are considering adding for a percentage of the board the ability to put Trustees on who have fundraising experience. We look forward to see that come through.

I understand we will soon have a new Trustee – and I apologize for not remembering her name.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Effie Gicas.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Where is she from?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I believe it was Legislator Horsley.

MS. FUHRMANN:

She's from Babylon? The name sounded familiar. That's why I asked.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would like to comment about some of the things that Carol said. For one, she has an interesting leadership talent. I don't want her to get too big of a swelled head but she really is a lot of fun to work with. She has good insights into her people. I think that that's really important. I think that she has been bringing the staff together. I'm very pleased to see that. I've been asking people to confirm what I'm seeing. I've been getting the same input from other Trustees just to confirm it. I think that she is the kind of leader that is bringing the staff

together, and that is a wonderful thing. The staff knows how to pull apart very easily. She is now bringing them together, and I'm very pleased to see that. She also is getting them to cross-train. She is getting them to become multi-disciplinary, to step up to the plate, and to add leadership. I think all those are good things. I'm very pleased with that. She is a very fast learner. I take her into the Legislature, and she's got it down. She sees what's going on, and she's got a good memory.

The other thing is that she's been doing the part that I really need help with, and that is there is a staff to staff dialogue that has to go on. She has been doing an excellent job of keeping that internal staff dialogue with the County Executive's Office, with Budget Review, and she's even discovering new friends. Yes, I pushed her out and suggested that she go to visit Legislators, and she did a very fine job of that. You noticed I'm talking about a lot of things that have to do with getting through appropriations, but that's part of my job. She certainly has been giving me the help I needed. When it came to working on the statement and working on the financials, quite frankly, after the last meeting I looked at all your faces and I thought about how I felt. I sat down with her and she dove into it – just dove into it. I really have to say that. We had some two or three hour phone calls. We went through every single line. There was never a moment where it was getting too late. It was great. It's been a good experience.

I want to repeat that, Marge, you're irreplaceable. We're all going to miss you. You've done a fine a job as a Trustee could.

MS. FUHRMANN:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then my last statement is that I would like to suggest that we not have a December meeting, that we pick up in January. This is a very late November meeting. It just doesn't make any sense with me, if that's okay.

MS. LEBOW:

Are we keeping the same third Wednesday of every month?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right now, we're going to stick with the third Wednesday in January.

MS. LEBOW:

It would be the 16th of January.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Hopefully by then we will have two more major appropriations through, the endowment done, maybe the 2006 audit, and whatever else Carol has got up her sleeve. I want to take a minute to wish you all good health, a happy new year, and a wonderful holiday season. Let's roll up our sleeves and get back here in January and we'll go at it again.

Any old business? New business? There is no need for an executive session. Ann Marie, thank you so much. You have been wonderful this past year as always.

MS. PASTORE:

Thank you.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And, Bill, thank you very much for balancing the books. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

MS. FUHRMANN:

I'll do that.

MR. OLDRIN-MONES:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Motion carries. (Vote: 8/0/0/5
Absent: Mr. Macchione, Ms. Figalora & Mr. Parr. Two vacant positions.)**

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Also, we do have a special cake for Marjorie.

(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M.)

SG:ap